



## Indian Literature

### Oral Tradition and Indian Literature

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Manager Pandey

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### Modern Odia Poetry

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## Literary Life of Gurudev

**R**abindranath Tagore was the first Asian to be awarded with the Nobel prize. As a poet, writer and philosopher, he became the voice of India's spiritual heritage. Tagore was multifaceted and left an indelible impression on different branches of art, such as novels, short stories, dramas, articles, essays and paintings. His songs popularly known as Rabindra Sangeet have an eternal appeal. He was a social reformer, patriot and above all, a great humanitarian.

To be born as the youngest member of a family is not necessarily a misfortune. Under favourable circumstances, it may turn out to be an asset. Tagore's case is an example in point. If his inborn genius was a major factor in making him an outstanding literary figure, the environment in the family was no less important factor in unfolding it. Tagore himself was very conscious of this as he confirms in his reminiscences.

Tagore's intense feeling of patriotism again infused by the family atmosphere provided the incentive for developing his literary talents. The atmosphere of patriotism prevailed in the family over several generations. Tagore's grandfather Dwarkanath set the tone for it. Though he mixed intimately with the members of the European society, he never gave up the Indian style of living. He loved it so intensely that even in his long sojourn in England, he continued to dress in Indian style and used to take delight in smoking the *hukka*. This spirit was inherited by his sons. His youngest son, Nagendranath created quite a stir in Calcutta social circle by disembarking from the ship dressed immaculately in Indian style when he returned home after his father's death in England. Debendranath always insisted that correspondence between family members should strictly be in Bengali.

The tradition not only continued in the next generation but was even intensified. Satyendranath took delight in composing patriotic songs in Bengali. In collaboration with his elder cousin Ganendranath and Nabagopal Mitra, he organised the Hindu Mela in Calcutta to encourage the growth of patriotic feelings among his countrymen and to promote the sale of indigenous goods.

Hemendranath insisted that the members of the family should study Bengali and develop their command over the language. The Hindu Mela provided Tagore the scope to give expression to his feelings about his land of birth, in poetry. It appears that on two occasions, he participated in the programmes by reciting his poems on India. The first occasion was in 1875 when he was only fourteen years of age. It was considered so important an event that it was reported in the leading daily next day. The theme of the poem imagines sage Vyas sitting on the Himalayas recalling the glory of India's past and contrasting it with the present lowly state and poses the question:

*"Will the ashes of India's  
past glory  
kindle again a blazing fire  
and light up the world?"*

His sensitive mind was fully conscious of the insignificant role played by the Bengali of his day and fired by patriotic thoughts he keenly felt that somebody should undertake to wipe out this disgrace. Thus in an essay he observes:

*"After remaining silent for  
long years, the heart of Bengal  
is surcharged with ideas. Let her  
speak out her own feelings in her  
own language. The chorus of the  
world will be made sweeter when  
the Bengali takes part in it."*

He was proud of his country's ancient past. He strongly wished that India should be reinstated to her position of glory. This desire finds expression in one of his sonnets which finds place, in his book of verse *Naivedya*. The availability of more than one literary journal run by the family acted as a direct incentive to his writing. The *Tattvabodhini Patrika* published one of his earliest poems, *Abhilash*, towards the end of December 1874, when he was barely thirteen. Later, when he was still in his teens, he became a regular contributor to the other family journal *Sadhana*.

When his mother died in his early age, it was his sister-in-law who took upon herself the task of looking to his comforts and showering on him the necessary affection to lighten his grief. After that she would always keep him with her even when she would shift with her husband to places away from the ancestral house, except for the short spell when he was away in the United Kingdom.

*Continued on page 66...*





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Let noble thoughts come to us from all sides  
Rig Veda

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Hope Yojana will pave way for inclusive growth and ensure prosperity of all.

– Dr Rajni Kant  
Head RMPCC & CU, ICMR

## Suggestion on Theme

I have been reading Yojana since last few years and Yojana developed my opinion on various perspectives. Apart from that, my reading and writing fluency have increased. I request to Yojana team to publish an issue on Poverty and Hunger of all aspects. Thank you Yojana team.

– Piyush Ranjan  
Email: piyushranjanyadav98@gmail.com

## Multiple Choice Questions

I have been referring to Yojana for various current affairs topics and I must say they are explained in detail. As a civil services aspirant, I prefer Yojana over other monthly current affairs compilations because it covers every important economic aspect briefly and also provides MCQ's for brainstorming. I would really appreciate if the number of MCQ's are increased substantially.

– Komal Yadav  
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## Accessible to Everyone

As a reader, one expects the information and analysis to be credible and resourceful. Yojana magazine tempts a person to think beyond and reflect on the merits as well as the demerits. With its pricing and its well-maintained standard, it has kept the idea of India alive. This reflects in the fact that it is accessible to people from all walks of life, a standing that reflects the fraternity, a crucial element in the Indian Preamble. With its highly regarded contributors from public as well as private lives, it keeps the reader engaged with excellent articles from diverse backgrounds. I hope Yojana Magazine keeps this spirit alive. I sincerely thank you for the utmost help you are

providing to readers like me to engage with India in a significant manner.

– Sankalp Singh Chauhan  
Email: sankalps192@gmail.com

## Issue on Climate Change

Yojana magazine is helping extensively in my civil services preparation. Content in the magazine is very enriching. If I talk about the latest issue of the magazine "Indian Society" it has helped me in preparing some of the topics of my optional subject. Simple language makes it easier to understand. I would like to suggest an edition on climate change. Thanks a lot team Yojana.

– Payal Pansuriya  
Email: payal.pansuriya13398@gmail.com

## November Issue

The November issue on "Post-Covid Economy" was undoubtedly the best of the year 2020. The way RBI monetary policy was explained was too good. It's a great weapon for UPSC exam, as the content is useful for all Pre, Mains and Interview phase. I would request you to add a section as "Question of the Month", and then publish the best answers in the next edition of the magazine.

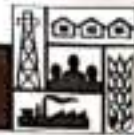
– Sachin Kabadwal  
Haldwani, Uttarakhand  
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## Republish Articles

I am in my early 60s. I keep reading this beautiful magazine just to keep myself updated on the latest developments in diverse sectors in India and abroad. In January issue every year if a rewind of articles published in last 12 issues could be published, it would really be immensely helpful to the readers.

– Pratap Nayak  
Bhubaneswar  
Email: pratap.kumar.nayak60@gmail.com





## Indian Literature

*"Books are infinite in number and time is short. The secret of knowledge is to take what is essential. Take that and try to live up to it" – Swami Vivekananda*

The pandemic gave us reasons to delve deep and look beyond the normal, shoving us into a capsule of self-banishment and demanding us to reflect on the many privileges that we somehow took for granted, and being grateful for the same. It altered lives in ways unimaginable and revived the lost melody, with people finding new ways to survive, adapt and grow.

Amid unprecedented darkness, Arts and Literature has always been a beacon of hope, enriching lives and defining who we are as humans. Through the prism of Literature, we view the art of words that not only gives pleasure to our restive souls but in essence holds a mirror to the society thereby becoming a means to validate cultural values and history connected with them. And it is the sheer power and magic of words that expand our skies and broadens our horizons.

Jorge Luis Borges said, *"When writers die they become books, which is, after all, not too bad an incarnation."* The annus horribilis 2020 took away from us many doyens of literature who shall continue to breathe through their words and forever be remembered for their immense contribution to the world of arts and literature. Literature is the panacea for all societal ills and a powerful tool for effective learning. In this issue, we bring you the remarkable thoughts and views of experts in the field of literature, emphasising upon varied genres to give readers a real literary experience.

The journey of Indian literature is rooted in diversity and marked with a shift in the themes, ideas, and styles. Despite these subtle changes and diversity, literature remains relatable because of the linguistic density of the Indian sub-continent and the willingness to take up and absorb all wonderful things from any language or culture. The sheer ability of the litterateurs to produce their vast literary creations without worrying about the trends eventually led to a rich collection in many languages. Indian Literature originated during the Vedic period and gradually progressed to newer forms and manifestations. It is clearly an outcome of a multi-cultural mélange where a thousand worlds forge themselves to create a mind-boggling symphony of words.

Mark Twain said, *"India is the cradle of the human race, the birthplace of human speech, the mother of history, the grandmother of legend and the great grandmother of tradition"*. Efforts of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan created a new school of Urdu literature. The Progressive Writers Movement in literature set a benchmark for the upcoming writers and brought forth the winds of change. Several genres flourished pre and post independence in the realm of literature. *Tholkappiam*, the ancient grammatical treatise governed the world of Tamil literature and soon became a way of life during the *Sangam* era. Bhakti poetry involving enlightenment and asceticism became a movement of its own, with poets devoting their lives to dispel the darkness of ignorance. Persian poetry dominated the royal courtyards and the khanqahs of Sufi Saints. The *Saptak* tradition in Hindi Literature on the other hand, opened new avenues of romanticism and social realities. Women's writings and feminist literature too emerged to give voice to the silent and unheard, influencing the content and changing the course of literature in all languages. Through the sheer power of the pen, Dalits and the Tribal communities continue to express their concerns, age-old struggle and mistreatment, censuring social snobbery and mortification of society's downtrodden sections.

Commensurate with extensive coverage on the evolution of literature and modern writings, an attempt has been made to make this issue aesthetically pleasing. A handful of pages will never be enough to describe something as vast as literature and we are deeply indebted to all the authors for their contribution. We hope our readers will like this thrust on the aesthetics in Indian literature.

As we have already ushered into this year with renewed hopes and dreams to leave behind tumultuous times and the uncertainty of the pandemic that continues to ravage lives, let us keep reminding ourselves of the kindness, compassion, and goodwill that remains amidst all the pain and abruptness, and continue to look at the brighter side. □







## Oral Tradition and Indian Literature

*Dr Chandrasekhar Kambar*

Ancient India had both 'writing' and 'speech' and the basic distinction between them defined their functions too. The essential culture of India is embodied by a living individual who not only interprets the norms of culture but also acts as a frame of reference. The norms are meaningless unless they are translated into human speech and action conceptually, at least, the mind, speech, and action form a single, unified entity.

**A** large portion of ancient Indian literature is a manifestation of the spoken word and it belongs to the oral tradition as far as its preservation is concerned. The Vedas have been preserved without the loss of a single syllable through a complex and intricate system of recital down the centuries. The writing was introduced much later in Indian history due to the influence of the foreign scholars,

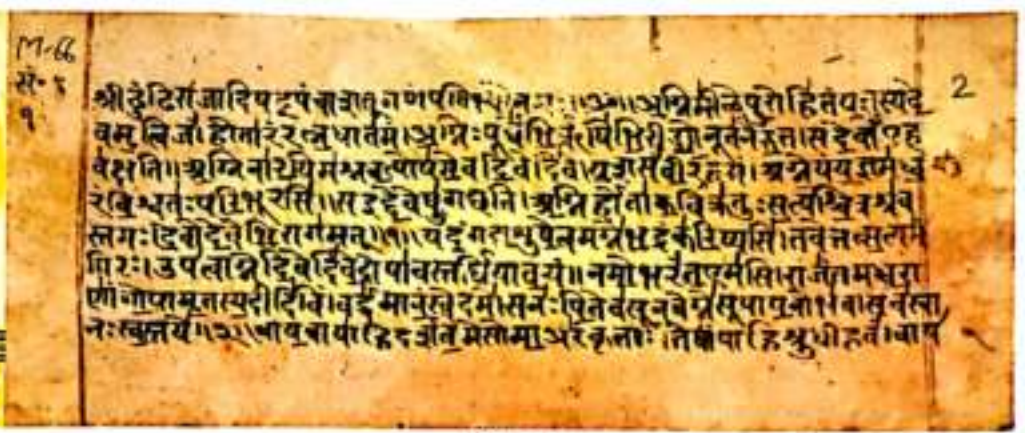
and literature as writing emerged only during the British regime. We have to consider the fact that the authenticity of writing was established by the British courts since the British could not have trust in the statements of the native witnesses. We also have to consider the fact that Western civilisation is book-centred, but the book does not exercise the same power and authority in the context of Indian culture.

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Kumaravyasa



Rigveda

The essential culture of India is embodied by a living individual who not only interprets the norms of culture but also acts as a frame of reference. The norms are meaningless unless they are translated into human speech and action conceptually, at least, the mind, speech, and action form a single, unified entity. According to a prayer from the Rigveda, "Speech is firmly rooted in the mind and the mind is established in speech". The integrated personality has such power and authority that it is a fit instrument for expressing the truth.

Ancient India had both 'writing' and 'speech' and the basic distinction between them defined their functions too. Writing which is alienated from the writer or the author survives him and therefore is meant for the consumption of the posterity. Speech, on the other hand, which being a living part of the speaker's personality is meant in order to communicate with a live audience. We have poetic works which are 'written' and those which are 'orally transcribed'. The works of Pampa, the first Kannada poet of the 10<sup>th</sup> Century, have the characteristics of a written work. In one of the introductory verses, which have been distorted due to the brittleness of the palm leaf, Pampa says that he composed the historical narrative of the Mahabharata and presented it as an 'inscription' to the world. The form of Pampa's great epic closely resembles that of a long 'inscription'. An inscription is writing in its pure form. It is spatial and monumental, which means it

According to a prayer from the Rigveda, "Speech is firmly rooted in the mind and the mind is established in speech".

The integrated personality has such power and authority that it is a fit instrument for expressing the truth.

is bound by space and is meant to commemorate some present event. The immediate purpose of Pampa's epic was to commemorate the historical deeds of his patron-prince, Arikesari. Again, Pampa's poem abounds in the metaphors of 'inscriptions', 'text' and 'writing'. The body of Bhishma on the bed of arrows, waiting for its death, looks like a 'stone inscription of some heroic deed'. A bad poet, Pampa says, is a pain to the hand of the scribe and his poem 'a misuse of the writing board'. As the Kaurava heroes fall

one by one, Pampa writes short epitaphs to commemorate their heroic death. All these pieces of evidence go to prove the Pampa's effort was to convert the narrative of the Mahabharata preserved by the oral tradition into a written text. Pampa lived during a time when the vernacular languages of India were being raised to the status of writing, and the chief purpose of the writing then was to commemorate. Pampa

found contemporary history as exciting as that of the Mahabharata and what he presented in his poem is the metaphorical relation between the two ages.

The form of a written poetic text is a 'closed' one due to the spatiality of the writing. It has a beginning, middle, and end. The structure of the poem is tight and so accurate that if you add even a word to it or remove something from it, the structure gets disturbed. The meaning of the poem depends upon the structure, and the structure embodies the meaning. The most favourite trope of Pampa, for

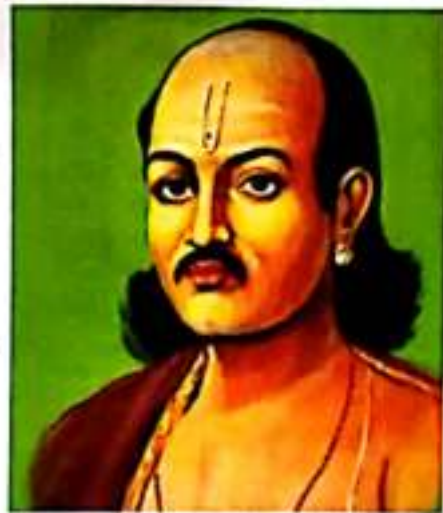


Vedas



example, is 'Sahokti', which is the expression of two similar events that happen simultaneously. Pampa describes a dancer called Neelanjane in these terms: "She (Neelanjane) entered the stage and also the minds of the spectators". The simultaneity of these events and also, their similarity reveals the meaning of the poem. The two epics of Pampa abound in such images of simultaneity—lovers die in each other's arms, brothers hate and kill each other, enmity gets whetted along with the weapons, and many others. Characters become mirror images, events recur and history repeats.

All these poetic devices are possible only in a written text. The writer can stop for a while to think after narrating an event, and thus can depict not only the event that takes place but also can provide his own commentary on that, a process in which both fact and its consciousness gets intermingled. Pampa is conscious of the fact that the meaning of the poem lies in the relationship of the mythological past and the historical present. The characters in the poem originally belong to the world of the Mahabharata but in the world of the epic poem of Pampa they still retain the consciousness, they belong to the Mahabharata, Bhima while describing the loose tresses of Draupadi says that the 'Mahabharata' has its origin in her tresses. But this consciousness has its own ambiguity. The characters who insist that they belong to the Mahabharata also reveal the fact that they do not belong to the Mahabharata. Arjuna who is the prototype of Arikesari clearly says that if he won't kill Karna he would not be a worthy son of Narasinga and Jakabbe, the birth parents of prince Arikesari. Pampa's characters in their desperate attempt to alienate themselves from the world of the original epic disrupt the very language of the epic. But all this goes to prove that in a written text—the past and the present are the warp and woof of the poetic texture.



Pampa, Kannada Poet

**Pampa's characters in their desperate attempt to alienate themselves from the world of the original epic disrupt the very language of the epic. But all this goes to prove that in a written text – the past and the present are the warp and woof of the poetic texture.**

A.K. Ramanujan, who has edited the folk-tales, says that 'a tale told by a grandmother in the kitchen is different from the story told by a story-teller to a group of adults gathered in a public place'. The king and the queen in a grandmother's story are nameless while all the characters and even beasts and weapons get names when the same story is told by a story-teller. The mythological stories also change their details when they are handled by the folk-poets. A narrative in verse belonging to the oral tradition, ideally speaking, has no limits of size and magnitude. They came to an end when both the singer and the audience get exhausted. Almost all the folksongs create an illusion of an interminable syntax. The form of a poem is unpredictable as it takes shape along with the performance.

The author in a written tradition is necessarily absent while in the oral tradition he is present and therefore the form of the poetic work depends upon the physical, creative stamina of the author. This also explains the fact that as to why the poetry of Bhakti tradition belongs to the oral tradition. The poetry of devotion addresses itself to God whose supreme presence it celebrates. Among the Bhakti poets, many of them are learned, but their poetry is always that of poetry belonging to the oral tradition. I can cite here



Palmleaf Grantha



only two such great examples, Harihara and Kumaravyasa. The movement of Harihara's lines is endless, each line crying out for its companion line and all of them, trying to build up an image which is never completed. The images reach their completeness only in heaven. This helps to understand the never-ending relation between the devotee and his God. A common complaint against Harihara's poetry is that his lines move in a monotonous way. But the monotony of lines is a technical necessity, in the sense that the monotony diverts the attention of the listener to the depth of meaning. Obviously, Harihara must have learnt this skill from the oral tradition.

The case of Kumaravyasa is slightly different. Kumaravyasa, like Pampa, sought to retell the story of the Mahabharata in Kannada. But his purpose, unlike that of Pampa was to revive the oral tradition, or better still, to introduce the vital elements of the oral tradition in a written text. In one of his introductory verses, he boasts of four distinctions:-

1. He never made use of a slate and a pencil while composing the poem.
2. He never erased a single word after writing it.
3. He never borrowed the style of writing from other poets.
4. He went on writing continuously so that the sound of the stylus and the palm-leaf could always be heard.

Obviously, Kumaravyasa wants to prove that he is an inspired poet and that his poetry has an extraordinary eloquence. But the details of this description are surprisingly ambiguous.

Kumaravyasa described his way of writing which is somewhat unusual. But the writing is unusual in that it ceases to be writing and has the characteristics of speaking. The act of speaking is spontaneous and it is uninterrupted. But the most striking feature of this writing, which is like a speech-act, is that the poet never erased a single word. You cannot erase a word while speaking because speech is irreversible. The act of speaking is a committed one, and a spoken word is a responsible word. A society in which the spoken word carries supremacy and moral authority is different from a society which holds the written word as a document of truth. The identity of a person in such a society depends upon his speech. Elders, rather than books, are referred to in disputes and matters of controversy. The poetry of Kumaravyasa belongs to such a society.

All Indian languages, except Sanskrit, when they reached the status of writing, continued to develop their

literature, drawing inspiration from both written and oral traditions. In India, the oral tradition does not belong to a pre-literate age representing a primary condition of civilisation. On the other hand, both traditions can co-exist in a given period of Indian history. The folk-traditions have been alive even during the present century. The main reason for this curious co-existence of these traditions is the fact that these two traditions, although they represent separate sets of values, are not ethically different from each other. Literacy in India is not the only way to cultural and spiritual experiences. Many of our mystics and saints have been illiterate but have produced classical poetry. Nrupatunga, a writer of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, says that 'the Kannada people are skilled in the art of producing poetry although they cannot read'. The paradoxical element in this statement must be considered seriously. The statement suggests a possibility of profound aesthetic and poetic experience which is not denied to an illiterate person. In the same way, many of our saints and mystics have been illiterate and yet have produced poetry of profound spiritual experience.

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**The author in a written tradition is necessarily absent while in the oral tradition he is present and therefore the form of the poetic work depends upon the physical, creative stamina of the author. This also explains the fact that as to why the poetry of Bhakti tradition belongs to the oral tradition. The poetry of devotion addresses itself to God whose supreme presence it celebrates.**

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The written tradition in Indian literature starts with the modern period since almost all the writers are literate. Poetry is now being read rather than being heard. The effect of this written tradition is most felt in the metrical structure of modern poetry. *'It is not meters but meter-making arguments that make poetry'* - this statement of Emerson is being followed very obediently by our poets and the result is that free verse is being used by all poets nowadays. Poets have taken resort to the free verse in order to liberate their poetry from the mechanism of

old meters, but they don't know how to escape from the mechanism of free verse. The old meters appealed to our sense of hearing and since poetry is being read now there is no scope for music in poetry. As far as Kannada is concerned, there are only two poets who have drawn a lot from the oral tradition and that is Dr. D.R. Bendre and myself. We did hear the echoes of folk-meters in our poetry and our poems gain a lot of significance when they are recited.

We don't know what will happen to the oral tradition in modern times of urbanisation and industrialisation. Campaigning for complete literacy has gained speed and we know that the purpose is purely political. The best we can do is to preserve some of the skills from total extinction. Some of our religious rituals in which recitals are compulsory and some of our art forms in which eloquence is an inevitable element can be of great help. □



# Tholkappiam: The Ancient Grammar

*Prof K V Balasubramanian*

Tholkappiam had followed the traditional grammatical regulations of several thousand years. In its backdrop, a long grammatical tradition had been alive which has provided enormous material to build up the first available grammatical treatise. The Tamils are fortunate to recover Tholkappiam intact without any loss which has escaped from huge deluges that usurped many valuable works of their glorious ancestors.

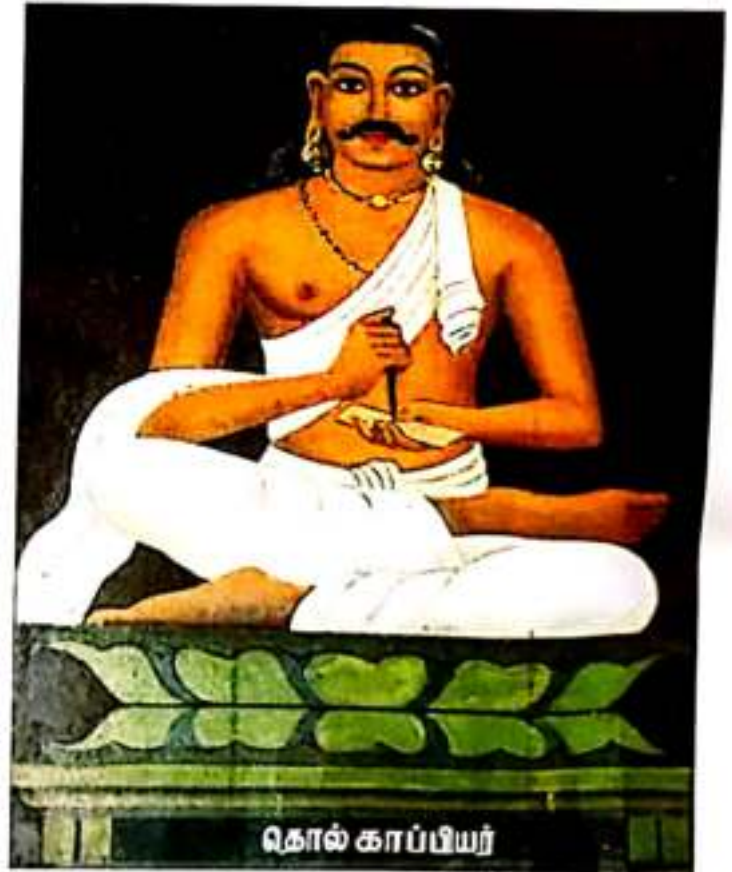
**T**holkappiam, a grammatical treatise in Tamil is the most ancient one, the age of which is considered by most as the fifth or sixth century B.C.<sup>1</sup> No other contemporary work is available. The massive devastations that took place in the seas of the Southern Peninsula had wiped off large quantities of palm leaf manuscripts which contained many works of grammar and literature. Tholkappiam itself in the course of prescribing rules and regulations for various genres of literature and classifications of grammar refers to many ancient works which we do not know in detail.<sup>2</sup>

1. Winking of eyes and snapping of fingers is the measure of sound in pronunciation as enunciated by scholars of minute perception.<sup>3</sup>
2. When 'th' comes, the stay of three-dotted letter **ஊ** is not a fault according to scholastic.<sup>4</sup>
3. The glorious scholars had devised and stated emphatically as parts of a poem.<sup>5</sup>
4. The verse, commentary, book, utterance, riddle, satire, proverb, all the seven that in vogue inside the four boundaries of the three glorious patrons are said as the prosodic regulations by scholars.<sup>6</sup>
5. The scholars have poeticised that the aphorism is of multifaceted use.<sup>7</sup>

Above such references are made in 230 places of Tholkappiam. It is beyond all doubts that Tholkappiam had followed the traditional grammatical regulations of several thousand years. It has not sprouted up suddenly from a barren track. In its backdrop a long grammatical tradition had been alive which has provided enormous material to build up the first available grammatical treatise, the Tholkappiam.

## The Antiquity of Tholkappiam

The Archaeological and historical evidences prove that Tholkappiam had emerged some two thousand five hundred years ago when the whole of the Indian subcontinent was ruled by several kings and chieftains. Tholkappiam states that the Tamil land was ruled by 'three famous munificent patrons' (வண்புகழ் மூவர்). In the prefatory verse of Tholkappiam, there is the mention of the name of the Pandya king 'திவந்தரு திருவிந் பாண்டியன்' (one



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who afforded the land). The Pandya king has afforded the dwelling sites to the Tamil people who had lost their land in a vast deluge. An apparent reference to this is found in 'Kalitokai', one of the Sangam classical anthologies.

*As the waves of the seas abound to usurp the lands,  
the southern king of unwearied fame, with his might  
not shrinked went over the enemies to seize their land  
removed the tiger and bow emblems and stamped with carp\**

This great deluge had devastated a huge landed area which had immersed under the Indian Ocean. Hence, there was the necessity to colonise the landless people. The prefatory verse of Tholkappiam denotes the southern boundary of Tamil land was 'Kumari' which actually represents the Kumari hills. In those days, the Tamil land existed between the Venkatam hills and Kumari hills. Before the advent of Tholkappiam, the land in the south had been further extended largely and was close to the Australian continent.

The Indus Valley civilisation is of the ancient Tamil speaking people, and the script found there, deciphered by Rev. Fr. Heras and Sir John Marshal, clearly shows the identity with the Tamil existing script. Tholkappiar speaks of the script form of certain letters and they are developed from the Indus Valley script. In the Indus Valley script, consonants do not have dots over them. In Tholkappiam, as a later development the same letters are said to have dots.

*'The nature of consonants is to have dots'*

Askoparpola and Iravatham Mahadevan had stated the Indus script is the native product and they are owned by Tamils.<sup>9</sup> Tholkappiar states how the two lettered word 'ஊம்' which means the funeral ritual, changes in coalescence.<sup>10</sup> This clearly tells the Tamils of ancient Tamil land are used to burn the dead. The excavations of Indus Valley also show the same practice. So the linguistic and cultural tenets show that Tholkappiam had its origin from many ancient sources, including that of the Indus Valley.

Among the eight anthologies of Sangam age, 'Ahananuru' refers in three verses to the invasion of Maurya kings over the southern region. When the invasion took place?

"The Mauryan invasion of the Tamil country could be placed therefore roughly between 298 B.C. and 272 B.C. the reign period of Bindusara."<sup>11</sup>

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**Tholkappiar speaks of the script form of certain letters and they are developed from the Indus Valley script. In the Indus Valley script, consonants do not have dots over them. In Tholkappiam, as a later development the same letters are said to have dots.**

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Prof. Nilakanta Sastri also endorses this above-stated view of Prof. Ramachandran.<sup>12</sup> Nandas are also referred to in Sangam poetry. Tholkappiam had emerged long before the period of Mauryas and Nandas.

#### The Prefatory Verse

A prefatory verse to Tholkappiam rendered by one Panamparanar, a contemporary to Tholkappiar provides the following valuable information in fifteen lines of the verse.

1. The Tamil land in the age of Tholkappiam is in between the northern Venkata hills and the southern Kumari. This Kumari denotes the hills that disappeared later.
2. Tholkappiam deals with the written and spoken Tamil versions that prevailed in Tamil land.
3. Tholkappiam is a three-fold work dealing with the alphabets, words, content and form.
4. Tholkappiar had referred to the ancient Tamil works and collected all appropriate materials of his age and anthologised into an impeccable dissertation.
5. Tholkappiam was presented before the learned audience of the Pandya king named Nilamtharu thriuvil Pandian. The Chairperson at that time was Athankottu Asan. This Athankottu Asan had been an exponent of ethical justice and had mastery in the four Vedas.



6. Tholkappiar had mastery over the Indhra Vyakarna.
7. The author of Tholkappiam is Tholkappiar, which is his proper name, and the work by him is named with that.

### Structure and Composition of the Work

Tholkappiam is a grammatical work and it is composed of three major divisions. They are:

1. Eluththu Athikaram (எழுத்ததிகாரம்) – the chapter on the alphabets.
2. Col Athikaram (சொல்லதிகாரம்) – the chapter on the words
3. Porul Athikaram (பொருளதிகாரம்) – the chapter on the content and form.

#### 1. Eluththu Athikaram (எழுத்ததிகாரம்) – The Chapter on the Alphabets.

This chapter on the alphabets of the Tamil language, contains nine subdivisions. In these, it tells about the following.

The thirty primary letters starting from 'a' to 'n'.

The three dependant letters, the short u, the short 'e' and three dotted letters 'Aytham'.<sup>13</sup>

The thirty primary letters contain twelve vowels and eighteen consonants. The twelve vowels, in their turn, contain five short vowels and seven long vowels. Among the consonants, there are three varieties: hard consonants, soft consonants and medieval consonants. The vowels and consonants combine to form vowel consonants,  $12 \times 18 = 216$ .

The sound of each letter is measured as one, and the measurement is called 'மாத்திறை' (The winking of eyelids and snapping of fingers).

A word in Tamil is formed by letter or letters. Single-lettered words, double lettered words, and multi lettered words are commonly found. Rules are there stating, what are the first occurring letters in a word, and the letters at the end and the sequence of letters in a word are all stated in the first chapter.

#### The Birth of Letters

The most important feature of this first chapter is 'the birth of letters.' In this, the aphorism is noteworthy.

**In Porul Athikaram, the two major divisions called the Ahaththinai (subject matter dealing with the divine love and family life) and Puraththinai (subject matter dealing with the heroism, munificence, honour, friendship and other external characteristic features) are dealt with grammatically.**

|    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| அ  | ஆ  | இ  | ஈ  | உ  | ஊ  |
| a  | ā  | i  | ī  | u  | ū  |
| எ  | ஏ  | ஐ  | ஓ  | ஔ  | ஔ  |
| e  | ē  | ai | o  | ō  | au |
| க  | ங  | ச  | ஞ  | ட  | ண  |
| ka | ṅa | ca | ña | ṭa | ṇa |
| த  | ந  | ப  | ம  | ய  | ர  |
| ta | na | pa | ma | ya | ra |
| ல  | வ  | ழ  | ள  | ற  | ன  |
| la | va | ṟa | ḷa | ra | na |

The breathing air starting from the navel stays in the head, throat and chest, activated by the teeth, lips, nose and palate with that eight types of affiliations, the birth of all the letters, having different identities, the occurrence happens to know.<sup>14</sup>

The pronunciation of each letter is thus accurately determined.

#### Coalescence of Letters

Tholkappiam reserves six sections of the first chapter to the coalescence of Tamil letters. In those, it enunciates the following:

1. Which letter will coalesce with which letter?
2. The occurring of hard consonants in the coalescence.
3. When two vowels coalesce, the process of assimilation (prevention of hiatus).
4. The loss of a vowel or consonant when two words coalesce.
5. One consonant turns into another consonant in the combination of words.

Tholkappiam points out the three major changes in the combination of words. They are: Change of consonant (மெய்பிறிதாதல்), Addition of a consonant (மிஞ்சல்) and Elision of a consonant (இயல்பு). In addition to these three, the fourth one that is without any change (இயல்பு) is also mentioned.

Thus, the first chapter narrates about—the letters, the formation of words and the changes in the combination of words.

#### 2. Col Athikaram (சொல்லதிகாரம்) – The Chapter on the Words

This chapter deals mostly with the four kinds of words. They are—nouns, verbs, various types of particles and indeclinables or attributes. The words when they combine, certain particles will not be visibly found. Such combinations are called 'Tokai' (தொகை). There are two



kinds of Tokais or combinations found when words unite to combine. They are:

1. Declinable combination (பெற்றுமைத் தொகை)
2. Non-declinable combination (அவ்வுழித் தொகை)

In the declinable combination, the case particles are imbibed. The first and last declensions have no case markers. From the second case to the seventh case, the case markers are as below:

1. The second case Accusative Case particle 'ai' 'ஐ'
2. The third case Instrumental Case particle 'odu' 'ஓடு'
3. The fourth case Dative Case particle 'ku' 'கு'
4. The fifth case Ablative Case particle 'il' 'இன்'
5. The sixth case Possessive Case particle 'atu' 'அது'
6. The seventh case Locative Case particle, 'kan' 'கண்'

No verb will hold the declension. Only the noun is declinable. Tholkappiar, after enumerating all the entities of cases, proceeds to point out the transformation of declensions.

"Whatever the case particle, the declension goes by the entity".<sup>13</sup>

According to this, the subject matter only decides the case.

The most remarkable feature in the Colathikaram is the two divisions of matter—the superior beings (Uyar Thina) and the inferior beings (Ahrinai). These two 'Thinai's are further divided into five genders. The division is as follows:

- |                                |                    |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. The Male gender             | Superior being     |
| 2. The Female gender           |                    |
| 3. The Plural gender of people |                    |
| 4. The Singular gender         | The inferior being |
| 5. The Plural gender           |                    |

This division clearly shows that this is based on the human needs and requirements. While the superior beings have male and female genders, the inferior one has the singular and plural genders. When occurring in the formation of sentences, these five genders are exhibited in

The grammar in other languages deals only with the physical features of the languages, starting from the alphabets and ending with the formation of sentences and poetic components. The 'Thinai' means the virtue or character is special and most important component of poetics is an unfound ingredient in other classical languages.



the subject and the predicate of the sentence. Tholkappiar says the gender suffix in the noun and the verb should not be different.

"The gender denotation in the verb and in the noun should not be different".<sup>14</sup>

Eleven gender suffixes are enlisted by Tholkappiar. However, Tholkappiar is of the opinion that occasionally the noun may differ in the usage of gender suffixes. So the verbs are said to have the gender suffix. Though rigorous grammatical tradition existed that verbs should show the gender of the doer, sometimes the tradition was not followed, and it was not considered by later grammarians as a fault, and such errors knowingly committed are called 'sanctioned deviation (வழுவமைதி)'. Though Tholkappiar in his aphorisms says nothing about such deviation, the commentators by way of inference say that the deviations are pronounced in Tholkappiam.

The verbs have the quality of showing the three tenses—the past, present and future. The finite verb clearly indicates the tense, the appellative verb, it is said will elude the sense of tense. A survey of such appellative verbs makes to think that they are actually predicative nouns. Tholkappiar enlists nine forms of adverbs belonging to the three tenses. The influence of oral tradition has made permanent imprints of irregular tense formations in the written grammatical rule formation. Tholkappiar clearly mentions the sanctioned deviations in the usage of tenses and their formation.

In the future and present tenses, the verbal terms that occur in usage to be said in a past tense that is because of hastiness in utterance<sup>15</sup>

Though Tholkappiar is conscious of the tense making participle, he is not giving the tense making participle applicable to each tense. The time sense in the verbs occur differently and sometimes in the suffixes of the verbs and sometimes by different nouns too.





#### The Four Types of Words

Tholkappiar tells about four types of words, and they are:

1. இயற்சொல் (The word that is in usage in the native Tamil land).
2. திரிசொல் (Synonyms and homonyms).
3. திசைச்சொல் (The dialect in usage in the twelve parts of Tamil land).
4. வடசொல் (The words of northern land).

The words of northern land are of Pali, Prakrit and Sanskrit. Here, Tholkappiar emphasises the northern word should not be taken as it is in available form; the alien letter should be removed, and an equal Tamil letter should be interfused. Until the time of Tholkappiar, there is no regulation to accept an alien word. He is the rule-maker in this regard. Earlier to this, that is before the sixth century B.C., no foreign word has infiltrated into Tamil. Up to that, it was a pure Tamil era.

In the indeclinables or attributes, Tholkappiar enumerates 124 words with their meanings. These are words selective in nature applied in poems of that age. The thesaurus in poetic forms called 'the Nigandu' and dictionaries had been developed in a later age.

The above said four kinds of words and the list of attributes are all intended for verse-making.

#### The Formation of Phrases

Six types of elliptical phrases are grammaticised by Tholkappiar. They are:

- a) An appositional compound with adjectival relation to a noun (பண்புத்தொகை).
- b) An elliptical compound with a verbal root (வினைத்தொகை).
- c) An elliptical compound with a conjunctive particle (உம்மைத்தொகை).
- d) An elliptical compound with a sign of comparison.
- e) A compound with the case marker elliptical.
- f) An elliptical compound based on one of the above said compounds used figuratively.

All these elliptical phrases are widely used in writing and spoken usages.

#### 3. Porul Athikaram - A Chapter on the Content and Form

The third chapter, 'Porul Athikaram' denotes the subject matter and formative techniques of a poem. The



verse-making skill and the subtle way of expression are elucidated in a grammatical form. The subject matter and the forms had been there long before Tholkappiar, and endorsing them adds more new components. This Porul Athikaram is a remarkable part of this grammatical work. It speaks more of the content of poetry, and it is really quintessence of the interior and exterior life of ancient Tamils. By this, Tholkappiar has built up a monumental edifice which has placed him on the acme of world-known grammarians.

In Porul Athikaram, the two major divisions called the Ahaththinai (subject matter dealing with the divine love and family life) and Puraththinai (subject matter dealing with the heroism, munificence, honour, friendship and other external characteristic features) are dealt with grammatically. Such a division is not a characteristic grammatical feature in other languages. The grammar in other languages deals only with the physical features of the languages, starting from the alphabets and ending with the formation of sentences and poetic components. The 'Thinai' means the virtue or character is special and most important component of poetics is an unfound ingredient in other classical languages.

The love affair between the hero and heroine is not considered to be a sudden breakout but an ardent command of fate and the two lovers meet this command in all their births. The clandestine love meet is only a supportive fact or to the fate due to them.

"To integrate and disintegrate, the fate that occurs in all births makes to meet the hero and heroine."

So the same pair continues to be the husband and wife in all births, it is believed.

The love affair happens in all the four lands, the 'Mullai' (woods and their surroundings), 'Kurinji' (hills and their surroundings), 'Marutham' (Agro tracts and their surroundings), 'Neythal' (The seas and their surroundings), 'Palai' (the desert) is not a division of land in Tamil Nadu. But the Kurinji (hills) and Mullai (woods) turn to be a desert in the summer region. All these five divisions with their flora and fauna, changing seasons, days and nights, the rhythm of music, the profession of the people all altogether called 'அன்பின் ஐந்திணை' (The five walks of love life).

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A love poem or Ahaththinai poem should be only in the utterance of the character, the hero, heroine, maid mother, or others. The poet does not have the right to make a direct utterance about the love episode.

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The above said five geographical divisions with their environmental factors are accustomed to five different mental moods or attitudes and they are as below:

- Mullai - Lovers waiting for the union
- Kurinji - The union of lovers
- Marutham - The sulking of lovers
- Neythal - The pitiful mood
- Palai - The separation

Each and every 'Thinai' the way of life has its own appropriate season and duration in days and nights. Each land is accustomed to worship a particular God as followed by convention. The Mullai people worship Mayon, Kurinji people Muruga, Marutham people Indra and the Neythal people Varuna.

A love poem or Ahaththinai poem should be only in the utterance of the character, the hero, heroine, maid mother, or others. The poet does not have the right to make a direct utterance about the love episode. This kind of dramatic expression is fully maintained in all Sangam love poems.

The love poems used to employ two kinds of technical skills, which are called as உள்நுழை (the imbibed simile) and the இறைச்சி (the suggestion in-depth) which are celebrated by many critics. These are more than the 'dhvani' theory. In these two, the former one—the ullurai is based on flora and fauna of the land concerned. The lotus flower, the lily, the jasmine, the dog, the cow, the tiger, the bear, the elephant, the crab, the crocodile, bee, fish, shark, the mango fruit, jack fruit, plantain, sugarcane, bamboo and such so many other things have been symbolised to denote the qualities of the characters. The loveliness, grace, sympathy, hatred, cruelty, anger, and such, are all symbolically illustrated. The suggestion in-depth is more subtle and could be perceived by people of good talent and accustomed to peep through the text available. Here, there may not be even a simile. These two techniques are hallmarks of ancient love poetry not found elsewhere.

In one subdivision called Meyppattial (the expression of the eight types of inner feelings) which are called the Rasas are being dealt with extensively by Tholkappiar. Here, the variety of feelings, uncontrollably coming out of human beings. The smiling, weeping, disgusting, astonishing, fearing, conceiting, angering and delighting are the eight exhaled inspirations depicted excellently by Tholkappiar. Very minutely expressed thrill and ecstasy between lovers are portrayed in the aphorisms in a wonderful way. Samples of such accounts are as follows:

Willing for a union, perspiring in the forehead,  
Concealing the smile, containing the mind's spoil,  
are the four manifestations of a heroine as a first measure.



Starting from the scale of measuring the sound of a letter called 'Mathirai' (winking of eyes and snapping of fingers), the letter, syllable, metre, foot, structure, convention, the rhythm, binding view, variety of verses, enumeration of foot, convention, the way of life, utterance, hearer, place of action, time, use, inspiration, remainder, intention, subject, subdivisions, connectivity and cadence, all these twenty-six constituents and the eight beautifying elements all put together the thirty-four are enlisted and described as the constituents of poetry.

Spreading the tresses, removing the ear stud,  
Rubbing of ornaments, re-dressing  
the dressing are the four manifestations of a heroine  
as a second measure.  
In this way, the descriptions of divine inspirations go.

In the subdivision of poetics, the art of verse-making its form and content are given in a grand style. The various constituents of a verse are described, and the regulations of poetry elaborately framed. Starting from the scale of measuring the sound of a letter called 'Mathirai' (winking of eyes and snapping of fingers), the letter, syllable, metre, foot, structure, convention, the rhythm, binding view, variety of verses, enumeration of foot, convention, the way of life, utterance, hearer, place of action, time, use, inspiration, remainder, intention, subject, subdivisions, connectivity and cadence, all these twenty-six constituents and the eight beautifying elements all put together the thirty-four are enlisted and described as the constituents of poetry.

There is one subdivision called 'மரபியல்' in Tholkappiam, which enumerate the genealogical factors and the traditional denotations of flora and fauna. Tholkappiar points out the evolutionary development of six senses in the living beings.

The first sense is of bodily realising.

The second one with that is of the tongue.

The third one with them is of the nose.

The fourth one with them is of the eye.

The fifth one with them is of the ear.

The sixth with them is of the mind.

So devised, the well realised.

Such a theory of senses, Tholkappiar says, are all ancient ones, prevailing among the Tamils. The greens and trees are of single sense; the snails and shells are of two senses; the termites and ants are of three senses; the grab and the bee are of four senses; the animals and birds

are of five senses; the human beings are of six senses. The various stages of the flora-the budding, flowering, withering, decaying, and their names in that stage are stated. The names of various off-springs or young ones of the fauna are also stated. In short, this part of this work is actually grammaticising the scientific factors found in the usage of ancient Tamils.

To summarise, Tholkappiam - an age-old Tamil grammar has many singularities such as,

1. A grammar of spoken and written tongue.
2. A grammar that has recorded the past expertise of grammatical traditions.
3. A grammar in which the 'Porulathikaram' the two folded walks of life, the Aham and Puram.
4. A grammar not only deals with the usage of language but also speaks of the cultural history and the geographical and environmental studies of ancient Tamil land, the psychological contemplations and metaphysical quests of the ancient Tamil people and above all the verse making techniques of age old Tamil tradition.

The Tamils are fortunate to recover Tholkappiam intact without any loss which has escaped from huge deluges that usurped many valuable works of their glorious ancestors. □

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## LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

# Evolution of Indian Literature

*Dr K Sreenivasarao*

Indian literature always had its own, unique style from the beginning. The number of languages, language families and dialects in the country is mind-boggling. These thousand plus languages and dialects provided perfect platform for people to outpour their thoughts, feelings and imaginations and the result is one eclectic mix of finest literary creation. One hallmark of Indian literature over the past 3000 years or so is diversity. One will be surprised to see the variety of works of literature that have been produced in the sub-continent.

**I**ndia is a land of literature. It has always been so since times immemorial. When one takes stock of the history of human societies and civilisations, this is one area where India will be on top by some distance over other civilisations and societies. One hallmark of Indian literature over the past 3000 years or so is diversity. One will be surprised to see the variety of works of literature that have been produced in the sub-continent. The key to this diversity is the linguistic density of the Indian sub-continent and the willingness to absorb all wonderful things from any language or culture that people came across.

The number of languages, language families and dialects in the country is mind-boggling. These thousand plus languages and dialects provided a perfect platform for

people to outpour their thoughts, feelings and imaginations and the result is one eclectic mix of finest literary creations. That each person was able to produce one's own literary creation without paying much attention to any formal classification led to a rich and dense collection of literature in each language.

The second just referred to above can be easily gleaned from the Persian literary texts produced in the sub-continent. In fact, during the medieval period, the amount of Persian literature produced in the sub-continent would easily far exceed that which was produced in Persia itself.

Much before civilisation dawned on many parts of the world, Indians were dabbling in and producing literature in a variety of genres. This early head start gave

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distinct advantage for Indian litterateurs as and when new genres popularised elsewhere in the world came to India. They simply grabbed them with both hands. This is because the foundation, the root was already firm, that is, the diversity of genres and the ability to pick up new ones. Today, people around the world are wondering how the Indians are doing so well in social media.

Brevity is in the genes of the Indians. This is the land that gave birth to varieties of Sutra literature, Thirukkural, Dohas, to name a few. So, it is no surprise that Indians are excelling in the cryptic expressions. They are not doing anything new but extending the traditions that is already there for thousands of years.

But how it all evolved? Hence the title is very fascinating.

In the initial days, there were no hard and fast rules and hence no separation between singing, poetry, dance, philosophy etc. What one will discover is that the Kavis (in the early days, the term was used to denote seers and later it was restricted to poets) outpouring most astonishing

poetry and music (as in Sama Veda), highest philosophy (as in Rig Veda) etc.

It is not with one language alone. If all these were happening on the northern plain, exotic poetry and grammar were being developed in Southern regions as well, in Tamil. Thus, we see early Sangam poetry that not only reflects

the poet's thoughts and emotions but also provide a large number of clues to the highly civilised society that was in existence at that time.

If Bharata produced Natya Sastra in the north, we see Tholkappiar producing astounding exposition of not only grammar but also plenty of societal rules.

Again, it is not as if literature in India was being produced only in these two languages. Plenty of oral traditions

were flourishing across the land and the songs, tales, proverbs, legends, etc. continue till date from that time in all the languages.

From the earliest time to commencement of medieval period, the majority of the literature of India was predominantly oral and poetry and play dominated

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**Much before civilisation dawned on many parts of the world, Indians were dabbling in and producing literature in a variety of genres. This early head start gave distinct advantage for Indian litterateurs as and when new genres popularised elsewhere in the world came to India.**

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the scene. The prose was there, but poetry dominated. As the genres began to widen, and literature started covering technology, astronomy, agriculture, governance etc., prose literature gained prominence. Again, as the number of languages gained writing systems, grammar, etc., the written literature slowly gathered pace and gained prominence over oral literature.

Still, oral literature was dominant. Given the vast number of languages and dialects of the land and strong root of oral traditions, this is not surprising. The emergence of a variety of literature in a large number of languages during the medieval period and almost on all the subjects of human endeavour marks the medieval period as Golden One for India.

That is in stark contrast with Europe and the West where medieval period is referred to as Dark Ages. Religious literature, Scientific Literature, Economic Literature, Political Science, Poetry, Drama, Stories and every allied field gained prominence in India during this period.

Today, oral and tribal traditions of the country is looked down upon but one should well remember that it was a slow process from oral to writing tradition that literature evolved here.

With writing system getting fresh face over from time to time, with printing press arriving, Indian literature never looked back. With education opening up for all, the number of authors, the number of books increased exponentially.

But, before coming to the modern and contemporary literary scenario, one needs to look at translation. When



11<sup>th</sup> century Shilahara Copper plate  
Devanagari script inscription in  
Sanskrit, Maharashtra

the range of translation is talked about. Bible translations are mentioned as much of it happened in the past 300 years or so.

Much before that, for close to 1000 years at least, India has been translating freely. True to the spirit of the term 'Anuvad', most of the classics were adapted into each region and language, to suit the local cultural milieu.

These were not literal translations per se but not the butchering of the original texts. So, Epics of India, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata were among the most adapted works in the sub-continent.

Many religious classics and other texts were adapted and integrated into the local cultural milieu. This is one of the main reasons why there is a commonality of culture or a thread of common culture despite vast divergence among the cultural, linguistic and literary traditions of India.

This aspect, function and role of translation is not merely the hallmark or cornerstone of the evolution of Indian literature but of Indian culture itself. This aspect has been highly underrated and even downplayed not only outside the sub-continent but in India. That is sad given the multilingual and multicultural nature of Indian civilisation from the beginning.

Coming to modern times, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century many writers across the languages tried to emulate their Western counterparts, especially when it came to stories and novels. That is no surprise given the amount of success these two genres had in the West. The same period





and up to 1947 saw the emergence of a unique type of literature – independence literature. Almost all the genres, especially prose and poetry writings, focused more or less on patriotic fervour.

In the first two decades after the Indian independence, when the country was coming to terms with the development and modernity, many poems, stories, novels and plays in many languages focused on the rural landscape, bringing out the travails of agrarian societies. Exceptions were there, but predominantly, this was the mood.

Then came the phase in which Indian literature evolved into something new. For the next three decades came the stories and novels highlighting new problems that society faced – labour unsettling, problems faced by women going for jobs, urban legends and so on. In fact, this period also witnessed the evolution of Indian cinema and many were inspired by the stories and novels.

In the contemporary scenario, many new genres and sub-genres have come into existence–Fantasy, Science Fiction, Flash Fiction, Mythology in a new avatar, Instagram poetry etc.

Rapidly advancing technology and the digital world have reduced the gap between the author and the reader. In fact, it has encouraged many youngsters to take up literature in a serious way. Self-publication and digital platforms have also helped in this cause.

Voices expressing concern over the quality of the new sub-genres are there, but my guess is it will all even out in the coming years and there is not much to worry about. Indian literature has always found newer ways of reinventing itself despite minor hiccups on the way. I am sure Indian literature will shine brightly in the coming decades and centuries.



However, what is bound to gladden one and all is the emergence of children's literature in various ways. While poetry publishing is going down, more and more publishers are taking up children's literature. That India is a very young country in the sense that most of the population is young and is helping.

Even in this genre, translation from one language to other languages is also heart-warming. No doubt, roaring success of Harry Potter and other literature oriented towards young readers in the West and the subsequent success of translations have also aided this admirably.

**Many religious classics and other texts were adapted and integrated into local cultural milieu. This is one of the main reasons why there is a commonality of culture or a thread of common culture despite vast divergence among the cultural, linguistic and literary traditions of India.**

Indian literature always had its own, unique style from the beginning. Contrary to the popular perception twenty years ago, Indian literature did not go the Western way and taking up of Mythology in a significant way in many languages and presenting the same to suit the sensibilities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is one example.

Whether novels or stories or poems or plays, Indian literature is going very strong. The process might have been slower than the expectation but there is a saying that 'slow and steady wins the race.' There is a reason for that. □





# India and the World

*Dr Nishat Zaidi*

How do we conceive of Indian Literature(s) in an increasingly globalised world where flows of capital, technology, people, information, and ideas (Appadurai, 1996) have rendered identity rhizomatic rather than rooted, where 'errantry' (Glissant, 1997) is the order of the day, where transnational pulls have already divested the nation of their control over identity production? Do Indian Literatures merit a place in world literature? What can the epistemic frame of Weltliteratur draw from literatures produced in Indian languages with multiple "contact zones" (Pratt: 1991:34)

**I**ndian Literature(s) being multilingual, multi-regional, and multicultural, are also pluriversal in their outlook and world-making. Defined and determined by plurality, comparativism, translation, and multilingualism (Rosella Ciocca and Neelam Shrivastava, 2017), I would like to argue that they are in a position to provide their own model to the world literature (Trivedi, 2007, 125-127; Sujeet Mukherjee, 1981) that may decolonise world literature, otherwise a field largely hegemonised by the anglophone West. I will do so by foregrounding four salient features of Indian Literatures in contemporary times undergirding their proximity to world

literature, i.e. multilingualism, translation, comparativism, and their straddling between global and local concerns.

David Damrosch argues that "world literature is an ever-changing set of literary works which are absorbed from one 'national tradition' to another.... works become world literature by being received into the space of a foreign culture, a space defined in many ways by the host culture's national tradition and the present needs of its own writers." (Damrosch, 2003) However, critics from the various non-western origins have discerned the imperial, neo-colonial West-centric agenda of world literature that promotes 'border regimes' by its privileging of Euro-American



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theoretical frameworks and Anglophone writings. (Aamir Mufti, 2016; Revathy Krishnaswamy, 2010).

Indeed, English in India has claimed a space alongside, even encompassing the vernacular Indian tongues, asserting its ability to articulate local moorings, angsts and desires. Yes, literatures in different Indian languages draw as much from each other and their textures of location, myths and oral traditions, as they do from their interaction with the Anglophone West. In fact, English writings in India draw from local textures of everyday life as much as the Bhasha literatures draw from the modernist agenda of colonial regimes, and their interaction with English under the spectre of the colonial education system and colonial modernity. The genre of novel in India, for instance, was first tried in Bhashas – Malayalam, Odia, Marathi, Bengali – and only later in English. Considering that Bhashas were a “site of significant projects of reform and dissent” during the colonial times, to assume that literatures in English speak of global concerns whereas literatures in Indian languages is concentrated on local concerns, cultural roots and narrow social views is a fallacy. Fallacies like these have led scholars like Salman Rushdie to make his tendentious claim that “prose writing - both fiction and non-fiction - created in this period by Indian writers working in English, is proving to be a stronger and more important body of work than most of what has been produced in the 16 “official languages” of India, the so-called “vernacular languages”, during the same time; and, indeed, this new, and still burgeoning, “Indo-Anglian” literature represents perhaps the most valuable contribution India has yet made to the world of books.” (Rushdie, 1996)

Multilingualism is the defining marker of the literary landscape of India, possibly in more pluriversal and cosmopolitan ways than what the world literature can only aspire for. Most Indian writers are bilingual or multilingual. Many keep moving between English and Bhasha such as Michael Madhusadan Dutt, Henry L. Derozio, Toru Dutt, Krupabai Sathianadan, Rabindranath Tagore, Ahmad Ali, Girish Karnad, Arvind Adiga and a host of others. Kiran Nagarkar wrote his first novel, *Saat Sakkam Trechalis* (*Seven Sixes Forty-Three*, 1974) in Marathi, and only later did he switch to English. Qurratulain Hyder translated her works, including her eponymous Urdu novel *Aag ka darya* into English herself. The linguistic choices made by writers reflect their involvement in the multilayered sensibilities at work in the polyglot cultural universe to which they belonged. Ahmed Ali mediated in literary debates in Urdu literary sphere

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as much as he did in the English literary sphere in India. Raja Rao simultaneously wrote in Kannada and French along with English. Not only this, writers who wrote in more than one Indian language were also not free from these ambivalences. Premchand, for instance, while writing his works in Urdu and Hindi responded to multiple social sensibilities in different registers in his writings.

The monolithic view of Indian literature perpetrated under the sign of colonial regime already stands challenged in the post-colonial times. There is a consensus among the scholars that even the ‘so called’ regional literature is plural in its orientations and language use. Hence, comparatist paradigms that deem literary tradition of each language as a unified whole have been found to be wanting in discerning several entangled, divergent and double-voiced discourses in Bhasha literature. Critical realism tinged with the parodic voice of the Odia writer Fakir Mohan Senapati (1843-1918) or the subversive cosmopolitanism of the Malayalam writer

Vaikom Muhammad Basheer (1928-1994), the satirical tone of the Hindi writer Shrilal Shukla, or the bleak wry humour of Manto require a transversal, dialogical approach to bring out the layers of subtexts embedded in these writings. We need new paradigms to define the literary in the contexts of these writers who do not lend themselves easily to any imported conceptual paradigm.

Multilingualism leads to the centrality of translation for Indian literature as in the case of world literature. One of the oldest classics in Malayalam, *Chemmeen*, was one of the first South Indian novels to be translated





and find acclaim. Several Sanskrit and Prakrit texts of poetry are being picked up for translation by the leading poets and translators. Arvind Krishna Mehrotra's *The Absent Traveller* (1991) is the translation of Prakrit languages poetry into English while more recently, Gopal Krishna Gandhi's translation of Tiruvalluvar's *Tirakkural* (2019) confirms Indian English poets' and writers' increasing interest in the vast treasures of Bhasha literature. Gone are the days when only literary masters like Tagore and Premchand were taken up for translation while a large body of complex literature from the South, North East, and tribal societies was undermined and largely went unnoticed. The vast popularity of translated works like *Samskara* by UR Ananthamurthy, the plays of Girish Karnad, Malayalam writers OV Vijayan, and Basheer are cases in point.

Bhasha literature now bags awards outside of India too and literary "snobbery" of the English-speaking Indians is no longer rampant (Nilanjana Roy, 2016). The earlier held view of the untranslatability of local textures of Bhasha literature is also fast receding. A case in point is Srinath Perur's English translation of Vivek Shanbhag's Kannada novel *Ghachar Ghochar*, recently published in the US. It made it to the New York Times list of recommended books in

2017. Even Indian English writers are alert to indigenous literary traditions. Booker-winning author Aravind Adiga for instance, draws heavily from his reading of Kannada literature and his works, especially his *Between the Assassinations* (2009) has distinct regional overtones, just as the case with the writings of Amit Chaudhury, Pankaj Mishra, Anuja Chauhan and others. Other examples in the series are Charu Nivedita's *Zero Degree* or *The Blast Book of Tamil Pulp Fiction*. These writers and writings have fostered a space where the polarities of English and the bhashas, or the global and local have been obliterated.

Indian literature over the years have exposed the limitations of the universal claims of Western epistemology by marshalling knowledges which are polyglot and porous, and where the local and global are not necessarily in conflict.

Who can deny the global concerns in writings of so many Malayalam, Marathi, Kannada, Hindi and Urdu writers? Moving beyond the "historically situated knowledges," Indian literatures in the recent past have paved the way for "open-minded, cross-cultural" (Revathy Krishnaswamy, 144) possibilities of knowledges. The emerging alterities of Dalit writing, tribal writings and women's voices have contested the unitary ideas of identity, culture and nation. Polyglossic

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modernity is further accentuated by the Dalit feminist writers like Bama, Meena Kandaswamy, P Sivakami, and Urmila Pawar, who destabilise narratives of homogenous Indian feminism. Krishna Sobti's polyphonic novels, translated into many languages, advance questions surrounding gendered concept of the nation. The works of Amitav Ghosh, Arundhati Roy and Mahasweta Devi have problematised the idea of universal environmentalism by foregrounding the indigenous and tribal people's resistance to the forces of neoliberalism. Writers like Vijaydan Detha, Heisnam Kanhailal bring to bear folkloric sensibilities upon modern literature.

In the post-liberalisation Indian economy, the diaspora is no longer a movement from east to west, from struggle to opportunity, from bondage to freedom in search of better opportunities as evidenced by the return movements of writers like Chetan Bhagat and Aravind Adiga. Diaspora is also not a space singularly populated by Anglophone writers of Indian origins. The latest example is Hindi writer Praveen Kumar Jha settled in Norway whose Hindi novel *Coolie Lines* (2019) explores the lives of indentured labours.

Even in terms of book publishing, most international publishers are moving into Indian language publishing and opening their offices in India. Once upon a time, Indian English writers travelled to England just to get their works

Even in terms of book publishing, most international publishers are moving into Indian language publishing and opening their offices in India. Once upon a time, Indian English writers travelled to England just to get their works published there.

published there. Now, Anglophone novelists such as Anuja Chauhan, Chetan Bhagat, and Amish Tripathi do not care about publishing their books outside of India. Both English language translations and Anglophone writings have gained the confidence to dispense with elaborate glossaries explaining cultural markers to a western reader. In other words, the myth of cosmopolitanism of English as opposed to the parochialism of Indian languages has largely dissolved.

These new literary iterations fostered by changed social and cultural dynamics and prodded by the changing and complex relationship between English and the Bhashas in the twenty-first century India have transformed the scenario of Indian literature(s), which is now hoisted upon frames of globalisation, entrenched in every day and the banal and equipped with complex archives of memory. Harnessing the varied and even ambivalent aspirational realms, looking outward but feeling inward, the Indian literatures are positioned at the intersection of regional, national and transnational networks. In their polyphony and pluriversalism, they offer us a template for the decolonial conceptualisation of world literature by inviting us to "unlearn our deeply ingrained prejudices" (Bhatnagar and Kaur, n.p.) and herald new ways of thinking. □

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# Urdu Language and Literature

Hasan Zia

Urdu is an important Indian language which is included in the eighth schedule of the Indian Constitution. Spread across the country, it has a rich literary heritage. Urdu literature, particularly, its poetry, continue to evoke interest among the readers and lovers of art and literature around the globe. As language speakers are spread across different parts of the world, Urdu can hope for a wider and deeper engagement with the people through the avenues of social media in a borderless world.

**U**rdu is an Indo-Aryan language which is a comparatively younger member of the great fraternity of Indian languages. It has rightly been said that languages are not born; they evolve over the years. Linguists and literary historians are not of one opinion and have different viewpoints as to how and where the process of evolution of the Urdu language began but there seems to be a broad agreement that it began taking shape around 10<sup>th</sup> century in areas surrounding Delhi and was the result of the admixture of *Shauraseni Apabhhransh*, *Khariboli* and *Brij Bhasha* with Persian, Arabic and Turkish words. In the earlier period, the language was also referred to as Hindi, Hindvi and Rekhta before it finally came to be called by the name Urdu around 18<sup>th</sup> century.

As Urdu was evolving, it was looked down upon by the then ruling elite for writing and literature and was

perceived as common people's language as opposed to the court language, Persian. However, the Urdu words had started making their way into the sayings and poetic works of Nizamuddin Aulia (1238-1325), Amir Khusro (1253-1325), Baba Farid (1173-1266), Namdev (1270-1350), Kabir (1398-1448) and Guru Nanak (1469-1539). Urdu shares with Hindi a similarity in phonology and grammar. Urdu and Hindi sounds are the same except for minor variations.

The *Khanqahs* (hospices) and *Dargahs* of Sufi saints like Nizamuddin Aulia, which was located in Delhi on the banks of river Yamuna (behind Humayun's mausoleum) became hubs of inter-religious and inter-regional interaction which also helped in the evolution of a composite language like Urdu. These places threw their doors open to one and all, irrespective of caste, creed, faith and religion. From Baba Farid (1173-1266) to Sheikh Bu Ali Shah Qalandar Panipati (1209-1324),



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names of numerous such saints can be mentioned. People came to seek spiritual solace in the company of saints. From the linguistic point of view, it was a unique process of the intermingling of varied visitors from far and near which helped in the evolution of Urdu language. Unlike the court language Persian, Sufi saints interacted in the commoners' language. From the North, Urdu travelled to places like Daulatabad, Gulbarga, Golconda etc., in Deccan after the 14<sup>th</sup> Century or so. Unlike the Delhi Sultanate, the newly formed kingdoms in the Deccan patronised the Urdu language and poetic works started making their appearance on the literary scene.

Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah (1565-1612), the ruler of Golconda himself composed poetry in Telugu, Persian and Urdu. Like many other languages, in the case of Urdu too, the development of poetry preceded that of prose. We find a collection of poetry by Wali Dakhani which was brought to Delhi in 1700 but works of prose came to the fore much later as Persian continued to be used as a medium of scholarly expression.

An iconic, extraordinary talented and multi-faceted figure in the cultural history of the Indian subcontinent was Amir Khusro. He was a soldier, courtier, mystic, poet, philosopher, musician and singer, all rolled into

one. Amir Khusro wrote beautiful poetry which paved the way for the future poetic journey of the Urdu language. Sample this:

*Gori sowe sej pe, mukh pe dare kes  
Chal Khusro ghar apne bhor baheen chahun des*

(Beauty is resting on the bed, face covered with long hair/ Hurry O Khusro homeward for the night has engulfed all the four corners.)

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Urdu language and literature touched its peak in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It was preceded by the educational and social reform movement of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (1817-1898) who founded the MAO College at Aligarh in 1877. Sir Syed advocated purposive and socially-relevant literature and journalism and scientific outlook and temper. He rejected the idea of literary works being confined to dealing with love and beauty and wild imagination. The Aligarh School inspired poets and writers like Altaf Hussain Hali (1837-1914) to write educative and reformist poetry. It added to the standards of

scholarship, objectivity, clarity of expression in prose and insisted on empirical approach.

A significant milestone in Urdu literature was the launch of the progressive movement in literature with



Baba Farid



Mir Taqi Mir



Bahadur Shah Zafar



Jigar Moradabadi



Mulk Raj Anand





Md. Quli Qutb Shah

Md. Ibrahim Zauq

Mirza Ghalib

Brij Narayan Chakrabarti

Mulk Raj Anand and Sajjad Zaheer in 1935, who were in London at that time. At the first All India Progressive Writers conference held at Lucknow in 1936 and presided by Munshi Premchand, it was made clear that the canons of appreciating beauty have to be changed. Literature cannot exist in an imaginary world with so many people around us suffering. Their struggle should also be reflected in contemporary literature. Later, the progressives were accused of ideological extremism and making literature a tool of communist propaganda. The strong reaction to their "propaganda" literature came in the form of a modernist trend. In the 1960s, the opposition to the progressive movement started picking up. However, there is no denying that the progressive movement drew our attention to the harsh realities of life. Realism brought literature closer to life.

that we find an echo of our sentiments in an Urdu verse. The first recorded collection of poetry is attributed to Wali Dakhani (1667-1707). In the north, Delhi becomes the hub of Urdu poets like Khan Arzoo (1687-1756), Hatim (1699-1791) and Mirza Mazhar Jan-e-Janaan (1699-1781). In the eighteenth century, Urdu poetry touched new heights with the arrival of Mir Taqi Mir (1723-1810) on the literary horizon. Mir is said to have captured a phase of the melancholy and the pathetic in a decaying society. As a literary historian and critic, at a time when society has slumped into utter decadence, Mir was a picture of grace, dignity and uprightness. He has sung the greatness of the man, thus:

*Mat sahal hume jano, Phirta hai falak barson  
Tab khaak ke parde se, Insaan niklate hain*

(Do not consider us to be men of easy attainment/ The skies revolve for years before a man emerges out of the earth's womb.)

The notable poets of the 18<sup>th</sup> century are: Sauda (1713-1781), Mir Dard (1720-1785), Qaim Chandpuri (1722-1793), Insha (1752-1817), Qalandar Baksh Jurat (1748-1809) and Mashafi Ghulam Hamdani (1751-1824).

A unique poet in the history of Urdu literature is Nazeer Akbarabadi (1740-1830) who digresses from contemporary traditional poetry dealing with love and

After the two world wars during 1914-17 and 1942-45, the grip of colonialism started weakening as the freedom movements across Asia and Africa gained momentum. Ultimately, new nations emerged with new aspirations and hopes. As India's freedom struggle intensified in the early twentieth century, many poets and writers took to patriotic writing and jumped wholeheartedly into the freedom struggle. In the later period, the sharp ideological divide in literature lessened and many writers felt they could not pen their thoughts with ideological commitments becoming an albatross around their neck. The post-modernist period and then the present age threw new topics for literary expression ever.

Following is the brief outline of the major works in some important literary genres.

### Urdu Poetry

Poetry is the most popular genre of Urdu literature. The subtle effectiveness of its expression has a unique ability to convey the message in such a way



beauty, and concerns himself with the affairs of the mundane. He was a mystic. Krishna and Mahadeo, Nanak and Narsi Bhagat find a mention in his poems. His famous poem, *Sab thaat pada rehjavega jab laad chalega banjara* (All the comforts of life are left behind when the last time comes and the nomad packs up his belongings).

The nineteenth century is considered to be a golden period of



Urdu literature. It produced poets like Zauq (1790-1854), Bahadur Shah Zafar (1775-1862), Momin (1800-1851) and Ghalib (1797-1869). Ghalib is considered to be a great Urdu poet who added wit and intellect to the emotions and sensitivities of poetic expression. He tells us how he overcame sorrow.

*Ranj se khugar hua insaan to mit  
jaata hai ranj / Mushkilen mujh par  
padi itni ke aasan ho gayen*

(Sorrow ceased to be painful when  
one got used to it / Countless as my trials were, I learn to  
face them with courage.)

The tone and tenor of Urdu poetry changes as it enters a new age i.e., the twentieth century. Poets like Brij Narayan Chakbast (1882-1926), Iqbal (1876-1938), Fani Badayuni (1879-1961), Jigar Moradabadi (1890-1960), Josh Malihabadi (1898-1982), Raghupati Sahay Firaq Gorakhpuri (1896-1982) and Anand Narain Mulla (1901-1997) reflected the sensibilities of the time. The progressive poetry of Majaz (1911-1955), Majrooh Sultanpuri (1919-2000), Makhdoom Mohiuddin (1908-1969), Sahir Ludhianvi (1921-1980) and Ali Sardar Jafri (1913-2000) gave vent to the workers' struggle and the plight of the downtrodden. Even their romantic poetry reflects concerns about the state of the poor and have-nots.

Urdu poetry continues to be the most popular genre of literature. *Mushairas* (poetic gatherings) have packed halls and auditoria where avid lovers of Urdu poetry listen to their favourite poets in rapt attention. Poets like Kunwar Mohinder Singh Bedi (1909-1998), Khumar Barabankvi (1919-1999), Shamim Jaipuri (d. 2003) and later Bashir Badr (b.1935) became popular poets.

### Urdu Prose

We find the first recorded pieces of Urdu prose in Deccani Urdu around the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The earlier prose is mostly the teachings of the Sufi saints to their disciples. The first significant work of literary prose is "*Sabras*" by Wajhi

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in 1635. The prose writing continued in Deccan. In the North, *Karhal Katha* is considered to be the first piece of prose written in 1731.

After winning the Battle of Plassey in 1757, the East India Company tightened its hold on the administration of India. It got the rights to collect revenue in Bengal and Bihar. This made the interactions of the British officials with the common people a functional requirement. This was not

possible without the British officials knowing the local languages. To teach them Indian languages like Hindi and Urdu, the Governor General of British India, Lord Wellesley established the Fort William College at Kolkata in July 1800. The college appointed Dr. John Gilchrist as Head of the Indian languages department. Writers were commissioned to prepare the textbooks/reading material for the British officers. The writers included Mir Amman (1748-1806), Syed Haideri (1768-1823), Beni Narain, Lallu Lal (1763-1835) etc. Though the college was shut in 1854 due to the shortage of funds, the books prepared here proved a landmark in the evolution of simple Urdu prose devoid of any superfluous or flowery language. Later, the Aligarh College's influence lent simplicity and purpose to prose.

The Urdu novel traces its roots in *Dastaan* or long fairytales. However, novelists like Nazeer Ahmad (1836-1912) were first to deal with themes of quotidian life. Prominent novelists include Ratan Nath Dhar Sarshar (1846-1903), Sharar (1860-1926) and Mirza Hadi Ruswa (1857-1931) who wrote the famous novel *Umrao Jaan Ada*. The turning point in Urdu fiction came with the arrival of Munshi Premchand (1880-1936) on the literary horizon. Premchand articulated the concerns of the poor, oppressed and the suffering masses. His simple language and straightforward style transformed the contours of fiction writing. Writers like Sajjad Zaheer (1904-1973), Krishan Chander (1912-1977), Ismat



Vintage Indian Painting - Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya  
With His Student Amir Khusro - Deccan Art



Sir Syed Ahmed Khan



Sahir Ludhianvi



Chughtai (1915-1991) and Rajinder Singh Bedi (1915-1984) were social realists who exposed society's decay and falsehood. Qurratun Hyder (1927-2007) was a novelist of extraordinary creativity with a deep sense of history and culture. Her autobiographical novel *Kar-e-Jahan Daraz Hai* was serialised by the monthly *Ajkal* (Urdu), Yojana's sister publication. She was awarded the Jnanpith award and the Padma Bhushan. Her works include *Aag ka Dariya*, *Gardish-e-Rang-e-Chaman* and *Chandni Begum*.

Other notable prose writers and essayists include Muhammad Hussain Azad (1830-1910), Mirza Farhatullah Baig (1883-1947), humourist-satirist Rasheed Ahmad Siddiqui (1894-1977) and Kanhaiyalal Kapoor (1910-1980), to name a few.

### Urdu Journalism

The first Urdu newspaper *Jam-i-Jahan Numa* was launched in Kolkata in 1822 by Harihar Dutta. He was the son of Tara Chand Dutta, an eminent Bengali journalist and founder of *Sambad Kaumudi*, a Bengal weekly. The first editor of *Jam-i-Jahan Numa* was Sada Sukhlal. Later, many Urdu newspapers made their presence felt like *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* (1937), *Awadh Akhbar* (1858), *Agra Akhbar* (1863), *Awadh Punch* (1877), *Paisa Akhbar* (1886). The editor of *Delhi Urdu Akhbar*, Mohammad Baqar was shot dead by a British government official Major William Hudson on September 16, 1857 for his involvement in the 1857 rebellion. He was the first Urdu journalist to sacrifice his life for the freedom struggle. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's (1888-1958) newspapers *Al-Hilal* and *Al-Balagh* and Mohammad Ali Jauhar's (1879-1931) papers *Comrade* and *Hamdard* took up the cudgels against the British rule.

After independence, Urdu newspapers continued to present news and views. Urdu newspapers and magazines continue to enjoy popularity among the readers. To meet the challenge of digitisation they have been coming with e-papers. During 2019-20, 6909 Urdu publications were registered with the Registrar of Newspapers for India.

### The National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language (NCPUL)

As far as government efforts in promoting the language are concerned, it would be worthy to note contribution of National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language (NCPUL). The NCPUL is an autonomous body under the Ministry of Education, Department of Secondary and Higher Education, Government of India. Established on April 1, 1996, the organisation was established to promote, develop and propagate the Urdu language. The National

The turning point in Urdu fiction came with the arrival of Munshi Premchand (1880-1936) on the literary horizon.

Premchand articulated the concerns of the poor, downtrodden and the suffering masses. His simple language and straightforward style transformed the contours of fiction writing.

Nodal Agency for the promotion of the Urdu language, NCPUL acts as the principal coordinator as well as the monitoring authority for promotion of Urdu language and learning.

Avenues employed by NCPUL for promotion of Urdu language include book publication, distance learning, vocational training, online courses and technical courses in Urdu medium. To connect the language with the knowledge of scientific and technological development, NCPUL offers technical courses like Computer Application, Business Accounting & Multilingual-DTP (CABA-MDTP) Course and Calligraphy and Graphic Design through approved agencies. Further, many state governments have also set up Urdu academies in their states to promote the language.

### Conclusion

Urdu is an important Indian language which is included in the eighth schedule of the Indian constitution. According to the 2011 Census of India, the total number of Urdu speakers are 5,07,72,631. Spread across the country, it has a rich literary heritage. Urdu literature, particularly its poetry, continues to evoke interest among the readers and lovers of art and literature worldwide.

In today's world, a language can find newer ways to connect with its speakers thanks to the advancement in technology. Rapid technological strides have completely transformed the lives. A recent western survey showed a declining trend for reading long texts among the youth. The fast pace of modern life has made leisurely ways a thing of the past. Computers, laptops and mobiles are the new writing tools replacing the old pen and paper. As more users shift to reading on digital devices and formats, the language and its script will also have to adapt to the same to reach its target readership. There is also a renewed interest in the publishing industry in the field of translated works of Indian languages enabling an exchange within literary traditions.

As language speakers are spread across different parts of the world, Urdu can hope for a wider and deeper engagement with the people through the avenues of social media in a borderless world. In the time to come, one can wish that literature would continue to be read and appreciated, as good literature has often been defined as one which rises above the barriers of time and space. □

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# Post-independence Hindi Literature

Manager Pandey

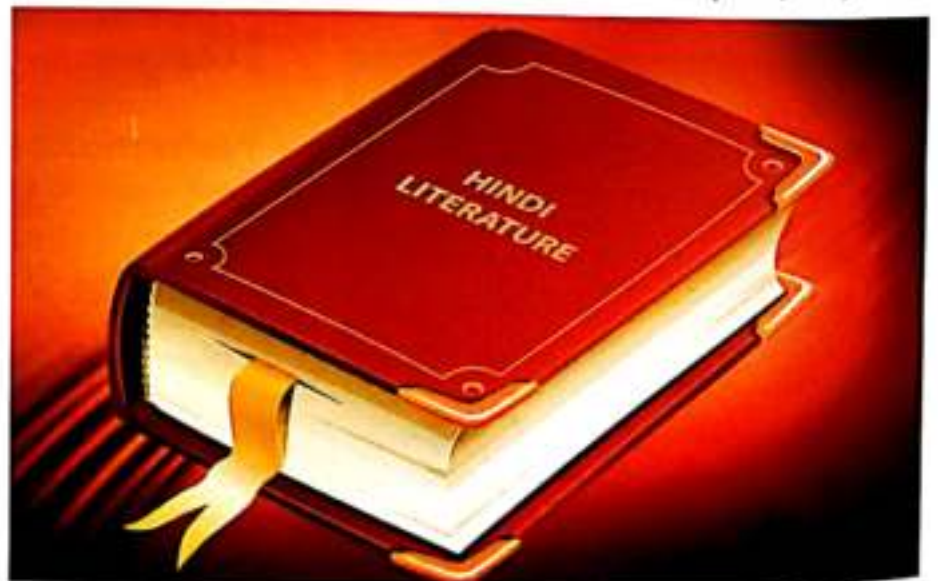


History of literature does not always mirror the history of society. Literature, sometimes, mirrors social-political changes, but sometimes, it also reflects the possibilities of social-political changes. Hindi literature did not take a turning point when India attained independence in 1947. Instead, the diverse creative trends, already existing in contemporary Hindi literature continued with minor variations.

**T**he freedom in 1947 brought along with it joy, enthusiasm and hopes, fraught with the sorrow of the tragic partition of the country. It was natural to be enthused at the prospect of freedom after a century-long struggle of the masses, but the joy was subdued by the tragedy of partition, displacement of lakhs of people, dreary communal violence and loss of lives. The martyrdom of Mahatma Gandhi within one year of independence was a traumatic event. This was also reflected in Hindi literature.

The violence and cruelty witnessed during the partition and subsequent communal riots put a deep scar on the psyche of the people. This sorrow was reflected in the writings of some Hindi writers. Agyeya is the most notable writer among them. He wrote 11 poems, from October 12, 1947 to November 12, 1947, on the tragedy of partition. He had written these poems in various cities of the Hindi-speaking belt of India. He also wrote some stories on the tragedy of partition. His book titled '*Sharnarthee*' (Refugees) published in 1948 contained these poems compiled under the same title and stories based on prevailing communal tension and violence of those times. Eminent Hindi poets – Nagarjun, Dinkar, Harivansh Rai Bachchan, Sohan Lal Dwivedi, Bhavani Prasad Mishra and others – expressed the angst and deep sense of sorrow due to partition in their poems.

Before independence, two prominent trends were prevalent in Hindi poetry. One of these was the progressive (*Pragatisheel*) poetry, patronised by poets like Nagarjun, Kedarnath Agarwal, Dinkar, Trilochan, Muktibodh and Shamsheer. The other stream was of the Experimentalist (*Prayogvaadee*) poetry, led by Agyeya. It started with *Taarsaptak* (1943) and *Doosra Saptak* (1951) – both

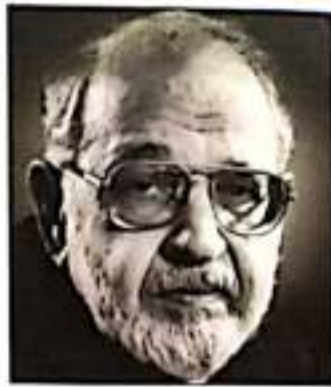


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Dinkar



Agyeya



Gajanan Madhav Muktibodh



Krishna Sobti

were collections of the poems of seven poets each. This stream was established as *Nai Kavita* (New Poetry).

In the post-independence prose genres of Hindi literature, these two trends are visible in the development of stories and novels. At one end, there were writers like Yashpal, Bhisham Sahni, Amarkant, Shekhar Joshi, Rahi Masoom Raza, Phanishwar Nath Renu, Nagarjun, Krishna Sobti, Mannu Bhandari, Kamleshwar and Upendranath Ashk; while Agyeya, Ilachandra Joshi, Jainendra, Nirmal Varma, Mohan Rakesh and others, were on the other.

Different literary movements flourished after independence in the realm of Hindi literature – from *Nai Kavita* (New Poetry) and *Nai Kahani* (New Story) to Progressive and *Janvadi* (People's) stories and poetry writing. Simultaneously, *Aanchlik* (literature reflecting dialectical-regional variations) literary trends in stories also flourished, prominently in the writings of Phanishwar Nath Renu, Nagarjun, Shivprasad Singh and others.

The decade of 1950 was the period of stability, development and diversity in Indian society and diversity, both in Indian literature and society. In the political arena,

India's constitution was adopted, followed by elections to the parliament and state assemblies. This paved the way for the establishment of democracy in India. New trends were evolving in Hindi literature, resulting in the movements of the 'New Story' and the 'New Poetry.' The *Saptak* tradition produced many new poets. The poems of these poets

opened new vistas of social realities, as well as of romanticism. The poetry of Shamsheer, Raghuvir Sahay, Sarveshwar Dayal Saxena, Bhawani Prasad Mishra and other poets can be seen in this context. The 'New Story', parallel to the 'New Poetry', was centred around the evolution of middle-class creativity.

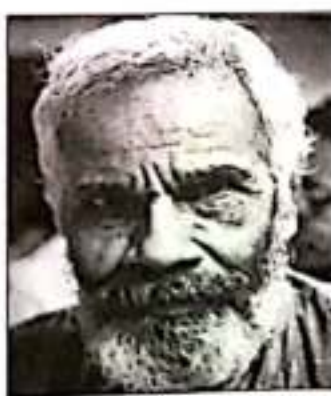
The thought process of the proponents of the 'New Poetry' and the 'New Story' centred around individuality. To establish that individuality, a discourse was started on 'honesty and authenticity of creative experience' (*Abhivyakiti Kee Imandaaree*) in poetry, and 'self-experienced reality' (*Bhogaa*

*Hua Yatharth*) in stories. Sometimes, 'self-experienced reality' was extended to the crass depiction of 'lived reality/indulgement' (*Bhog ke Yatharth*) whose extreme forms were witnessed in 'Akavita' and 'Akahani' ('Non-story' and 'Non-poetry', i.e., creative expressions that go beyond the usual ambit and format of stories and poems).

Before independence, two prominent trends were prevalent in Hindi poetry. One of these was the progressive (Pragatisheel) poetry, patronised by poets like Nagarjun, Kedarnath Agarwal, Dinkar, Trilochan, Muktibodh and Shamsheer. The other stream was of the Experimentalist (Prayogvaadee) poetry, led by Agyeya.



Mahadevi Varma



Nagarjun



Mannu Bhandari



Mridula Garg





Phanishwar Nath Renu



Rahi Masoom Raza



Raghuvir Sahay



Omprakash Valmiki

Hindi novel developed manifold during this period, expressing the historical traditions and contemporary reality of society. On the one hand, Yashpal, Rahi Masoom Raza, Bhisham Sahni, and others were writing novels of epical proportions on the tragedy of partition, while Phanishwar Nath Renu, Nagarjun, Bhairav Prasad Gupta, Shiv Prasad Singh and others were exploring the struggles and strife of Indian rural life. Scholars like Rahul Sankrityayan and Rangeya Raghav were re-interpreting Indian history through their novels. Noted scholar-critic Hazari Prasad Dwivedi also wrote his historical-cultural novels during this period.

In the realm of Hindi literary criticism, a clash of realistic and individualistic trends was witnessed during 1950s and 1960s on the one hand, while traditions were being evaluated on the other. Nand Dulare Bajpai, Nagendra, Ramvilas Sharma, Shivdaan Singh Chauhan, Namvar Singh, Muktibodh, Vijaydev Narayan Sahi and Devishankar Awasthi were among the prominent critics of this period. They continued to write even beyond that period and have written many important books.

A new trend was developed in Hindi literary criticism during this period and poets, story writers and novelists indulged in literary criticism to project and protect their writings and modes of creativity, as well as of the writers of similar thought process and modes of expression. Agyeya himself was a crusader in this area. Poets like Lakshmikanth Verma, Jagdish Gupt, Girijakumar Mathur, Dharamvir Bharati, Vijaydev Narayan Saahi and Muktibodh on the one hand, and story writers like Nirmal Verma, Kamleshwar, Rajendra Yadav, Mohan Rakesh and Markandey, on the other were contributing towards such writings.

During this period, some old genres of writing faded away and some new genres emerged. The most important fading genre was *Gadya Kavya* (poetic prose), while very few *Lalit Nibandhs* (Aesthetic Essays) were written after independence. Vidya Niwas Mishra was a prominent writer of *Lalit Nibandhs*. Satirists like Harishankar Parsai established Satire as an independent

genre. *Kavya Natak* (drama in poetic form) is an important emerging genre. Dharamvir Bharati, Dushyant Kumar and Naresh Mehta wrote such plays. However, this genre could not be sustained for long. Reportage was also a new genre, practiced prominently by Dharamvir Bharati and Phanishwar Nath Renu. Long poems of Muktibodh revived discussion on this genre with references to Nirala and Jaishankar Prasad. Agyeya also wrote long poems. Kunwar Narayan and Dharamvir Bharati wrote poetry based on stories and legends and gave them new meanings and interpretations.

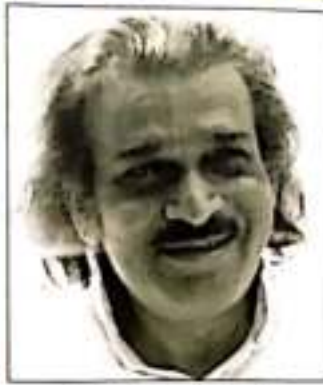
Sometimes, social and political events influence literary trends in a decisive manner. After 20 years of independence, in 1967, Hindi literature took a definitive direction. There was disillusionment among the masses after 20 years' continued reign of one party. This disillusionment resulted in two significant events. First was the emergence of a new political awakening resulting in a severe jolt to the ruling party. The other was the revolutionary struggle of the farmers who were continuously exploited by ruling vested interests.

This socio-political scenario of 1967 has influenced a whole generation of writers across the country. In Hindi poetry, Alok Dhanwa, Kumar Vikal, Pankaj Singh, Vishnuchandra Sharma, Vijendra, Venugopal, Kumarendra Parasnath Singh, Manglesh Dabral, Gyanendrapati, Arun Kamal, Rajesh Joshi, Chandrakant Devtale, Rituraj and other poets emerged on the scene. On the other hand, Gyanranjan, Kashinath Singh, Ramesh Upadhyay, Swayam Prakash, Jagdish Chandra, Jagdamba Prasad Dixit, Shrilal Shukla and other young writers enriched the realm of stories and novels with their progressive creativity. Writers and poets of the older generation like Nagarjun, Kedarnath Agrawal, Shamsher, Trilochan, Kedarnath Singh, Sarveshvardayal Saxena, Raghuvir Sahay, Amritlal Nagar, Bhisham Sahni, Rahi Masoom Raza, Shiv Prasad Singh and Markandey continued to enrich literature, expressing the joys and sorrows, hope and despair, mass struggles and awakening of the Indian people. Many veterans of '*Nai Kahani*' and '*Nai Kavita*' continued to write during this period. Prominent among them were poets like Dharamvir





Yashpal



Sarveshwar Dayal

Bharati, Kunvar Narayan, Shrikant Verma, Bhawani Prasad Mishra and Naresh Mehta; and prominent story-writers and novelists like Kamleshwar, Rajendra Yadav, Mohan Rakesh and Nirmal Verma. Many protagonists of *Akavita* and *Akahani* (Non-poetry and Non-story) were influenced by changed political and social awakening and started writing poems, stories and novels, attuned to new realities. Dhoomil, Rajkamal Choudhary and Leeladhar Jagudi were among such litterateurs. Vishnu Khare, Vinod Kumar Shukla and Ashok Vajpeyi started their literary journey during this period.

A new trend of secular writings started in Hindi literature around the 1980s. Some Muslim writers like Shaani, Asgar Wajahat and Abdul Bismillah. Rahi Masoom Raza continued writing on such themes. The secular traditions of Urdu literature, established by Meer, Ghalib and Nazeer kept on influencing Hindi litterateurs.

Women's writing emerged with a new gusto in Hindi literature around the 1980s. This has vastly influenced the content and direction of Hindi literature. Among old generation writers of this stream were Krishna Sobti, Mannu Bhandari and Usha Priyamwada; followed by the new-comers like Chitra Mudgal, Raji Seth, Mridula Garg, Nasira Sharma, Mamta Kalia and many others.

The trend of women's writing further strengthened and more and more writings with self-awareness and intellectual acumen enriched Hindi literature. Mahadevi Verma, in her '*Shrinkhala kee Kadiyan*' (Links of a Chain) deliberated upon the issue of women's emancipation. Concerns related to this issue were more focussed during this period. Global movements of women's liberation have also sharpened the vision of women's writings in Hindi. This fresh awakening among women writers was not restricted to a single genre. They

practiced multiple genres and the trend is continuing. Maitreyi Pushpa, Katyayini, Prabha Khaitan, Geetanjali Shree, Anamika, Ramnika Gupta, Savita Singh, Alpna Mishra, Manisha Kulshreshtha and Vandana Raag are among prominent women writers. Many autobiographies of women writers were also published during this period, elaborating their internal and external world.

The generation of Hindi writers emerging in the 1990s had many challenges before them. Socialist regimes in different parts of the world were either disintegrated or were disintegrating. With that, the socialist dream of emancipation from capitalist exploitation and suppression also evaporated. Simultaneously, capitalism was spreading in India with its new banner of globalisation. People were getting intoxicated by the emerging consumerism and the market culture. For the younger generation, the hypnotic and mind-boggling campaign of globalisation was more alarming than amazing. The objective of globalisation is to establish the overwhelming victory of capitalism. It means westernisation of the entire world, which, *de facto*, is to put the world under the US umbrella. This will result in the destruction of the environment and the spread of the culture of violence. These trends are visible now. Therefore, the meaningful creativity of the new generation of Hindi writers is resisting globalisation and its impacts. This generation knows that they are living in violent times where everything has a price tag.

Most of the new generation's writers and poets feel that they are living in a crisis-ridden time and society. Therefore, a quest to understand the crisis, to explore its reasons and find out remedies is seen in their writings. Indian mind was struggling to get rid of the impacts of the old pattern of colonialism. Meanwhile, new colonialism emerged in the form of globalisation with its tactics to win the minds of the people. The new generation of writers are facing the dual pressure of globalisation and cultural

nationalism. This pressure is reflected in their writings in different shades of anger, depression, tensions and disappointment.

Besides, new modes of mass communication, technology and virtual world have also impacted literature and the litterateurs. This has its bearing on the sensitivities related to nature, society and culture.

Many poets of the new generation are enriching Hindi poetry with their meaningful creativity. Prominent among them are: Madan Kashyap, Pankaj Chaturvedi, Bodhisatva, Nilay Upadhyay, Sanjay Kundan, Ashtbhuja Shukla, Pavan Karan, Badri Narayan,

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The Saptak tradition produced many new poets. The poems of these poets opened new vistas of social realities, as well as of romanticism. The poetry of Shamsher, Raghuvir Sahay, Sarveshwar Dayal Saxena, Bhawani Prasad Mishra and other poets can be seen in this context. The 'New Story', parallel to the 'New Poetry', was centred around the evolution of middle-class creativity.

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Jitendra Srivastava, Upendra Kumar etc. New poets emerging after the onset of the 20<sup>th</sup> century are also enriching Hindi literature.

Many new and old writers also enriched the realms of stories and novels. Akhilesh, Uday Prakash, Subhash Kushwaha, Manoj Roopda, Kailash Vanvasi, Shivmurti and Anuj are among the prominent story writers of our times. Sanjeev and Bhagwandas Morwal are among prominent novelists. Many writers are contributing to both genres of stories and novels.

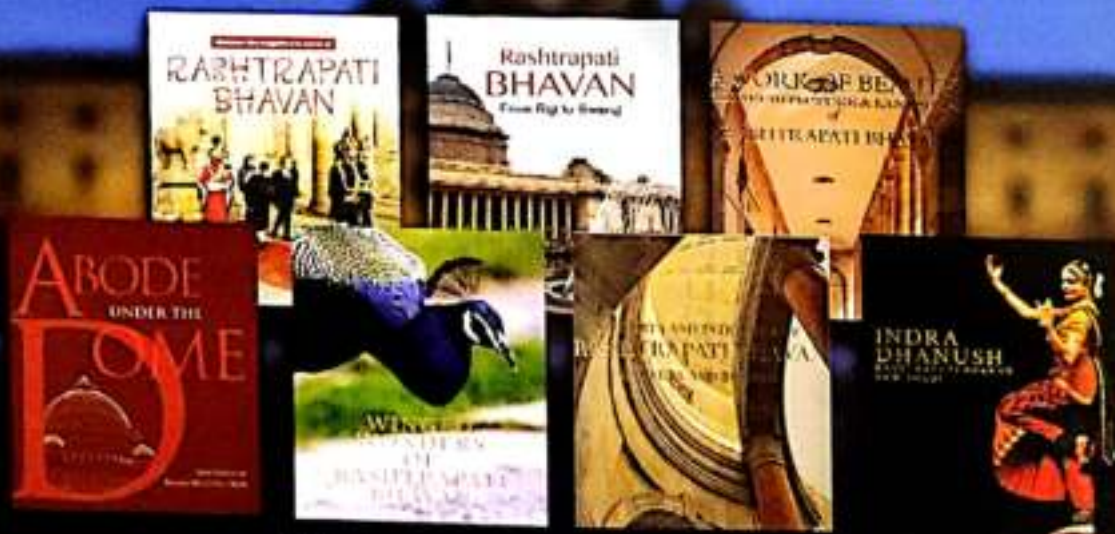
In the 1990s, *Dalit* writings emerged in Hindi literature. They enriched literature with their self-realisation and experiences. They made literature a vehicle of their emancipation in oppressive Indian society. Dalit literature is quite different from the aesthetic Hindi literature. It reflects the realities of life in their society, their travails and sorrows, and the resultant anger. Both men and women Dalit writers are enriching Hindi literature. Dalit literature is diversified with writings in different genres like autobiographies, novels, plays, stories, poems, biographies, literary criticism, etc. They have created new aesthetics to express their specific realities. Dalit writers are expressing their new anxieties and awareness related to their past, present and future. This corpus of writings has been christened as '*Dalit Vimarsh*' (Dalit Discourse). Prominent among Hindi Dalit writers are: Omprakash Valmiki, Jaiprakash Kardam, Dharamvir Bharati, Shyraj Singh Bechain, Rajat Rani Meenu, Mohandas Naimishrai, Sushila Takbhore, Anita Bharti, Ajay Navaria, etc. Dalit literature and Dalit Discourse in a pan-Indian tendency as Dalits are in all parts of India, facing the same types of torture,

exploitation and slavery. Therefore, their experiences and their literary expressions are similar.

Tribal people have their mother tongues, in which they have continuously been expressing their joys and sorrows, tortures and their resistance. Earlier, their literature was oral, but now, after their languages/dialects are developing their scripts, their literature has started coming in written form. This literature is being translated in to Hindi, English, Bengali and other languages. Literature on tribal life and their struggles is being written in many Indian languages, including Hindi, Bengali, Odia and Telugu. Besides tribal writers, non-tribal writers are also writing on tribal life and realities. Discussions are going on different aspects of tribal life, history, crises and different shades of exploitation and suppression and a new '*Adivasi Vimarsh*' (Tribal Discourse) has emerged. Ramanika Gupta played a vital role in bringing out the realities and problems of Indian tribal life and society before Hindi readers. Besides tribal writers like Nirmala Putul, Anuj Lugun, Rose Kerketta, Hariram Meena, Ganga Sahay Meena, some non-tribal writers are also writing on the realities and issues related to tribal life. Ranendra and Mahua Maji are important writers who wrote novels on tribal life.

The present world of Hindi literature is witnessing neither any mass movement nor an effective literary movement. Therefore, writers themselves have to carve out a creative relationship with their society and times. In fact, they are already doing it. This is reflected in the diversity of vision and expression in the writings of present generation writers. They can see through the prism of society and express the realities effectively. □

## BOOKS ON RASHTRAPATI BHAVAN



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# Information Technology: Beyond Self-Reliance

*Balendu Sharma Dadhich*

Despite the challenges and limitations, India has made all-round progress in technology, although our accomplishments in areas such as space and nuclear power are more noticed. But we have made phenomenal progress in the field of information technology. With initiatives like 'Digital India', 'Make in India' and 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan', the signs are clear. India neither lacks potential nor opportunities. India's ambitions in the field of IT can no longer be constrained.

**W**e are moving forward towards completing 75 years of independence. The country's achievements in science and technology in this long period need to be analysed, considering our background and circumstances. India has moved forward, grappling with the backdrop of protracted slavery, a glut of social problems, economic deprivation, rampant illiteracy, lack of infrastructural development, and many other similar problems. Our background is neither like that of America, which was liberated about two hundred fifty years ago, nor is it like Japan, which has much less population than us. Nor are we like China, where brute power rules. We live in a vibrant democracy with its own strengths and challenges. Despite all this, whatever we have achieved in science and technology is undoubtedly a matter of pride. When we look at the situation prevailing in other countries that have got freedom with us, our achievements become clear.

Despite the challenges and limitations, India has made all-round progress in technology, although our accomplishments in areas such as space and nuclear power are more noticeable. But we have made phenomenal progress in the field of information technology. We are in the leading position in the world in many areas related to this, especially in service. In other areas where India could not make significant progress in the past decades, serious efforts have been made in the last five-six years to make a mark in them, and their result is also visible. Areas such as manufacturing and semiconductor can be specifically named in which quite a few positives are occurring in the present time of the corona pandemic. You must have seen the recent news that Apple, the world's famous telecom equipment manufacturer, is shifting its plants operating in China to India. Some other companies are doing the same.

## India –The Future Hub of Manufacturing

Domestic players such as Apple, Samsung, and Lava Group are set to make India a major export hub for mobile device manufacturing. In this field, India can challenge China and Vietnam, which control 85 percent of the global export market. Samsung has committed to manufacturing mobile devices worth Rs. 2.2 lakh crore in India, which are priced more than Rs. 15,000 per unit. The government has recently approved manufacturing proposals in India of five global and five Indian companies (Lava, Micromax, Padget, UTL Neolynex, and Optimus), which under the Production Linked Incentive Scheme (PLI), have committed to manufacturing 12,500 billion phones over five years. They have also committed that 60 percent of the cost of production will be met from exports. Clearly, India is also transforming areas where we have not traditionally been strong.

The progress being made in the field of technology is not sudden. The Government of India has been making calculated and well-planned efforts in this regard. This



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**Aatmanirbhar India**  
5G Kapsar Develops UV Device: Shunt  
in 15 Minutes



The smartphone operated Handy Ultraviolet Disinfection  
Kapsar or Shunt has an UV light of 15 watts each that  
can be individually monitored from a distance

**The Smart  
Route Towards  
a Healthy Life**



- Telemedicine services available through CSCs for the marginalized and underserved in rural and remote areas of the country
- Services offered through experienced medical practitioners of Apollo, doCIP, Optima and AwaazCure
- Citizens can visit the CSC anytime from 8 AM-8 PM any day and avail consultation at a cost of Rs.1

**CSC**

**ENABLING THE CASHLESS  
ECOSYSTEM IN INDIA**  
India Post Payments Bank (IPIB) launched the  
Digital Payment App



Transfer funds  
Check balance of  
your bank accounts  
Make online payments  
to merchants  
Avail money transfer services  
using one application

Customers can send money to others by implementing Domestic  
Money Transfers - DMT, scanning QR code as well as send money payment  
for services/merchants digitally through virtual debit card with IPIB

is also evident from the government's investment in this area. In 1947, 0.1 percent of the gross domestic product was being invested in India's scientific research. In less than a decade, it was reduced to 0.5 percent. In the last tenure of the present government, not only has investment gained momentum in this area, but its scope has also expanded considerably. Programs like Digital India, Make in India, and Aatmanirbhar Bharat (Self-reliant India) reflect both the forward-looking vision and broad outlook of the present government in the field of technology. At the same time, they also manifest the Government's faith in the nation's capabilities and inherent potential in this area.

Among the past's prominent achievements that need to be mentioned includes the satellite and communication revolution of the 1960s when India started its space program and, despite all its limitations, finally established itself as the foremost power of the region in this field.

In 2017, when ISRO launched 104 satellites into space on a single spacecraft and accomplished its first Mars mission before that, India's dominance in this field was established without any doubt. Today, the governments and companies of developed countries do not hesitate to seek the help of ISRO for launching their satellites.

### Challenges Paved the Way

Almost 50 years ago, the telecom sector, like most other sectors, was dependent on multinational companies to supply hardware. New technology could not make way to India due to high costs and a shortage of foreign exchange. But a revolution swept the telecom sector in 1984 when the government, under the leadership of Sam Pitroda, picked up the scientific teams from the TRC and TIFR to establish the Center for Development of Telematics (C-DOT). Rural telephone exchanges developed by Indians came up that could operate in

harsh conditions and without air conditioning. Since the endeavor was to make the country self-reliant, the technology developed in the public sector was generously transferred free of cost to private companies. Ultimately, the monopoly of multinational companies in the telecom sector in India was challenged. Whatever happened in the case of basic telecommunication techniques and equipment at that time, similar developments have started now in the mobile phone sector.

The revolution in the information technology sector and computerisation of railways is also path-breaking events in India's development journey. To break up the monopoly of large foreign companies and to promote indigenous software and hardware development, the Department of Electronics was established in the 1970s. The Electronics Corporation of India Limited, Computer Maintenance Corporation, and State Electronics Development Corporation were established. Later, many indigenous private companies also joined this race, and computerisation of offices started. When the use of information technology in Railway's passenger reservation project began in 1986, its success not only shocked the world but made many processes easy and services accessible. The largest project proved how the technology could improve efficiency, cut corruption, and impact lives of millions.

The discussion on computerisation would be incomplete without talking about India's supercomputers. Param, which was India's first supercomputer, became a symbol of modern India's technological progress. It has a fascinating story. When other countries refused to provide such a state-of-the-art technologies, India focused on developing such technologies and achieved the goal. The Center for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) was established to cater to

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**Vocal for Local Tech**

**AatmaNirbhar India**  
Innovative AI Based Social Distancing Tracking Device created by IIT Kharagpur Students



The device can visually detect the gap between individuals and plays a proximity alert sound through audio output, for any violation of social distancing norms

**Digital Puducherry**  
Online Application for New Service Connection


Services available online

- The system is developed by IIT
- This workflow based online system users can register and apply for a new electricity connection
- Online payment via credit
- Check application status
- Modify application

Approved service connection - not required, online & digital link, 24x7 service & help

**Major Boost to Manufacturing Sector to Make India AatmaNirbhar**

Samsung to Relocate its Mobile and IT Display Production Unit in Uttar Pradesh (UP)



India's computing sector's growing needs, especially the need for a supercomputer. It triggered a series of new developments in the digital sector by developing a supercomputer named 'Param'. This trend continues even today, and at present, India has not just one supercomputer but many supercomputers. It is noteworthy that when India built a supercomputer with a capacity of 100 GHz-flop, the US also started relaxing its export restrictions. This had happened on other occasions as well, viz. when the supply of cryogenic engines to India from abroad was banned, India made such engines by itself.

### Resolve to Turn Crisis into Strength

Courage is identified only at the time of crisis. Japan is a shining example of this virtue. It demonstrated its boundless courage and counted among the top two economic powers after the atom bomb devastated Hiroshima and Nagasaki and it was badly defeated and ravaged in World War II. In the midst of the horrific crisis unleashed by the Coronavirus and then the aggressive antics of China, today we have a similar opportunity in the form of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan' (Self-reliant India campaign). Today, while the Prime Minister has infused a new spirit of self-reliance in India, the question before all of us is, "Will

India also turn its challenges into an opportunity? Will we soon become a \$50 billion (\$ 5 trillion) economy, and will this country overtake Japan to become the world's third-largest economic power by 2025?" To answer yes to these questions, information technology and the manufacturing industry must realise their immense potential. The signals emanating from these two areas in response to the Prime Minister's clarion call seem to reassure us to a great extent.

The Prime Minister has opened new vistas of development and national pride by talking about 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' and 'Vocal for Local'. He has shaken India's common consumer's soul and has also positively challenged the national economy of this country. This reminds us of Swami Vivekananda, who said that 'Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached'. The government has taken several major steps in the field of information technology. Novel innovations are being introduced, and new opportunities for economic development have been created- by opening new avenues somewhere and closing the old ones elsewhere. On the other hand, the present upheaval of public sentiments also proves that the common man of this country is in the process of rising and waking up. Data for July 2020 indicate that sales of Chinese mobile phone brands in India have begun to decline. Chinese brands

**Digital India**



**Digital Payments**  
enable contactless and cashless transactions, keeping you and your loved ones safe during the swell season of festivities



Samartham apna  
Merry Christmas

**“**  
To bolster the Digital India campaign, the Wi-Fi (Prime Minister Wireless Access Network Interface) scheme has also been initiated. In the public space, quality Wi-Fi connectivity will be possible for the common people and young scientists will benefit from this scheme.  
**”**



Visit the PM-Wi-Fi Numbers page at the address in the India International Science Festival (IISF) organized by the Ministry of Science and Technology



accounted for 81% of the total mobile phones sold in India in March. By July, the number came down to 72 percent.

The message has reached where it was intended—not only at the level of consumers but also at people in business, industrialists, and governments. India has successfully attracted an unprecedented amount of new investment in information technology—Google is a classic example. We are witnessing Indian companies acquiring a global dimension—Reliance Jio is the best example of this. The ban on Chinese startup applications engaged in dubious activities enthused India's startup ecosystem. Our entrepreneurs and developers developed the alternative of almost every Chinese application within a few days. Mitron, Namaste, Chingari, Jio Meet are some such examples. Who knows how big these applications would grow when they get a favorable environment for development. This is what China did. It has enforced restrictions on other countries' information technology companies and provided every right or wrong support to establish its IT companies in other countries. We may not be like China, but in the environment of healthy rivalry, we can give legitimate incentives to domestic companies.

The work initiated by Make in India and Digital India continues unabated, but the Prime Minister has once again startled the nation with his creativity, original thinking, and innovative ideas. Among the many incentive schemes included under self-reliant India, the success of the Production Linked Incentive Scheme (PLI) of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology is exceptional. Under this incentive scheme of about 41 thousand crores, 22 companies have shown interest in manufacturing mobile phones in India. These include Indian companies such as Lava and Micromax and global companies such as Apple and Samsung. The plan will make India a global hub for the mobile phone manufacturing industry. In the next five years, mobile equipment and components worth more than 11 lakh crore rupees will be manufactured, out of which devices worth more than seven lakh crore rupees will be exported. In the process, three lakh direct and nine lakh indirect jobs will be created. More than 40 companies, including both Indian and foreign, have applied in another scheme to encourage electronic goods manufacturing.

#### Possibilities Inherent in Digital India

Due to Digital India, huge success has been achieved in bringing one billion Indians online. Smartphones available at an affordable price in India, Internet connectivity (data) at reasonable rates and the world-class infrastructure of telecommunications have made the amazing revolution of digitisation come true. The way millions of Indians are making payments through digital channels, filing income tax returns, booking railway tickets, using banking services, and using



e-Commerce, connecting with the government machinery is an astounding achievement for the world that even developed countries like America and Britain cannot compete with. The development of the country's digital psyche and the environment guarantees a blissful future as information technology will continue to dominate economic development for at least two decades.

The \$10 billion investment by Google into India proves that global companies' faith in India's growth story has not been affected by the Coronavirus crisis, nor by the possibility of a confrontation with China. Within the next five to seven years, Google will help take the country's information technology system to the next stage by investing around 75 thousand crores. Apple has indicated that it is seriously considering transferring its manufacturing facilities from China to India. If this happens, it will not be just big news but a deteriorating event to convey to IT companies worldwide that conditions are in some places, and new possibilities of development are being created in other places.

IIT Alumni Council's establishment with a corpus of about 21 thousand crore rupees is a laudable initiative. The alumni of IITs today operate the largest IT companies globally and are known for providing hundreds of billions of dollars to their former educational institutions. Funds going to institutions such as Stanford, Harvard, MIT has now started coming to Indian institutions and can inspire the new generation towards innovation, self-reliance, opening new startups, and job creation. Indian companies have announced to bring indigenous 5G technology. The signs are unmistakable. India neither lacks potential nor opportunities. India's ambitions in the field of IT can no longer be constrained. □



# Marathi Literature

Shridhar Nandedkar

"The cult of Vitthal has been enormously important in making history of Maharashtra and in the establishing of new ways of thinking, believing of new ways of thinking, believing and behaving so much so that the history of Maharashtra is markedly different from what it would have been if 'Dnyaneshwar and Namdev' had not lived."

– Rise of the Maratha Power, Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade

**T**he journey of Marathi literature covers about seven centuries. It begins with the old Yadav Dynasty and flows down to the present times. 'Mahanubhav Panth' and 'Warkari Sampradaya' laid the foundation of Marathi literature and were influenced by the 'Nath Panth' (9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> century).

Nath Panth is a medieval movement. It combined ideas from Buddhism, Shaivism and Yoga traditions of India. Gorakhnath is considered the originator of the Nath Panth. Nath tradition has extensive Shaivism related to the logical literature of its own, most of which is traceable to the 11<sup>th</sup> century or later. The Nath tradition was influenced by other Indian traditions such as Advaita Vedanta monism. Further, Nath Panth influenced movements like Vaishnavism, Shaktism, Mahanubhav Panth and Bhakti Movement.

Mahanubhav Panth was founded by Sarvadnya Shri Chakradhar Swami in 1100-1200. This cult accepted all members irrespective of their castes. Mahanubhav literature generally comprises works that describe the

incarnations of gods, the history of the sect, commentaries on the Bhagavad Gita, poetical works narrating the stories of the life of Shri Krishna to explain the philosophy of Mahanubhava.

Leela Charitra is thought to be the first biography written in the Marathi language. It was written by Mhaimbhat (1278). Mhaimbhat's second important literary creation was 'Shri Govinda Prabhu Charitra'. This was a biography of Swami's Guru, Shri Govinda Prabhu. It was probably written in 1288, soon after the death of Shri Govinda Prabhu. Keshavraj Suri, Narendra, Bhaskar Bhat Borikar, Damodar Pandit, Ravalobas, Narayanbas Bahahaliye and Vishvanath Balapurkar contributed to producing Mahanubhav literature during 1288-1418. Most of the religious literature of the Mahanubhav cult is in ancient Marathi Prose.

History says the Yadava capital, "Devagiri" became a magnet for learned scholars in Marathi to showcase and find patronage for their skills. The origin and growth of Marathi literature is directly linked with the rise of the



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*Dnyaneshwar*



*Namdev*



*Sarvadnya Shri Chakradhar Swami*

Yadava dynasty. Around the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the Yadavas declared independence. The Yadavas of Devagiri used Marathi as their court language.

In Maharashtra, the Bhakti movement began in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century. It was in the rule of Yadavas the tradition of Saints emerged. Vedic tradition lost its value of caste system and complicated ritualism. It was a period of social degradation, poverty, fear and helplessness. Bhakti movement emerged out of the desire to uplift the downtrodden class out of dehumanisation and give them a milieu which could allow them to reach the way of God without obstacle. It was the need of time to move to a more fulfilling method of worship and salvation. Bhakti movement was the result of the rejection of inequality and ritualism.

Bhakti movement ignited the minds of countless poor and downtrodden people. Saints like Dnyaneshwar and Vitthal sang in their local, colloquial language. People in large numbers began to attract to Warkari sect. They felt that they were getting acceptance, respect, and a chance to reach closer to God. Warkari sect tried to outcast inequality based on discrimination. It inspired people to follow the path of passionate devotion.

It was the first time when the great literature in Marathi bloomed. It produced language and literature reflecting higher values in human life. Bhakti poets emphasised surrender to God. Not only this, but they also

rebel against those who chose to defy the currents of their time through their writing. Saint poets were pilgrims devoting their lives to awaken masses from the darkness of illiteracy.

Namdev flourished some years after this period. He was a tailor by caste and profession. However, poetic genius was quite ready at his service, and he wrote a great many 'Abhangas' on devotion to God. This we may call the first or early period of Marathi literature. It extended from 1200-1350 A.D. This period is marked by works on spiritual philosophy and devotional love.

The style of the literature of this early period is called

**Mahanubhav literature generally comprises works that describe the incarnations of gods, the history of the sect, commentaries on the Bhagavad Gita, poetical works narrating the stories of the life of Shri Krishna to explain the philosophy of Mahanubhava. Leela Charitra is thought to be the first biography written in the Marathi language. It was written by Mhaimbhat (1278). Mhaimbhat's second important literary creation was 'Shri Govinda Prabhu Charitra'. This was a biography of Swami's Guru, Shri Govinda Prabhu.**

Archaic Marathi. Namdev being a poet of later date than Mukundraj and Dnyaneshwar, his style is somewhat more modern and we find the purity of diction permeating all his poems. The influence of the literary activity of the time was so great that the spirit was taken up by Namdev's whole family, even by his maidservant Janabai. Namdev died in the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and no writings of significance were produced in Maharashtra for about two hundred years from that date.

From the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century till the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the Mohammedan Kingdom ruled and place of Marathi was taken by the Persian language. It was a completely blank period in Marathi literature. Saint Eknath was born in 1518. The seed of literary genius





*Eknath*

*Tukaram*

germinated again. He resumed the task commenced by Dnyaneshwar before two centuries.

Political situation of this period destroyed social harmony and everyone struggled for existence. There was hardly any time to devote to literature.

The third is the most brilliant period in the history of Marathi literature. It extends from the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the close of Peshwa rule. It was almost a period of two hundred years. Three great poets Ramdas, Tukaram and Mukteshwar were born in only a year or so about 1603 A.D. Saint Tukaram, the greatest poet in Marathi literature preached asceticism, toleration and devotion to God. He, too, sharply criticised rigidity in social structure imposed by the upper caste. He took the Bhakti movement to its height. He was a 'Warkari' of devotionism tradition. Saint Tukaram composed Abhanga poetry, a Marathi genre of literature which is metrical (traditionally the ovi meter), simple, direct, and fuses folk stories with deeper spiritual themes. His great contribution is found in his use of local language in contrast to his predecessors such as Dnyaneshwar and Namdev who were known for combining a similar depth of thought with a grace of style. 'Tukaramgatha' is the Marathi language compilation of his works, which covers a wide range of human emotions and life experiences. Some of his Abhangas are autobiographical. He includes

a discussion about the conflict between 'Pravritti' and 'Nivritti' i.e. between having a passion for life, family and business and the desire to renounce, leave everything behind and individual liberation i.e., 'Moksha'.

Ramdas was a saint of keen insight. He was an ardent preacher. He wrote 'Dasbodh' containing sermons on abstract as well as practical topics. Mukteshwar too, by his translation of 'Mahabharata' motivated masses. This period of two centuries produced poets of a very high order. Among those were Vaman Pandit, Shridhar, Moropant and Mahipati. The Shayari tradition of the 7<sup>th</sup> century also became very popular which gave rise to folk singing form called as 'Powadas'

immortalising historical events. It mainly glorifies valour and heroic deeds of Shivaji.

Later, before the subversion of the Peshwa rule, the poetic faculty seems to have indulged in lighter literature. The poetry of low order was composed for pleasure alone. The fourth period of literature covers the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Great literary activity is shown during this period of peace under British rule.

The art of printing was introduced and a large number of publications were made. Many works of ancient authors are discovered and published. Translations were rendered from the Sanskrit and English languages of works on history, philosophy, religion, medicine, law and literature. This constituted the readership of Marathi poetry but it did not accept modernity in poetry easily.

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**The origin and growth of Marathi literature is directly linked with the rise of the Yadava dynasty. Around the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the Yadavas declared independence. The Yadavas of Devagiri used Marathi as their court language. In Maharashtra, the Bhakti movement began in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century. It was in the rule of Yadavas the tradition of Saints emerged.**

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The Marathi Poetry written during the first decade of the post-independence period is called the 'Navkavita' (New Poetry). Amongst these new poets, Mardhekar and Vinda Karandikar had the strong urge to embody the tumultuous reality of their time. Their poetry dealt with the unbearable heat of the time. Thereafter the 'Post-Sixties' poets contributed substantially to the development of Marathi poetry. Sharchchandra Muktibodh was a leading poet who enriched mainstream Marathi poetry. It voiced the concerns of the middle



class from the Marxist point of view. Although all these poets were writing during the same period, their temperament was remarkably different from each other.

After 1960, the poets who emerged from the little magazine movement succeeded in creating a space for themselves in the mainstream Marathi literature. The poets in the little magazine movement infused new life into Marathi poetry. They added a modern, unique and contemporary dimension to the poetry. They succeeded in discovering the roots of their literary tradition and established an association with it.

Keeping the Ambedkarite ideology at the centre, the educated Dalits and the oppressed began to register their protest against exploitation and poverty through their creative writing. Protest against the established system and strong self-consciousness are the most notable features of Dalit writing. This movement changed the very face of Marathi literature. Namdeo Dhasal and Prakash Jadhav were the strongest voices of this movement. After the 1980s, Arun

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Saint Tukaram, the greatest poet in Marathi literature preached asceticism, toleration and devotion to God. He, too, sharply criticised rigidity in social structure imposed by the upper caste. He took the Bhakti movement to its height. He was a 'Warkari' of devotionism tradition. Saint Tukaram composed Abhanga poetry, a Marathi genre of literature which is metrical (traditionally the ovi meter), simple, direct, and fuses folk stories with deeper spiritual themes.

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Kale emerged as a prominent poet. He was also the product of the Dalit movement.

Globalisation has deeply influenced the post-90s' Marathi poetry. Women poets who contributed to Marathi poetry with their intense expression are - Kavita Mahajan and Pradnya Daya Pawar, Kalpana Dudhal and Yogini Satarkar-Pande.

The Novel is a popular genre in Marathi literature. In Marathi, Novel is called Kadambari. It evolved in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and before the 19<sup>th</sup> century it became very popular. After the demolition of Peshwa rule and beginning of the British rule, all genres of literature in Marathi were reshaped and the western literature introduced newness and wide world to Marathi literature. It was a kind of

awakening. Western style of writing began to influence Marathi novel.

'Yamuna Paryatan' (1857) is considered the first significant novel in Marathi written by Baba Padmanji. Most of western fiction was being translated into Marathi and printing revolution made it easy to publish books.



*Warkari in Maharashtra*





Hari Narayan Apte (1864-1919) dominated the scene during (1885-1920). He was the first novelist who understood the object, elements, and effects of the novel. A novel can reveal not only personal but social psyche as well. He perceived that his own country, society, culture, customs, traditions and life values could help build the world of a novel. No other novelist of his time could review the search of a life with such a serious attitude. So Apte created an everlasting place in the history of Marathi novel.

Narayan Sitaram Phadke (1894-1978) was a major novelist who, with his romantic novel, dominated the Marathi readers for almost two decades.

After the First World War, the novel changed drastically. It was also the result of Marxist ideology and Freudian psychoanalysis. V.S. Khandekar was another prominent novelist of the Phadke era. He too became the most popular novelist in Marathi and won the prestigious Jnanpith award for his novel 'Yayati'. Marathi novel took new shape between 1950-1975. Shripad Narayan Pendse, Vyankatesh Madgulkar and G.N. Dandekar dominated the scene.

Modern Marathi novel adopted all complexities of contemporary life. Bhalchandra Nemade who recently received Jnanpith Award is the most influential novelist of this period. He has been writing since 1963. His famous novel 'Kosala' is still being read by the new generation. Shyam Manohar is also a prominent fiction writer of the present times. He has been writing fiction for four decades. His novels try to pacify the quench of human knowledge. He is considered the most influential fiction writer due to his philosophical writing. The post-90s scene in the Marathi novel is also satisfying. Pravin Bandekar, Ramesh Ingle Utradkar, Asaram Lomate and many others are writing novels with zest and serious attitude.

Literary criticism in Marathi is thought to have existed in the British period. It extended during the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and present times. There are five significant major periods of Marathi criticism.

**First Period (1818-1874):** This period marked the influence of Sanskrit criticism. Western thoughts in criticism also played a major role in shaping our criticism. Ganesh Shastri Lele's 'Sahityashastra' (1872) and Daji Pradhan's 'Rasmadhav' (1867) both works reflect influence of Sanskrit criticism. Mahadev Moreshwar Kunte wrote a preface on the poetry written on Shivaji. He discussed literary principles, form, epic poetry, romantic and classical cults in his preface.

**Second Period (1874-1920):** Vishnushastri Chiplunkar laid the foundation of Marathi literary criticism in this period. Haribhau Apte and V.K. Rajwade also contributed with their brilliant literary arguments in shaping the Marathi literary criticism. Shripad Krushna Kolhatkar also wrote criticism on the drama tradition of his time. N.C. Kelkar also wrote prolific criticism.

**Third Period (1920-1940):** Literary debate on 'Art for the Sake of Art' and 'Art of the Sake of Life' was a major topic of discussion during this period. Khandekar and Phadke were proponents of this debate.

**Fourth Period (1940-1960):** Bal Sitaram Mardhekar was the most influential critic of this period. He wrote 'Wangmayin Mahatmata' (1955). He discussed the relation between aesthetics and literature. M.P. Rege, Prabhakar Padhye and R.B. Patankar wrote major critical commentaries.

The last period of literary criticism is considered from 1960 onwards. Post-independence Marathi criticism not only discussed modern literature but also studied in detail the ancient literature and literary theories. In this modern period, G.B. Sardar, D.K. Bedekar, Narhar Kurundkar wrote important critical commentaries. The new criticism at present times focusses on its principles and ultimate objectives.

Marathi literature flowered in every genre of literature. V.S. Khandekar, V.V. Shirvadkar, Vinda Karandikar and Bhalchandra Nemade are among the Jnanpith Award winners. Marathi literature has a long tradition of seven centuries. It is difficult to cover it within a limit of four thousand words. I hope this bird's-eye view would help the non-Marathi readers to get a broad view of Marathi literature. □

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# 21<sup>st</sup> Century Malayalam Novels

Dr Saidalavi Cheerangote  
Dr Ganesh Cherukad

The major turning point in the history of Malayalam novels took place in the 1940s with socio-political movements of Kerala collectively referred to as the Renaissance period. The reformist movements among various castes and religious groups and anti-caste consciousness were the major socio-political turn in the decades before and after the 40s.

**I**n an attempt to mark the unique journeys of the Malayalis (people of Kerala) and their identity formation, the plots of a good number of the novels of the present century are interwoven with history. Interestingly, untold local histories and myths are preferred to the established academic history.

Based on the themes, the contemporary Malayalam novels can be classified into seven broad areas. This classification may not be precise in all sense but would help streamline the major trends in the present century Malayalam novels. The plot and narrative techniques entwined with history is the primary category among them. Deconstruction and re-reading of the classical works, including *epics* and *puranas*, falls in another set. Experience, voice and aspirations of subalterns including dalits, women, sexual minorities, and diaspora community, have been considerably represented. The works satirising the socio-political environment of contemporary Kerala and India have also been widely celebrated.

T.D. Ramakrishnan's "*Francis Itty Cora*" deals with the adventurous life of Francis Itty Cora and his successors. Widely acclaimed by the critics, the novel deals with the exploration and expedition of the protagonist, Francis Itty Cora, a 15<sup>th</sup> century Kunnamkulam based trader. Incorporating the global historical characters of the 15<sup>th</sup> century including Vasco da Gama, this novel discusses the way by which Malayalis attained a global cultural identity. It also flares up and problematises the themes like mathematics, sex, power, etc. Using the langue and narrative style of a typical history text at surface level, it enthralls the reader through a perfect amalgamation of conflicting experience of sex and violence at one end,

and arts and mathematics at the other. Other two novels of the same author "*Sugandhi Enna Andal Devanayaki*" (*Sugandhi alias Devanayaki*), and "*Mama Africa*" treat the history of civilian unrests in Sri Lanka and Ugandan Malayali life, respectively.

Adopting the background of the historic struggles led by Sahodaran Ayyappan against caste discrimination, M.R. Ajayan's novel "*Mishra Bhojanam*" brings the memory of the reformist movements of past. *Mishra Bhojanam* was a community feast organised in 1917 by Sahodaran Ayyappan. The feast where people of all castes dined together was a revolutionary venture during those days. By connecting the past with the present, Ajayan's novel set in the villages of 'Ochanthuruthu' and 'Pulachonmar' retells the history with a fresh flavour.

"*Delhi Gathakal*" (*Delhi Stories*) by M. Mukundan describes how Delhi functioned as the mosaic and museum of Indian democracy. He traces the history



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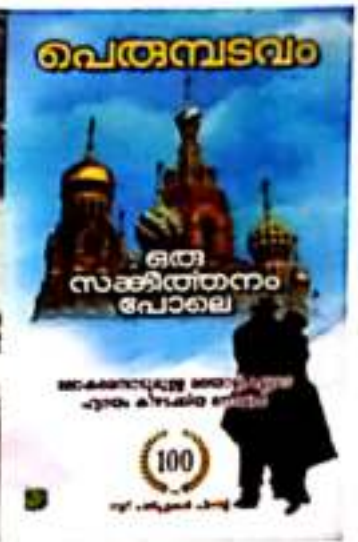
of Indian democracy from the 60s to the present. M. Mukundan's *"Kesavante Vilapangal"* (*The Laments of Kesava*) is also based on a political theme embedded with the history of Kerala. The protagonist is a communist who finds it difficult to link his own life with political ideology. Criticising the ethical laxity and compromising ideology of the present-day leaders, the novel idealises that involvement in a revolutionary activity needs dedication and commitment towards one's own life.

T.P. Rajeevan's *"KTN Kottur: Ezhuthum Jeevithavum"* (*The Life and Writings of KTN Kottur*) is a novel that depicts the mysterious and volatile personality of the central character, Kottur who was a poet, politician, and activist. The novel often labelled as a magical history, presents an epic like canvas of the history of politics and less told events during freedom movements. The narrative techniques take the readers on a journey from real to the unreal world.

In the background of the local history of *Thachanakkara and Ayyattumpilli Tharavad* (traditional joint family of Nair community), Subhash Chandran's masterpiece *"Mamushyanu Oru Aamukham"* (*A Preface to Humankind*) foregrounds the history of the last century Kerala.

Punnappa-Vayalar, a revolutionary struggle in the history of Kerala is depicted in *"Ushnarasi"* by K.V. Mohan Kumar. It has been translated into English with the title *"Manhunt"*. N. Prabhakaran narrated the local history through his novels *"Bahuvachanam"* (*Plural Marker*) and *"Thiyoorekhal"* (*The Thiyoore Records*). *"Budhini"* by Sara Joseph tells the story of the expelled tribes. *"Thakshankunnu Swaroopam"* by U.K. Kumaran depicts the history of a village in Malabar, *"Sufi Paranja Katha"* (*What Sufi Said*) by K.P. Ramanunni highlights the secular life of ancient Kerala, and *"Kunjali"* by Rajeev Sivashankar tells the life of Kunjalimarakkal. *"Acharya"* (*Preceptor*) by C. Ganesh and *"Maraporul"* (*Enigma*) by Rajeev Sivashankar are based on life and philosophy of Adi Shankaracharya.

In addition to this kind of novels linked with history, there are some satirical works based on the socio-cultural history of Kerala. *"Azhukillam"* by Rafeeq Ahmed is



such a work that lampoons on the glorified past where the voice of the lower caste and class was ill-represented. *"Prathi Poovankozhi"* (*The Cock is the Culprit*) by Unni R is a satire with a seemingly simple story of a rooster which crows at inconvenient times and disturbs important events in a Kerala village. At a deeper level Unni R rises and tackles the key question about contemporary Indian politics. *"Nireeswaran"*, a great work of V.J. James is a beautiful depiction of a belief system that questions the boundary between theism and atheism and reveals how atheism becomes another religion in disguise.

The contemporary Malayalam novels can be classified into seven broad areas. This classification may not be precise in all sense but would help streamline the primary trends in the present century Malayalam novels. The plot and narrative techniques entwined with history is the primary category among them. Deconstruction and re-reading of the classical works, including epics and puranas, falls in another set. Experience, voice and aspirations of Subalterns including dalits, women, sexual minorities, and diaspora community, have been considerably represented.

The works satirising the socio-political environment of contemporary Kerala and India have also been widely celebrated.

A good number of novels on Subaltern's life have come up in the last two decades. *"Chavuthullal"* (*Ecstatic Dance in Memory of the Deceased*) by Raju K. Vasu represents this group of novels. Portraying the life of a Pulaya man who was a migrant to Kanjirapally from Central Travancore, it depicts the conflicts and crisis faced by the Pulaya community. Pradeepan Pambirikkunnu's *"Eri"* (*Blaze*) describes the discriminations faced by Dalits even when they are highly educated and placed with well-paid jobs. P.A. Uthaman's *"Chavoli"* is another celebrated work under this category. The victims of the modern concept of development, and environmental issues gained considerable emphasis in many novels. In the novel *"Enmakaje"*, Ambikasuthan Mangad describes the Endosulfan victims of the northern regions of Kerala.

Feminist thoughts for the liberation from patriarchal ties are





still alive in Kerala and its reflections become clearer in the novels of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. "*Barsa*" is a novel about the female resistance against religious dogmas. Set in Bengal, K.R. Meera's "*Aarachar*" (*Hangwoman*) tells the story of a family of executioners with a long lineage, beginning in the fourth century BC. The protagonist of the novel, Chetna, is a determined woman who struggles to inherit this profession.

Many myths, legends, and plots in epics have been deconstructed and re-read in the form of novels in the last few decades. Sara Joseph's "*Urukaval*" (*Translated into English with the title The Vigil*) is such an attempt for retelling based on Ramayana. Angadha, the son of Vali is the central character of this novel that rereads Rama's action. Ambikasuthan Mangad, in his novel "*Marakkapile Theyyangal*" depicts the transformation in a village concomitant to changes in belief and ritualistic art form.

A few novels representing the struggle for survival of the Malayali diaspora captured wider readership during the past two decades. The prominent among them are: "*Aadujeevitham*" (translated as *Goat Days*) by Benyamin, and "*Alia*" by Sethu. One of the top sellers, *Aadujeevitham* is a hard-hitting story of a Malayali emigrant to Saudi Arabia who was destined to lead a slave-like life. *Alia* is about the Jewish minority in Kerala returned to their promised land.

Unlike the past two centuries, the life of the sexual minorities has been represented in the novel of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. "*Aalohari Anandam*" is a work of Sara Joseph on women's freedom and sexual orientation, including homosexuality. Written by Sangeetha Sreenivasan, "*Acid*" describes the strength and vibrancy of male-female relationships in the city of Bangalore through the life of Kamala who loves her husband Madhavan and Shali (her girlfriend) simultaneously. Treatment of the theme like

bisexuality and lesbianism in the changing socio-cultural milieu makes this novel exceptional. "*Salabham Pookkal Aeroplane*" (*Butterfly-Flowers-Aeroplane*) is another novel of Sangeetha which weaves fantasies and creates new narratives through its female protagonists.

The paradigm shift in the diction and theme of the present century Malayalam novels can be described by a brief linear history of the development of these novels. The novel as a literary genre had not been established in Malayalam until the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. "*Indulekha*" (1889) written by O. Chandu Menon, is considered as the first significant Malayalam novel. Some novelistic works published before *Indulekha* are not considered as novels in the strict sense. Mrs. Collin's "*Ghatakavadham*" (*The Slayer Slain*) (1872), Dicken Koshy's "*Pulleli Kunju*" (1882) and Appu Nedungadi's "*Kunthalatha*" (1887) were prominent among them.

Unlike the earlier works, *Indulekha* claims some uniqueness as the story and characters are set in Kerala society of that time. It was the contemporariness and beautifully depicted socio-cultural transformation, which made critics assign it the status of the first significant Malayalam novel. The background of the novel is the dilemma of tradition and modernity in a Nair (upper caste Hindu) family. The author attacked the feudal lordship and the then prevalent Namboodiri-Nair marriage pact called *Sambandham* (an informal mode marriage between Nair women with Namboodiri [Brahmin] men).

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*Indulekha* was followed by the historical novels by C.V. Raman Pillai such as "*Martandha Varma*" (1891), "*Dharmaraja*" (1913), and "*Ramaraja Bahadur*" (1919). Some critics consider "*Parappuram*" (1908) by K. Narayana Kurukkal as the first political novel and "*Bhaskara Menon*" (1904) by Appan Thampuran as the first detective novel. Appan Thampuran's novel "*Bhutarayar*" (1923) is also historically significant, for it portrays the second century



Kerala. With its epic features, "*Kerala Simham*" (1941) by K.M.Panikkar also attracts the readers and the critics alike. The first Malayalam novel that dealt with the socially backward classes was "*Saraswatheevijayam*" (1892) by Potheri Kunjambu.

The major turning point in the history of Malayalam novels took place in the 1940s. The two decades after the 40s was strongly influenced by the Association of Progressive Writers that owes its ideological standpoint to socio-political movements of Kerala collectively referred to as the Renaissance period. The reformist movements among various castes and religious groups and anti-caste consciousness were the major socio-political turn in the decades before and after the 40s. It was with this movement a group of writers began to depict elaborately the minority experiences in Malayalam literature. "*Odayil Ninnu*" (*From the Gutter*) by P. Kesavadev (1904-1998), "*Balyakalasakhi*" (*Childhood Companion*) by Vaikom Muhammad Basheer (1908-1994), "*Thakarnna Thalamura*" (*Ruined Generation-Short Stories*) by Lalithambika Antharjanam (1909-1987) "*Shabdikkunna Kalappa*" (*The Talking Plough-Short Story*) by Ponkunnam Varkey (1910-2004), "*Chemmeen*" (*Prawn*) by Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai (1912-199) "*Vishakanyaka*" (*Venomous Nymph*) S.K. Pottekkatt (1913-82), "*Amina*" by Uroob (1915-79) represents the realistic narratives of the socio-economic, and political transformation that took place in those decades. K. Saraswati Amma (1919-75) portrayed the innate strength of womanhood through short stories and a novel "*Premabhajanam*" (*Darling*) that influenced Women Liberation Movements of later periods.

Another turning point in the sensibility of Malayalam readers happened in the 1960s by M.T. Vasudevan Nair with his unique portrayal of virtues and tribulations of olden and disintegrated feudal social structure. His masterpiece novels depicting these features are "*Naalukettu*" (1958) (translated into English with the title '*Naalukettu*:'

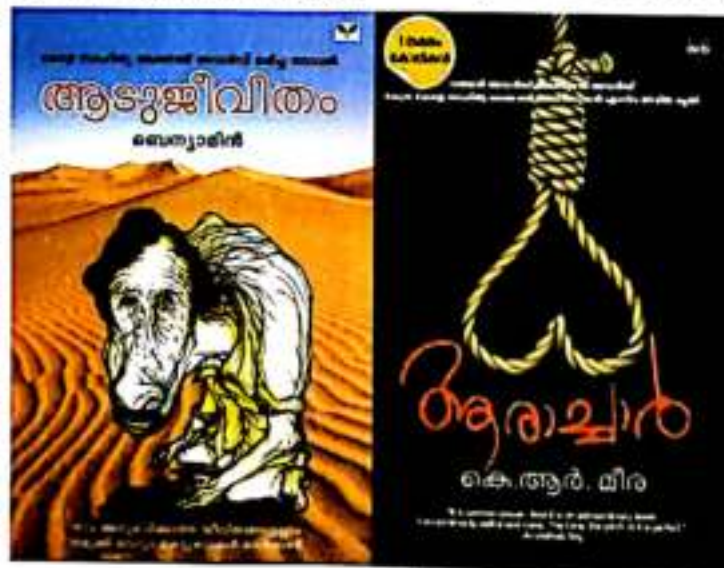
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*The House with a Courtyard*') and "*Kaalam*" (1969) (Time).

Introducing a poetic style of prose in the narration by swaying gracefully between myth and reality O.V. Vijayan's "*Khasakkinte Itihasam*" (*The Legend of the Khasak*) became another milestone in the history of Malayalam novels. Though the short-stories outnumber the novels penned, "*Madhavikutty*" (also known as Kamala Das and Surayya) also deserves a unique place in the history of Malayalam novels with her works, including "*Neermathalam Pootha Kaalam*" (*When Neermathalam Bloomed*) is worth mentioning. Kakkanadan, Vadakkke Kottala Narayanankutty

Nair (V. K. N), N. P. Mohammed, M. P. Narayana Pillai, Malayattoor Ramakrishnan, Vilasini, Rajalakshmi, M. Mukundan, Kovilan, Nandanar, Sethu, K. Surendran, Punathil Kunjabdulla, Anand, Zachariah, P. Valsala, T.V. Kochubava, Geetha Hiranyan, Rosemary, K. L. Mohana Varma, Ashthamurthy, K. P. Ramanunni, Sethu, C. Radhakrishnan, C.V. Balakrishnan, are a few among the prominent writers of this period. "*Oru Sankeerthanam Pole*" (*Like a Psalm*), one of the much-admired novels of the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century penned by Perumbadavam Sreedharan deserves a special mention. Based on the life of the Russian author Dostoyevsky, the novel surpassed its 100<sup>th</sup> edition in a period of about 25 years.

It can be found that the nature of the novels in the last century was predominantly realism. Combination of myth and reality and magical realism as narrative techniques started appearing in the works published at the last decades of the twentieth century and such narrative experiments in imaginative inquiry in Novels thrived in the present century. A paradigm shift occurred in the literary sensibility of the readers and the style and themes of works by the contemporary novelists who started writing in the last decades of the twentieth century is arguably due to the influence of post-modern literary trends. □







## Modern Odia Poetry

*Manorama Biswal Mohapatra*

Folk elements are interspersed not only in Odia poetry but amply evident in other literary forms, be it novel or play and the likes. In today's turbulent times, the world is passing through colossal uncertainties. In the ensuing context of upheaval, the establishment of time-tested normative order, based on values assumes enormous importance. A just societal moral dispensation can only be enforced ubiquitously through the pursuit and propagation of folk literature. This article mainly deals with the folk elements, found in modern Odia poetry.

**S**ince the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, systematic research into various aspects of the cosmogonical literary oral traditions or folk literature has been taken up throughout the world. Eminent Western scholar John Beams, while serving as the Collector of Baleswar, during the last phase of the 18<sup>th</sup> century had initiated the task of collection, compilation and deliberation of folk literature in Odisha. A seminal treatise, 'Folklore of Odisha', written by him was published in 'Indian Antiquary' in 1872. Subsequently, Gopal Chandra Praharaj, Chakradhar Mahapatra and Dr. Kunja Bihari Dash etc., had largely succeeded in establishing folk literature as a substantive discipline through collection, documentation and discussion of Odia folk literature. In the present context of globalisation, folk literature or folklore has been well recognised as a scientific study of societal process and development, like the other branches of social sciences. Comparatively, due to India's unique socio-cultural diversity than elsewhere, the study and research in the field of folk literature have become justifiably accelerated. It is also a positive development that increasingly specialised sessions on folkloristic are now being organised in various fora.

Folklore and folk culture have variously given a fillip and stimulated it to grow vividly. It is clearly discernable

in the epic of Mahabharat of Sarala Das of yesteryear to that of the present day's poetic composition of Prasanna Mishra. Folk elements are interspersed not only in Odia poetry but amply evident in other literary forms, be it novel or play and the likes.

In today's turbulent times, the world is passing through colossal uncertainties. In the ensuing context of upheaval, the establishment of time-tested normative order, based on values, assumes enormous importance. A just societal moral dispensation can only be enforced ubiquitously through the pursuit and propagation of folk literature. Therefore, the need for folk literature has certainly increased manifold. It proves that folklore cannot be confined to a specific time frame or era in the life of a society and its historical literary tradition.



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John Beames



Gopala Chandra Praharaj



Utkalmani Gopabandhu Das



Pandit Nilakantha Das

Confirming to the trends of social change, though folklore has undergone the necessary metamorphosis, yet it has remained the same, at its core. Its soul remains intact while passing through several somatic transfigurations. In every sphere, the folk literature has been recast, starting from the time of formative written Odia literature of Sarala Das to that of mid-age, influencing the 'making of literature', itself. At times, the prosaic primacy of folk literature or its rhythmic propensity has been fully utilised as the prime motif in the Sarala and mid-age Odia literature to its perfection. The writings of Radhanatha that imbibed selected themes from Western literature has indeed infused vividly in the canvas of Odia literature. Even though elements of modernity started largely with Radhanatha, still the poetry of the post-independence era, going through an array of experimentation, trial and tribulation, could, be termed as the real modern poetry. The application of folk elements has adequately been manifested in these poems, in turn transforming modern poetry to a new high and making it rich enough. Even Radhanatha could not keep himself away from the historical realities, traditions and rustic imaginations in his creative pursuits, though he was much influenced by his Western type education, based on scientific spirit and rationality. It is a fact that he got much inspiration and impetus from the transcendence of folklore and its subliminal symbolism. The language of folk literature is as simple and spontaneous as mountainous spring, so also its rhyme. Radhanatha wove the magic of rhythm in much splendors for which he is best acknowledged. However, he made the rendition possible only by taking a cue from the vast depository of folk literature of the time. Based on oral traditions and myths, he wrote several poems. Poems, such as 'Kedargouri', 'Nandikeshari', 'Usha' and 'Jajatikeshari', etc., embodied

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myths and metaphysical themes. Radhanatha's other poem, 'Chilika' also, on several instances, relied heavily on folklore to propagate its branches, foliages and to bloom.

Mainly, I have included two poets of the modern era in my present discussion; first Radhanatha and then, Nandakishore. The poems of Palli Kabi Nandakishore are like the treasure trove in Odia literature. One can effortlessly spot the rawness of the village life in his poetry. It will be most appropriate to say here that the soul of his poems always had the tone, tenor and form of the folk songs. Further, it will not be out of place to mention that his writing is enriched by precious and well-chosen folk elements. Rustic problems and trivialities have stretched the expanse of his horizons, making his experience meaningful and worthwhile.

Folk lullaby like

"ଝାଲର ଚାନ୍ଦର ଝାଲ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ଚିତାନ୍ତରେ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ଚାନ୍ଦର ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ଚିତାନ୍ତରେ

ଚାନ୍ଦ", "ଝାଲର ଚାନ୍ଦର ଝାଲର ଚାନ୍ଦ, ଝାଲ ଚାନ୍ଦର ଚାନ୍ଦର ଝାଲର ଚାନ୍ଦ", ଝାଲର ଚାନ୍ଦର ଝାଲର ଚାନ୍ଦ

ଝାଲର ଚାନ୍ଦ ଝାଲ ଚାନ୍ଦ ଝାଲର ଚାନ୍ଦ ଝାଲ

is an excellent testimony of the poet's imaginations, seamlessly merging in the pristine spirit of folklore are configured fully to the brim in all hues into the children's

poems, composed by Nanda Kishore Bala. A review and the categorisation of the poems written by Nanda Kishore indicate how closely they are entrenched, or rather merged in the life of the village mass.

Utkalmani Gopabandhu Das and Pandit Nilakantha Das, poets of eminence of the Satyabadi literary tradition wrote brilliant poems incorporating historical, cultural and mythical components of Odisha with much aplomb and fine craftsmanship of creativity.





Radhanath Ray



Sachi Routray

Some of the norms, values and mores in vogue in the contemporaneous social life of Odisha were recast in their poems, assuming new perspectives. Based on the foundation of the folk legend "ବୀରବନ୍ଧୁ ବଳଦେବ ଦାସ ନା ହୁଅନ୍ତ ଦାସ" as the central leitmotif, Gopabandhu Das's poem 'Dharmapada' has gone burgeoning to its desired level. This incidentally is still alive in the minds of the people. Similarly, a number of folk legends formed integral parts of the poem 'Konark' of Nilakantha as the referral components of the cultural matrix of the mass.

The poems of Sachi Routray have undergone several experimentations, resulting in changes and transformation of forms and contents. The crises, past post World War II had generated unprecedented convulsion, gripping man and his existence into questions. This is the time when Routray took embargo in the existing myth, metaphor, symbolism, and simile to faithfully portray the unsavory and nauseating realities faced by mankind, then. He was the first poet of Odisha to bring in a finer confluence between poetic style and vocable application. Further, he also transfigured the folk elements in his writings, suffusing with shades of modernity, in turn leading the trend. His poetry book 'Pallishree' is impregnated profusely with myriad elements of the rural life of Odisha. Folk elements have gone directly into the making of the poem 'Rakta Bija Ra Abhijan', an appendage in his book 'Abhijan'. A poet in Sachi Routray, who painted stark realities into his creations, however, could not exclude the folk elements. 'Shua Shari Sambad' and 'Swapnabhanga' bear ample testimony to this.

One can find numerous instances of use of folk elements in the creations of ageless writer Mayadhar Mansingh. In the realm of folktales, 'Maluni' has remained a popular motif. This particular motif has been applied in fruition by him in 'Sadhaba Jhia'. The

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mankind, then.**

importance of folk literature is underscored if we take into account the usage of myths and legends, etc. in the successful lyrical poems of poets Radhamohan Gadanayak and Godabarisha Mishra.

While the other names of life were hopelessness and loneliness characterised by existential anomie, at the very time, progressive literature was in the making, roughly starting from the year 1936 through 1949. During the phase, writers were not far off from the folk elements or rather they found active substances to feast. 'Champa Phula' of poet Guru Prasad Mohanty and poet Benudhara Rout's 'Katha Ghoda Pani Pi' are but just two representative examples of such interactions. Consider, "ପଥର ପାଲଟି ଉଠା ଉଠା ପୁଅ, ହାତ ବଢ଼ ହେଲା ଗୁଜାହୁର (ବଂସାହୁର) ଏବଂ "ନାଠଦେବୀ ପାଣି ପି'ରେ ପାଣି ପି", ଉଦୟ ଶେଖରୀ ଏ, ଜାଣି ପି" of above poets or Binod Natak's "ଉଠେଇ ପୁଅ ଉଠା ଏପାଖେ ବର୍ଦ୍ଧିତ ଯୋଜନା ଗାଧୁଆ ଚୁଠ ଦେବାଟି ନ ଦେବା ହୁଏ, ଉଦାତ୍ତର ମାତା ଆସିଥାନ୍ତି" in this context of such linkages. Folk literary styles, rhythms and elements successfully manifested across the writings of poet Sarat Chandra Pradhan. He has deployed folk rhythm eloquently with ease, to feel life afresh, far away from the perfunctory, in saying.

"ହୁଇରେ ଜାତୀ ହୁଇ ବିଷୟ ଗାଡ଼ି ପାରିଲାଣି ଗାଦର ଜାତ ଉଠ ଉଠ ମଠ ଚଉର ଆଉ"

("ହୁଇରେ ବୋଉ" ଏବଂ "ବାହୁ ଗାଈଁ ଗାଈଁରେ" etc. Folk elements have assumed exceptional dimensions in "ଜେ ଗାଈଁ ଗୋଟିଏ ଚିତ୍ତା" with beautiful expressions like, "ଜାହାଣୀର ବୁଢ଼ା ଅବୁରୁଣା ଗୋଟିଏ ଗୋଡ଼କୁ ନାଚ ରୁଦିରେ ଦୁଇଟି ଜାତି ଜାଣି ଆଉଟି ବେଢ଼ିଲା ପରି ହୁ ଚି ବଂଚିବୁ।" it is equally true for Soubhagya Mishra, even as his "ବୋହେଇ ଗା" has gone the extra mile to rein in the raw elements of folklore to catapult his creative surges into variegated planes. "ସାମନା କୁହଣା" is a feat of sorts where poet Pratibha Satapathy has harmoniously merged the folk identity of the persona with the modern milieu. She has ventured into the labyrinth of the travail of the modern times, to lay bare the pains of life.

"ମୁଁ ଭିନା ଖରାରେ ଘୋଡ଼େ ବଢ଼ି ଖାଏ ଖାତ ବହେ ସାହାଦା ଗଛର ଅଗଣିତ ଗଣି  
ଝିଲରେ ଚାରିହାତ ହେ ଗୁରୁଦା। ଗୋର ଅସ୍ଥିତଗରେ ଗୋଡ଼େ ଆଉ ବୋହେଇର ଦେନ।

Eminent folklorist and poet Prasanna Kumar Mishra is a fine wordsmith of repute, who has delved deeper, to find meaning and essence in folk literature, accepting it as his main pursuit of life. He has taken pains to collect a large number of folk songs, thereby contributing substantially to enrich the cultural resource base of the people in general. His research work on legend has buttressed the domain of folk literature immensely, making it a more attractive proposition to all of us. Apart from this, it is noticeable that his current writings have ample leaning towards folk elements. A collection of poetry,



'Manimar Priya' is an asset in the field of folk literature. One cannot deny the appealing value of many of its stanzas that are conspicuous with the folk elements, re-examined by him.

Myths are extremely important in folk literature. Amongst modern poets, Sitakanta Mahapatra has shown extraordinary dexterity in its professed application that is just multifarious and abounding. The infusion of myths and Puranic epitaphs in modern poetry is not only confined to the precinct of simile but has also transformed the societal realities into dramatic symbolism. In turn, it has transposed individual experiences into a recipe for the masses. Myths further sharpen the edges of poetic expression. Being less descriptive, yet more figurative, poet Sitakanta Mahapatra has so meticulously employed the motif, storyline, rhythm, etc. of folklore into his writings that the primordial truths and its basal characteristics have come alive, zinging to the fore in easily comprehensively forms. In this respect, we can take a small example of his poem, 'Ghasa Phula' for clarity.

"ଆସ ଆସ ପାସ ପୁର ନେ ପିଆରେ ବସ ଶାନ୍ତବୀରୁ ବେଶି ବୁଲୁ ବୁଲୁ ଉପ"  
One can easily spot folk elements crowding the creations of Sitakanta, such as, in 'Bidaya Muhurta', 'Budha Shikari' and 'Prajapati', etc. His rhythmical compositions, symptomatic of the styles of folklore have been delegated to the words used, increasing its impact beyond the meaning, invoking an intense feeling of the enchantment of import. Through his rhythmic lines of poems, he has equally made extensions of the pace of the wordings and additionally maintaining a finer balance between the intonation and words. In these poems, the lingua franca, along with the rhyme, has dissolved fully to form and entity of oneness within the entire length of the poems. We can instantly notice such a mystical fete in Sitakant's 'Dhwansara Bilare Krushnachuda', that also explains its nuances, if one is keen to decipher. The cast corresponds to the rhythmic styles of Sabari Daka songs of Odisha. As

if it reverberates all the dreams, imagination and hues of life itself.

|               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| ଗହାଣି ବିଲରେ   | ହାତୁଳ ଧାବରେ   |
| ଆର୍ତ୍ତା ଖରାରେ | ଝିଅ ଯାଉଛିରେ   |
| ରମ ରମ ଆଦ      | କାହାର ଝିଅରେ   |
| ଦେହ ଆଦ ନାଦ    | ଗାଁର ଝିଅରେ    |
| ତାଳଦଣ୍ଡ ନାଦ   | ବୀରୁ ବଦାରେ    |
| ଆଉ ବେତେ ଦୂର   | ନାଦ ସରଗରେ     |
| ଅଶ୍ରୁର ଖରା    | ହାତୁଳ ଧାବରେ   |
| ଆଗୁଣ ଅସରା     | ଝିଅ ଯାଉଛିରେ   |
| ହାତୁଳ ଦାବୋଲୋ  | ବୀ ମାଟି ବୁଲୋ। |

(ରୋଡ ଗାଡ, ବାଲେଶ୍ୱର, ଦଶରା)

Measured lines, simple language and intense rhythmic churnings create an elevated atmosphere. As if a palanquin is passing through the tranquil meadow, enveloping dreams, rife with impending possibilities. It is a life simplified, though. Such folk elements are agog in the innumerable poems of Sitakanta. In his creative vision, even the vast sea is not an extension but innate, an inseparable part of the self, the intrinsic consciousness. His steps simply have gone on encountering the wetness and warmth of the expanding sea, everywhere "ଉତ୍ତୁ ଚ ନାହିଁ କାତେ ଶାନ୍ତବୀରେ ଅଜାଉର ବହୁଞ୍ଜିଆରେ। କାବର ବିଷ ପିଆଏ କେନ୍ଦୁରେ ଶୁଆର ଉଷ୍ଣ ସେଇ ଶାନ୍ତବୀରେ ସମୁଦ୍ର ବାଞ୍ଛ ବଦାଏ ନା ଦେହର ଦେବା ବେଦୁ ଉତ୍ତାପର ବିବାହ ଉତ୍ତୁରେ। ଉତ୍ତରେ ବେଶି ଖେତେ ନବବଧୂ ଓ ତାକୁ ଖେଳାଏ। ଦେଇ ପିତ ପିତାମହ ଅଦ୍ଭିତ ଶାନ୍ତବୀରେ"।

The poet in Sitakanta has appropriated the first drops of rain of folk literature fame while mediating in between the inevitable alley of life and death. Here, he has not dissected the exuberance of life but has come to an agreement with the myriad tastes of life and living off the faceless common mass just of fresh, raw, and undiluted feels.

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| Hyderabad          | 204, II Floor CGO Towers, Kavadiguda, Secunderabad              | 500080 | 040-27535383                 |
| Bengaluru          | I Floor, 'F' Wing, Kendriya Sadan, Koramangala                  | 560034 | 080-25537244                 |
| Patna              | Bihar State Co-operative Building, Ashoka Rajpath               | 800004 | 0612-2675823                 |
| Lucknow            | Hall No 1, II Floor, Kendriya Bhawan, Sector-H, Aliganj         | 226024 | 0522-2325455                 |
| Ahmedabad          | 4-C, Neptune Tower, 4th Floor, Nehru Bridge Corner, Ashram Road | 380009 | 079-26588669                 |



# Punjab's Folklore: Heer Ranjha

Kulwant Singh Virk

**F**olklore springs from the culture of the peasantry, their myths and legends, songs, proverbs, riddles and other manifestations of cultural activity. In Punjab, the most famous legend is that of *Heer Ranjha*. Four noted Punjabi poets, besides numerous others, have versified this story since the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It is, therefore, also a part of Punjabi literature and learning. The learning of one generation has a way of becoming the folklore of another.

The most popular version of *Heer Ranjha* is the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The common people, however, have never considered themselves strictly bound by the original but have always felt free to add to or improve upon it. This is an essential characteristic of folklore. Anyone who feels competent to do so gives something of his own to it. It is then for the people to accept or reject the new contribution.

There are so many interpolations in Waris Shah's *Heer* that every publisher's production displayed at the village fairs, has to announce itself on the front cover as the "genuine" and the longest version before it can command appreciable sales. Universities and other learned societies employ editors to expunge what was not contained in the original version. (Sometimes editors, fond of good poetry, are tempted to keep an interpolation for fear of destroying beautiful compositions).

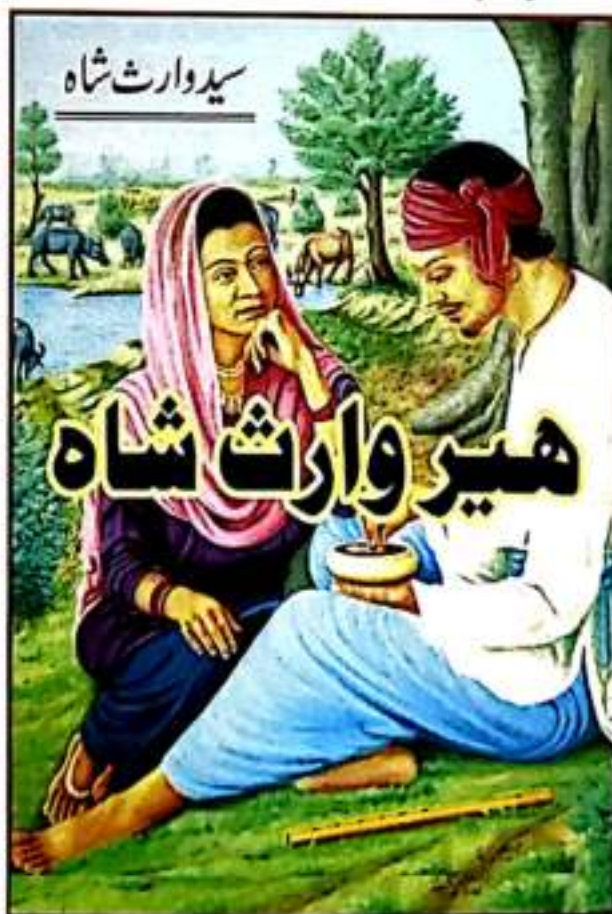
When I read Waris Shah's *Heer* at our small farmstead in Pakistan, my unlettered elder brother acted as my tutor. There were 15 miles between our village in Sheikhpura district of Pakistan and Jandiala Sher Khan,

the poet's home. There were 150 years between the time of writing and the time of our reading. While the proximity of places must have helped him a little—only a little because Waris' diction is not restricted to any particular part of Punjab—the distance in time did not appear to stand in his way at all.

This, then, is the basic fact about *Heer*—the reason why it is so universally popular. The Punjab peasant knows no other book so well; no other story has a more familiar outline and environment. While the richness of thought and variety of similes and metaphors bring him emotional pleasure, his mind readily grasps the well-conceived situations and easy trend of argument. There is no obscurity of language or ideas. He has only to hear it to understand.

*Heer of Sayal* "whose features are as beautiful as the

writings of a calligraphist"—and who could be "spotted out from among a thousand"—is the charming heroine of millions of Punjabis answering their conception of a brave, handsome and clever girl giving of her best to love. In the (now) two Punjabs, *Heer* has perhaps touched more hearts than any other book. Some are known to have carried a copy on their person all their lifetime. At every other farm, after the day's work, a rough, soiled hand reaches out to the book wrapped in an old piece of cloth. Parties of wandering performers play the legend before rural audiences. Since there is no copyright, it is not possible to tell exactly how many copies have been sold, but the number must run into several hundred thousand in Persian and Gurmukhi scripts.





Let us now turn to the story itself. Ranjha is the youngest of the seven sons of Mauju, a prosperous farmer side of the Chenab. After his father's death, Ranjha, a young idler, finds farming too hard for himself. His life is also made difficult by his brothers' wives who take a mischievous delight in teasing him. "Why don't you go and woo Heer of Sayal?", they suggest tauntingly.

Ranjha left home in quest of a vague love. On the way to Heer's village, he crossed the Chenab and went to sleep on a bed in a lonely hut. This bed belonged to Heer, daughter of Chuchak. She happened to come upon the scene playing with her friends. Annoyed by the intrusion of a stranger, they were about to beat him with sticks. Ranjha woke up and seeing Heer and her three score fair companions in a menacing mood, asked half in amazement and half in reproach: "Whatever do you mean, fair lady?"

Heer smiled and her smile turned into kindness, says Waris. Both fell in love with each other at first sight. Heer suggested that Ranjha serve as a herdsman with her father. "I will graze your cattle in the pupils of my eyes", replied Ranjha. In this new relationship, it did not take long for the news of their love to spread. Heer's uncle, Kaido the lame, took an active and malicious interest in broadcasting it. "You say she goes only to the mosque for studies, but she is, in fact, taking lessons from a strange chapter", the village women secretly told Heer's mother. She cautioned her daughter: "Your father, Chuchak, is a Sultan; he will cut you into pieces if he comes to know of it". "I am a slave unto my king Ranjha from the core of my heart," replied Heer. Matters, however, came to a head when Kaido took Chuchak to the wilds to see Heer and Ranjha in each other's embrace. The time-honoured formula to separate lovers by marrying off the girl to another man was

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tried. Heer was married off to a youth named Saida of the tribe of Kheras. To re-establish contact with Heer after her marriage, Ranjha went to Bal Nath, the *Yogi*, and joined his order. This gave him the privilege of not having to explain his presence in any village or house.

On her side, Heer met Saida's advances with frozen indifference and remained devoted to Ranjha. When Ranjha went to the Khera's village, he learnt that Saida's sister, Sehti, was in

love with a Baluch, named Murad. Ranjha won her over by showing her miracle and promising her union with Murad through his supernatural powers in return for her assistance. "I will cause mountains to strike against each other and make it rain without any clouds", said Sehti, and, true to her word, she hit on a stratagem. A snake was to bite Heer. *Yogi* Ranjha and Sehti were to be put into a separate room for occult treatment. Ranjha, through his supernatural powers, summoned Murad, "his eyes half-closed with inebriation", and the two couples fled their separate ways under cover of darkness. The Kheras pursued them in the morning and overtook Heer and Ranjha. They were taken to a Qazi for justice who decided in favour of the Kheras. At this, the town, which was a State capital, caught fire. King just of that State reversed the decision of the Qazi and restored Heer and Ranjha.

When the "ruby was stringed with the pearl" and Ranjha wanted to take his beloved to Takhat Hazara of which she was the queen, Heer said, "If I go like this, women will say I have eloped." So back they went to Jhang where "Heer surrendered herself to Ranjha". Heer's parents also promised him her hand and asked him to come with a proper marriage party. Ranjha agreed and went back. In his absence, Heer's people killed her by poisoning. When Ranjha heard of this, he killed himself. □

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## Expanding Children's Horizons

Ranjitsinh Disale was awarded the prestigious Global Teacher Award in December 2020 for contributing in the field of education among tribals and girls in Solapur district of Maharashtra. The Editor of Yojana English, Shuchita Chaturvedi spoke with Shri Disale on his exemplary work with rural children.

**Question:** Tell us about your childhood, how you perceived education then. What was the support from the family, and how did you fill these gaps in imparting quality education?

**Ranjitsinh:** I was an ordinary child doing so many things. My brother was brilliant and sharp. I was completely different. Actually, I was inclined toward computers since childhood. I was many times kicked out of the schools by my teachers and they always complained about me for not performing well in the classroom.

**Question:** What are the biggest takeaways from that?

**Ranjitsinh:** I met Dr. Vijay Bhatkar - Supercomputer man of India. He was invited as a Chief Guest at our school's Annual Function. And that time, I had designed an oval-shaped computer screen. So that was my model. And when he saw that, he visited me and told me that you should design better for a better future. That was the moment which inspired me to work in the field of computer science and work for society. This is the only thing that I still remember from childhood. Even though my teachers were complaining about me and punishing me every time, but in reality, they were thinking for my betterment. I opted for computer science in fifth grade. It was an optional subject and we had to pay an extra fee for that. But I know continuously pushing my parents to pay the fees. I wanted to learn about computer science. At that time, it was really a new thing.

**Question:** There is a perception that it is the end of the road after getting a government job. There is a stagnancy which comes to it. And it is evident in your case, the journey began with it. So tell us about how it started? Being a government servant, how do you see this road towards the transformation of the education system?

**Ranjitsinh:** When you get a job, you don't need to worry about the salary and any other things if it's not well-secured. Every day you're working with humans and



those humans are the futuristic citizens of the country. And they're actually very innovative and energetic students. So you cannot be very cool, shy and reserved with them. You should always be ready and energetic to interact with the students. When I started working in 2009, I faced a lot of troubles. My classroom was in a cowshed with buffaloes and goats and cows, which was really shocking for me. And I never imagined that there are such classrooms in India that are using that as a catalyst. So when I got back home, I was really worried about the situation of the schools and the indifference of the parents towards education.

It took six months to get back to my classroom. And in those six months, I realised that if the parents could believe in education, if I could get them to trust that education is the only way to change your status or find out the solutions, they might change their mindsets. And I surveyed the entire village, found data about the population, their economic status, their educational level. I submitted the data, analysed it, and realised that all the girls are more educated than the males. So this was really interesting to me as it was something different. So I am more focused on women's empowerment and their participation in education. And that's why I started the community engagement program



with the parents. I rented a room and started living there. I participated in cultural programs. The interaction with the parents did not involve any questioning like why they are not sending their daughters and boys in the class. My goal was to show them how education can change their lives and open windows of opportunity for them. They finally realised that this man is trying to do something different. Simultaneously, I also worked towards increasing the attendance of students in the classrooms because marginally two or three students were attending the classrooms, but the rest of them were sitting at home, and others were lending the helping hand to the parents at the farm. So I started with it, and everyone was upset. I went back to their homes, taking them back to school every day. It was my job for at least six or seven months. Then, after a year long time, I was thinking to change something in the classroom to make it more interesting and enjoyable. But first I asked my father to buy a laptop for me because at that time my salary was merely two thousand rupees per month. So I asked my father to give me a laptop so that I can use it for students. So he gave me one, and that really changed the environment in our classroom. So we were enjoying watching the movies, singing songs and everything that they wanted to watch. I asked them, what do you want to see on the computer/on my laptop? They said, "Sir, we want this movie or this song". When they got back home they discussed with the colleagues and friends that, 'today we are watching this movie. Tomorrow we'll be watching this one.' So this was a method to catch the attention of others, those who were actually working in the farms and leaving the house. They thought school is something different. We can watch movies and enjoy them. Initially, the focus was not on education but to let them just enjoy and get them back in the class. Gradually, they started coming and attendance increased day by day.

And then I saw entertainment turning into education. It's like edutainment how they can learn enjoying the games and other things. We started making some small videos/power point presentations and YouTube videos translating in Marathi and giving them some voice. So these were the initial steps to change the educational status of the system in their respective school districts.

**Question:** In terms of education, there are many other teachers in the world who are trying to bring out such a change in the society within their own limitations and we all have heard how you have decided to share the prize money with the other contestants. Do you have any plan to engage with teachers worldwide in a way to bring this transformation into grassroots sharing the best practices and maybe taking this journey forward?

**Ranjitsinh:** Yes, that's why I decided to collaborate and share that prize money with the intention that all the prize money they will be getting can be utilised for innovative practices and other things. I can interact with these kids and know if they have some innovative ideas to take back into my classroom. It's like a collective effort to grow together. So, already we have a network of such teachers at the international level. But now I am thinking about having mutual interactions and collaboration between them. Through one of my project, "*Let's cross the Borders*", Indian students interact with students of other countries. So that really helps me grow as a teacher and a human as well. Ultimately, it will help my students to broaden their horizons. Like ultimately we are global citizens, if you want to be a global citizen this experience is what exactly students in other class, other countries are thinking. Well, I think that collaboration will really help me and ultimately, education sector.







**Question:** Since introducing the QR codes and textbooks was such a basic idea but eventually turned out to be a big game changer. How did you go about it and how actually it reached the levels of NCERT that they actually do the textbooks?

**Ranjitsinh:** Yes, so actually the initiative was, I told you the computer based laptop. I was engaging them. At the end of every week, I created digital content. I transferred it through the memory card. The students bring their mobile phones. I transfer the data from my laptop to their mobile phones. Sometimes the files get corrupted. Sometimes the file is not supported by their respective handsets. So I was trying to find out the solution because there were some students, still do, who were not coming to schools. They were living far away from the schools and I couldn't reach out to them every day. So how these students can access education and how education can be reached to them? I was working on that. We can give them access even though they are sitting at home. The only way was textbooks but a textbook will not help them because ultimately they need someone to explain the concept in a better way so I was just recording the videos in my classrooms. Whatever I was teaching, I was recording it and the videos were being uploaded on a drive.

Once I went to a shop. I saw the shopkeeper scanning the QR Code of a product and the price was displayed on the scanner. That really sparked my interest. So I thought how this could happen? I got back home and started searching it on the internet. At that time I really do not know what a QR Code was so I sorted through the image but I didn't know how to search and what to search? Then I started to make QR Codes and learned to embed data in it. I created 27 QR Codes for my students and all the content being embedded in the QR Code.

**Question:** Would you like to share some new experiences that can benefit teachers like you across the country, especially during the pandemic days when underprivileged children need equality?

**Ranjitsinh:** If you have the mobile devices then you have access to control. But access to the technology is really missing in the various part of the country. We need to focus more on the quantitative aspect of e-learning. Even the children who have access to technology, are at the receiving end in this age of pandemic. They do not have two-way communication in terms of the classes conducted online. And teachers are not trained for that right now and ultimately this pandemic had pushed the schools to shift from conventional teaching to online teaching. Ultimately, online teaching is completely different. This is the opportunity for the policy makers to work on these aspects as well. We need to empower teachers as well, so that they could learn the nuances of online teaching.

**Question:** Coming to the policy, the policy change you have discussed how do you see the new education policy? It has a focus on the regional language and how can things be different for the children say ten years down the line?

**Ranjitsinh:** The New Education Policy is actually going to be the game changing policy in the educational system of India because so many years have passed still we are lacking the new idea. This policy focuses on student-centric pedagogy and will really change the pace of education. It will lead to teachers' empowerment as well.

And these initiatives are actually operated by the government. They have their own prototype and they have that structure. They're never flexible. So these initiatives should be taken from the grassroots level. It doesn't mean changing the lives of people. Your role is actually to target soft outcomes. So you see the difference between my perspective and the policy although I don't think they focused more on those statistical facts or the outcomes or the target. But I won't focus on the outcomes but ultimately I don't want to, every goal is now empowering. Everybody is getting the job. This is not my thought. You want them to have the confidence, self-esteem so they could actually become innovative with their own status in society.

**Question:** Publications Division has journals and newspaper including Yojana, Kurukshetra, Bal Bharti and Employment News published in 13 languages read by the children and the youth. So what would be your message to them?

**Ranjitsinh:** I think children should listen to their voice. They should not get bothered by the parents. Stick to your interests and do your best. I have seen fathers wanting their child to become scientist, engineer etc. but nobody is willing to listen to their child's wants and wishes. In my class, I make sure every student is heard. Always listen to the internal voice. □



## Multiple Choice Questions

- In which one of the following judgments of the Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court of India, the 'rarest of rare' principle in the award of death penalty was first laid down?
  - Bachan Singh v. State of Punjab (1980)
  - Gopalanachari v. State of Kerala (1980)
  - Dr. Upendra Baxi v. State of UP (1983)
  - Tukaram v. State of Maharashtra (1979)
- Consider the following sentences regarding 'MoU on cyber security' which was signed between India and the US.
  - The MoU was signed between Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT In) and US CERT.
  - CERT-In is a government-mandated information technology (IT) security organisation
 Which of the above sentence(s) is/are true?
  - Only 1
  - Only 2
  - 1 and 2
  - None of the above
- Among other things, which one of the following was the purpose for which Deepak Parekh Committee was constituted?
  - To study the socio-economic conditions of minority communities
  - To suggest the measures for financing the development of infrastructure
  - To frame the policies on genetically modified seeds
  - To suggest measures to reduce the fiscal deficit in the Union Budget
- Who among the following is not a recipient of the Bharatiya Jnanpith Award?
  - M.F. Hussain
  - Ashaparna Devi
  - Raghupathi Sahai
  - V.K. Gokak
- Who is the author of the book 'To Cancer, With Love: My Journey of Joy'?
  - Yuvraj Singh
  - Sharat Kumar
  - Neelesh Misra
  - Neelam Kumar
- What contribution has been made by Ernest Binfield Havell (E.B. Havell) in the Indian art and culture?
  - E.B. Havell was a official of East India company, whose efforts led to establishment of Asiatic Society.
  - E.B. Havell made efforts in establishing the Bengal School of Art.
  - E.B. Havell was a famous indologist who translated several Sanskrit dramas in English.
  - E.B. Havell was a teacher at Pune who established the National Archives of India.
- 'The Hitavada' is the largest selling broadsheet English daily newspaper of Central India. It was founded in 1911 by Social Reformer--
  - Baba Amte
  - Vinayak Damodar Savarkar
  - Gopal Krishna Gokhle
  - Nanaji Deshmukh
- With reference to 'World Economic Situation and Prospects 2019' consider the following statement:
  - The world economic forum released the report World Economic Situation and Prospects 2019.
  - Uneven economic growth is a major threat to be addressed.
  - The World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP) 2019 report, cautioned the steady pace of expansion in the global economy masks an increase in downside risks that could potentially exacerbate development challenges in many parts of the world.
  - The world economy is estimated to have grown by 3.1 percent in 2018, as a result of fiscally induced growth acceleration in US while a slower growth in a few large economies like Argentina, Canada, China and Turkey.
 Which of statement given above is/are not correct?
  - 1, 2 and 3 only
  - 2, 3 and 4 only
  - 1 only
  - All of the above
- Consider the following statements
  - Amaravati School of Art flourished during Kushana time.
  - White Marble was used in this art.
  - In this school, the Kings, Princes, Palaces etc. have got prominence.
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
  - 1 and 2
  - 1 and 3
  - 2 and 3
  - 1, 2 and 3
- In which of the following cases the Supreme Court observed the Central Bureau of Investigation is a 'Caged Parrot'?
  - Rail Board Bribery Case
  - Vineet Narayani Vs. Union of India
  - 2G Spectrum Scam Case
  - Coal Gate Scam Case

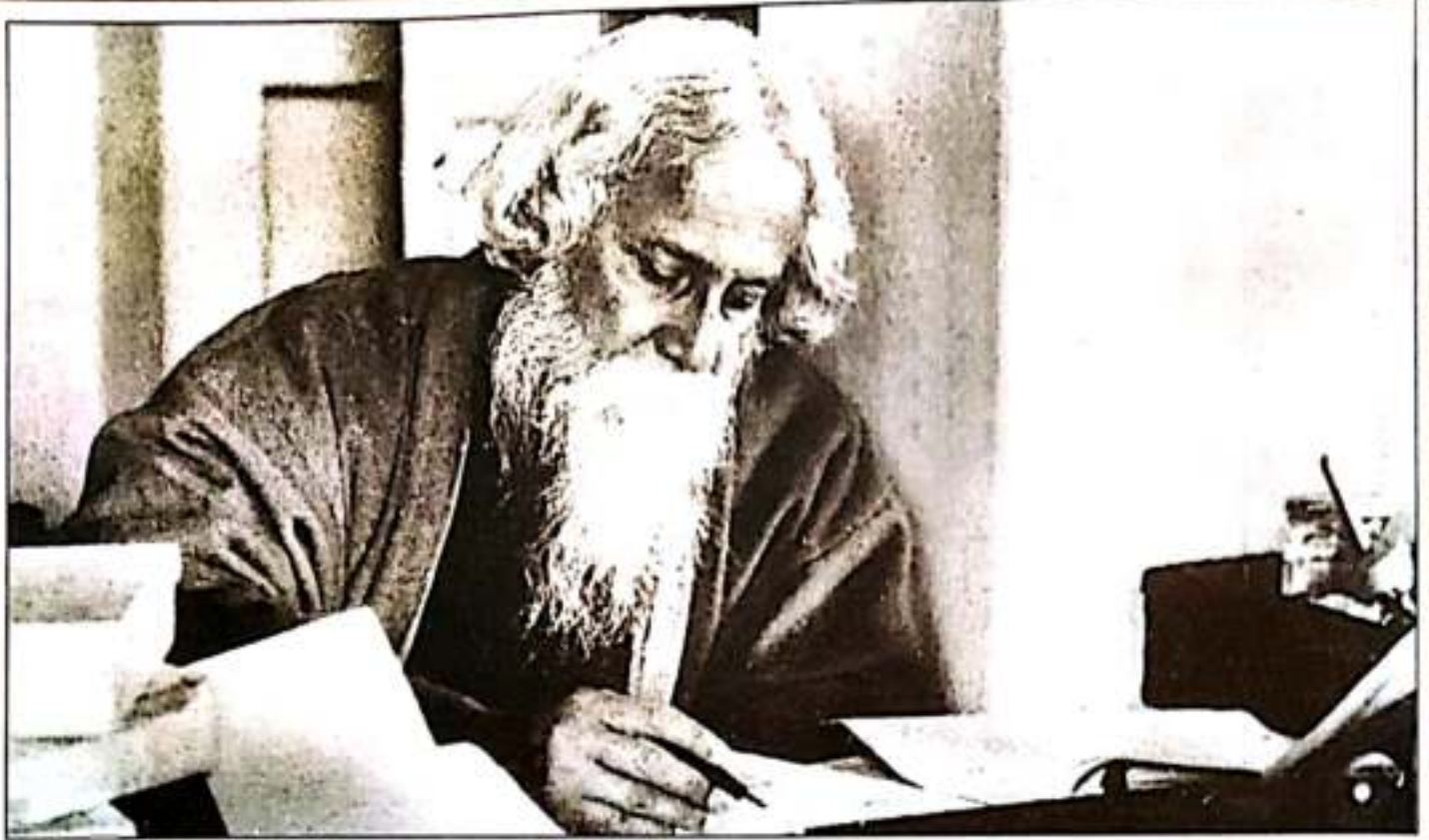
ANSWERS KEY : 1. (a), 2. (c), 3. (b), 4. (a), 5. (d), 6. (b), 7. (c), 8. (a), 9. (d), 10. (d)



## Frequently Asked Questions on COVID-19 Vaccine

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Will COVID-19 vaccine be given to everyone simultaneously?   | Based on the potential availability of vaccines the Government of India has selected the priority groups who will be vaccinated on priority as they are at higher risk.<br>The first group includes healthcare and frontline workers. The second group to receive COVID-19 vaccine will be persons over 50 years of age and persons under 50 years with comorbid conditions.  |
| Is it mandatory to take the vaccine?   | Vaccination for COVID-19 is voluntary. However, it is advisable to receive the complete schedule of COVID-19 vaccine for protecting one-self against this disease and also to limit the spread of this disease to the close contacts including family members, friends, relatives and co-workers.   |
| Will the vaccine be safe as it is being tested and introduced in a short span of time?   | Vaccines will be introduced in the country only after the regulatory bodies clear it based on its safety and efficacy.  |
| Can a person presently having COVID-19 (confirmed or suspected) infection be vaccinated?   | Person with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection may increase the risk of spreading the same to others at vaccination site. For this reason, infected individuals should defer vaccination for 14 days after symptoms resolution.  |
| Is it necessary for a COVID-19 recovered person to take the vaccine?   | Yes, it is advisable to receive complete schedule of COVID-19 vaccine irrespective of past history of infection with COVID-19. This will help in developing a strong immune response against the disease.   |
| Out of the multiple vaccines available, how is one or more vaccine chosen for administration?  | The safety and efficacy data from clinical trials of vaccine candidates are examined by Drug regulator of our country before granting the license for the same. Hence, all the COVID-19 vaccines that receive license will have comparable safety and efficacy.<br>However, it must be ensured that the entire schedule of vaccination is completed by only one type of vaccine as different COVID-19 vaccines are not interchangeable.   |
| Does India have the capacity to store the COVID-19 vaccine at temperature of +2 to +8 degree Celsius and transport them at required temperature? | India runs one of the largest immunisation programme in the world, catering to the vaccination needs of more than 26 million newborns and 29 million pregnant women. The programme mechanisms are being strengthened / geared up to effectively cater to the country's large and diverse population.  |
| Will the vaccine introduced in India be as effective as the ones introduced in other countries?  | Yes. The COVID-19 vaccine introduced in India will be as effective as any vaccine developed by other countries. Various phases of vaccine trials are undertaken to ensure its safety and efficacy.  |
| How will I know if I am eligible for vaccination?  | In the initial phase, COVID-19 vaccine will be provided to the priority group-Health Care and Front-line workers.<br>The 50 plus age group may also begin early based on vaccine availability.<br>The eligible beneficiaries will be informed through their registered mobile number regarding the Health Facility where the vaccination will be provided and the scheduled time for the same. This will be done to avoid any inconvenience in registration and vaccination of beneficiaries. |
| Can a person get the COVID-19 vaccine without registration with Health Department?   | No, registration of beneficiary is mandatory for vaccination for COVID-19. Only after registration the information on the session site to visit and time will be shared with the beneficiary.   |





...Continued from Cover II

This remarkable lady not only loved literature but took keen interest in it, particularly in poetry. Dwijendranath, the eldest brother of the family had for his friend the most gifted poet of the time, Beharilal Chakravarty. The latter became a regular visitor to their house. His poetic qualities so much excited her admiration that Kadambari Devi would entertain him by serving food cooked by herself. She even presented him with an *Asan* (a carpet piece used to sit on) embroidered by herself, in which she quoted a few lines of verse from his famous book, *Sarada Mangal*. Taking such delight in poetry, she naturally felt interested in the poetic talent displayed by her young brother-in-law and encouraged him in his efforts. But, she would take particular care to avoid the growth of any feeling of undue pride in him. She wanted him to develop his powers to his utmost and, therefore, would never let him know that he was progressing very well indeed. Even she would not plague him with taunting remarks to root out any feeling of conceit.

Unfortunately, she committed suicide for some unknown reason in 1884. Tagore records in his reminiscences that he had never before felt the sting of death so sharply as on this occasion. Overwhelmed with a sense of deep gratitude, he dedicated two of his books, published shortly after this shocking event, to her memory. The first of these is *Saisab Sangeet*, a collection of poems composed by him when he was still in his teens. More mature writings had been published before. Evidently, the death of the sister-in-law who provided him the inspiration to write them acted as the incentive for its belated

publication. They cannot claim high literary quality but have historical importance as supplying specimens of his earliest writings. The other book is *Bhanu Sinha Thakurer Padavali*. It has some interesting features of its own. Tagore wrote a number of poems following the *Padavalis* of the Vaisnava poets. They were published in the different issues of the family journal *Bharati*, between 1877 and 1881. They were such perfect imitations of the originals that they created quite a stir among research scholars and one of them even ventured to write out a thesis identifying the author with a poet of the medieval times. In spite of his sister-in-law's request Tagore was reluctant to publish in the first instance the compilation as he found no literary qualities of his own reflected in them. It is her memory again that provided the incentive to publish these poems.

From early childhood, Tagore developed an intense love of nature. That was naturally the inspiration for his poems in the early formative stage, which Tagore very aptly calls the copy-book stage of his poetry. The idea is that at this stage his efforts were more directed to imitating established poets. One example is *Bhanu Sinha Thakurer Padavali*. The other example is the collection of poems published under the title *Saisab Sangeet*. There is indication that he was influenced here by the poet Beharilal Chakravarty, the friend of the family. This is reflected both in the rhymes adopted by him and the description of scenes, though admittedly they carry promise of future greatness. Tagore himself says that he crossed the threshold of the copybook stage of his poetry in his book of poems, *Sandhya Sangeet*. The poems included in this collection bear the impress of his own



style for the first time. It was definitely a step forward towards maturity and he was immensely delighted to realise this.

Tagore's literary efforts were diversified from the beginning. Apart from poetry, he made rapid progress in other fields as well. By the turn of the century, we find him established as a writer of distinction in many fields. His first book of plays, *Rudra Chanda*, was published in 1881, when he was barely twenty. The same year, he wrote *Valmiki Pratibha* which adopted the story of the transformation of the robber chief Ratnakar into a great poet by the grace of goddess Saraswati. The next drama produced by Tagore is *Visarjan* in blank verse, which has for its theme an experience obtained in a dream. This is one of the finest dramas in Bengali literature.

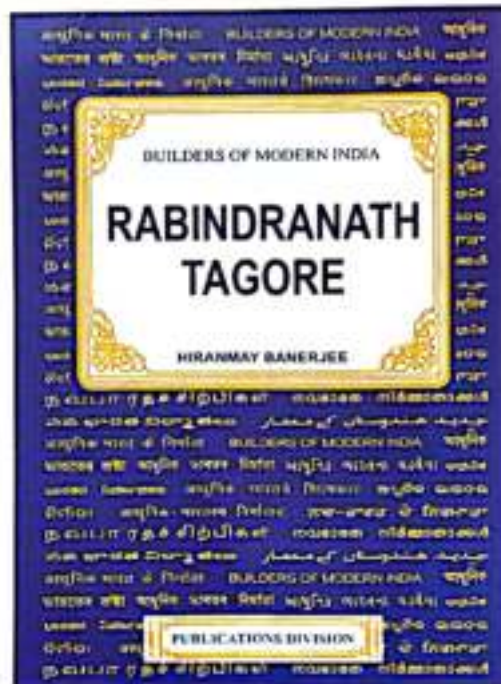
Tagore's first novel *Bou Thakuranir Haat* published in 1883 is evidently immature. The next novel *Rajarshi*, which shares the theme of *Visarjan*, reveals little beyond a promise of future greatness. It was published in 1887. But, *Chokher Bali* published in 1903 surprisingly records a considerable advance. It is a fine novel giving all the indications of Tagore's maturity in the field. During the long gap between the publication of *Rajarshi* and *Chokher Bali*, Tagore experimented in writing short stories. In the nineties of the last century, his main preoccupation was stories and he produced scores of them which have found place in his *Galpa Guchha*. They established his reputation as a great short story writer.

Tagore did not rise to such position of unique prestige without opposition. The contemporary writers wedded to conservative ideas started a tirade of criticism which was often cruel and extremely unkind. The writers who took a leading part in this campaign were Kaliprasanna Kavya-Visharad, a poet, and Dwijendralal Roy, a poet and playwright who by his own right can claim a place of distinction in Bengali literature. It is not uncommon that great writers face severe criticism. Tagore bore all this criticism with unruffled courage and equanimity. There can be no doubt that his sensitive mind must have felt its sting sorely enough, but there was no hostile reaction. He neither belittled the importance of his critics as lacking in capacity to appreciate his works nor did he try to protect himself by putting on an armour of indifference. He did not counter-attack them

either. He not only faced them with equanimity but was magnanimous enough to wish them well in return. There is evidence that he reacted to criticism in writing only on one occasion.

He argued in a verse that if his poems were found lacking in quality, they would be ultimately rejected and forgotten and so there is no point in such sharp attacks. The poem ends with message of good wishes:

*"Let your fame spread,  
Let your pen achieve distinction,  
Let the lustre of your talents,  
Rouse the admiration of the entire world."*



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The English *Gitanjali* had been published towards the end of 1912. Through it, he became introduced to the people of the West. It received the same warm appreciation as it had earlier, from the little group of his English friends in the house of Rothenstein. Recognition came promptly. In November 1913, he was awarded the Nobel Laureate in Literature. The conferment of this coveted prize marking his recognition as one of the greatest literary figures of the world took his countrymen by complete surprise. Recognition by his own people had never assumed an unreserved character, there having been hostile critics all the time. It appears that at least for the time being, their hostility had been silenced. Among the people in general, there was great jubilation. They became proud of his achievement and felt that their national prestige had been

vindicated to some extent through it, Tagore had so long remained a literary figure whose fame had not crossed the boundaries of his country because he had expressed himself in Bengali which was only a regional language of India. The language barrier was an effective bar to keep him screened from the view of the outside world. The publication of the *Gitanjali* in English had the effect of removing the screen and uncovering him to the eyes of the outside world. The people of the West discovered in him one of the greatest literary figures of the world. The award of the Nobel Laureate in literature put on their judgement the seal of approval of the highest world body assessing the merit of literary works. In consequence, Tagore became a world figure in his own right. □

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