

***INDIAN LITERATURE IN  
HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES***

**IV SEMESTER**

**ELECTIVE COURSE**

**HIS4 E06**

**M.A. HISTORY**

**(2019 Admission onwards)**



***UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT***

*School of Distance Education,  
Calicut University P.O.,  
Malappuram - 673 635, Kerala.*

**190517**

# **UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT**

**School of Distance Education**

**Study Material**

**IV Semester**

**Elective Course (HIS4 E06)**

**M.A. HISTORY**

## ***INDIAN LITERATURE IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES***

**Prepared by:**

*Munavir Ali A. P.*  
*Research Scholar, Dept. of History,*  
*University of Calicut.*

**Scrutinized by:**

*T.P Shihabudeen,*  
*Asst. Professor of History,*  
*SDE, University of Calicut.*

### ***DISCLAIMER***

“The author shall be solely responsible for the content and views expressed in this book”

## CONTENTS

<b>MODULE I</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>MODULE II</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>MODULE III</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>MODULE IV</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>48</b>



## MODULE I

### Vedic Literature

The Vedic Literature is the first non-archaeological written source of Indian history. The Vedic literary tradition thus places itself at a transmission stage of history between Pre-history and the Historical period. The Vedic literary tradition started around 1500 BCE with the emergence of the Aryan Culture. This literature gives information about the cultural and spiritual events during that period, including the names of certain tribes and their leaders and sages. Vedic literature is said to be the oldest readable Literature in Indian history. Harappan texts are available, but they have not been deciphered to date. Vedic literature is intrinsically connected with spirituality. The term Veda means Knowledge. Vedic literature is broadly a collection of three forms of writings. The first one is Samhithas that includes hymns, incantation, benediction, prayers, litanies, and sacrificial formulas. The second one is Brahmanas, the voluminous prose texts which comprise the matter of sacrifices and significance of sacrifices. The Aranyakas and Upanishads, the third, discuss matters associated with the meditation of God, and general musings of the world and humans. Aranyakas and Upanishads are partially attached with Brahmanas or included in Brahmanas themselves and partly also exists as independent works from other collections of literature.

The Samhitas form the core of Vedic Literature. They include Rigveda Samhitha, Atharva Veda Samhita, Samaveda Samhitha and Yajurveda Samhita.

## Rigveda Samhitha

There is no clear evidence to indicate the correct date of the composition of Rigveda. Rigveda does not deal with the Harappan culture. It is also mute on the features of the later Vedic Literature that shows the later phase developed Vedic societies and political systems. Historians thus generally place its composition age in between about 1500B.C. and 1000 BC. It comprises the collection of 1028 hymns Known as Sukthas divided into ten books or 10 Mandalas or circles. Books Two to Seven are considered the earliest and one and ten are considered to be the latter addition. Rigveda gives information about the Aryan society. The hymns in Rigveda locate Aryans in the region from the Yamuna to Sutlej and south of Ambala and the upper part of the river Sravasti. Rigveda mentions the *Dasas* and *Dasyus*, who are considered survivors of Harappan culture and the Dasa in classical Sanskrit and later hymns in Rigveda, which means the Slave class. Rigveda gives information about intertribal conflicts. Indra is named Purandra in Rigveda and he is believed to be the destroyer of dwelling units. Rigveda is the most important source of Aryan culture for historians. The term Arya is visible 36 times in Rigveda. Although the language of Rigveda is Sanskrit, it also comprises words of Dravidian and Munda languages. Rigveda as a spiritual text is a collection of prayers offered to different deities such as Indra, Agni, Varuna and Mithra. Rigveda noted the victory of Divodasa, a chief in the Baratha clan over Sambra. Rigveda indicates the political structure of that time. The names of tribal assemblies Sabha, Samithi, Gana and Vidhatha are mentioned in Rigveda. Rigveda also sheds light on the economy of people. The term gavishti in Rigveda denotes war or battle for the cow. Cow and bull are repeatedly mentioned in Rigveda, indicating their socio-economic significance. It indicates that the cow was the main

criterion for wealth, and many people follow the pastoral economy. Information about Artisans and other workers like Chariot makers, leatherworkers, pottery, and weavers is also present. The term *ayas* in Rigveda, meaning iron or bronze, shows that people knew or used metals.

## **Later Vedic Literature**

The later Vedic Literature belongs to the period after the Rigveda. In this period, other Vedas like Atharvaveda and Yajurveda were composed. Later Vedic Literature gives information about Iron usage in India. The term *Krishna-ayas* and *Shyama-ayas* in Yajurveda and Atharvaveda denotes dark or black metal.

In the later Vedic period, people's social and political life became more structural than in the early Vedic period. The extension of agricultural activities also created new economic and social relations. Indications of socio-political history in later Vedic Literature is different from the early Vedic Literature. There are some charms in Atharvaveda to avert the problems faced in agriculture, like drought. Agricultural activities like ploughing and reaping are extensively discussed. This information indicates that agriculture is becoming a relevant part of the then socio-political and economic life. The connection of iron with agriculture or peasantry is reflected in the context of the implements used in *Ashwamedha* in *Sathapatha brahmana*. The same text also gives information about the connection between metal and people.

The *Aithreya Brahamana* suggests that the king should gift 1000 pieces of gold, a field, and cattle to the brahmana who anoints him. These evidences show goods that are held valuable. There was evidence for the ploughs driven by half a dozen or a

dozen oxen in *Tittiriya Samhita* of black Yajurveda. The last part of the later Vedic period witnessed the emergence of the township or urban system. The word *nagara* was visible in Taittiriya Aranyaka.

Most of the Later Vedic texts are not spiritual and philosophical works like Rigveda. Later Vedic Literature focused on imparting sacred knowledge. Chandogya Upanishad has a list of subjects to study such as Veda, spiritual Knowledge (*Brahma Vidhya*), Ithihasa, Purana, Chronology(*nidhi*), grammar, dialectics(*Vakovakya*), mathematics, ethics, astronomy. The reference to the Upanayana ceremony, which transforms a young boy into Brahmacharya life, is available in Satapatha Brahmana.

Later Vedic Literature showed the emergence of the new mode of state-building based on territory, which is different from the earlier nature of the lineage-based state. The term Raja in later Vedic Literature denotes his key role in political power. Raja is the leader in battle and protector of people and settlements. Raja is the custodian of Rashtra. Examples of hereditary kinship are visible in shatapatha Brahmana and Aithreya Brahmana, which mentions *dasha purusha rajyam*, a kingdom of ten generations. There is also evidence for the election of the king in Atharva Veda. Some historians argued it might be not an indication for an open election but a kind of ratification of hereditary succession. Later Vedic Literature asserts the supremacy of raja over people. The imperial interests of some kings were reflected in terms like *samrajya* and *samrat*. Aithreya Brahama states that being defatted in battle by demons, the Gods realised that the reason for their defeat was that they had no king. So, they elected a king who led them to victory against demons.

The divine connection of the king is also discussed in later Vedic Literature. According to Satapatha Brahmana, the king

attained identity with Prajapati through the *rajasuya* and *vajpeya* sacrifices. References about sabha and samithi are visible in later Vedic Literature. Later Vedic text explained not only the divine relation of King; it also discusses the relation between king and priest. In rajasuya ceremony, the priest has a leading role.

The emergence of more systematically stratified society is associated with the later Vedic period. The term varna denotes the social differentiation among the people. The reference to social stratification is available in Rigveda. Purusha suktha of Rigveda mentioned four social groups Brahmana, Rajanya, Vishya and shudra. But term varna is not visible. Although there is some ambiguity on the order of the varna system, from the time of dharmasutra the order of Varna system was fixed. Brahmanas is on top and Shudras at the bottom. It is a hierarchical relation. The first three varnas have the right to perform an upanayana ceremony. These varnas are Brahmins, Kshatriya, and vaishya. The later Vedic text Aithreya Brahmana describes that the rajasuya sacrifice endows each of the four varnas with certain qualities- The brahman with thejas or luster, kshatriya with virya or valour, the vaishya with prajathi or procreative powers and the shudra with prathishta or stability

## Atharva Veda Samhita

Atharvaveda is a composition of 730 hymens containing 6000 stanzas. It is divided into 20 books (khandas), of which the last two are later additions. Some 1200 verses are derived from Rigveda. Atharvaveda is in poetic style like the usual Vedic style, and some part is written in prose similar to Brahmanas. Today there is two available recession of Atharvaveda- Shounuka and Paippalada. According to Patanjali, there are nine shakhas of Atharvaveda. Atharvaveda is related to *Rithik*. Atharvaveda included both material and spiritual contents and discussed who

has a supervising role in sacrificial ceremonies. Atharvaveda had a role in constituting the philosophy of the later Vedic period. Atharvaveda is considered the oldest text in Indian medicine. Ayurveda tradition originated from the Atharvaveda. Cure methods for various diseases are detailed in Atharvaveda. Atharvaveda is divided based on the themes discussed. The first section has Cure methods and destruction of adverse powers, and the second one is related to establishing peace, health, wealth, protection, long life, and friendship. Third section deals with time, the nature of supreme reality, mortality and immortality.

## Samaveda

Samaveda is connected with Rigveda. Most of the verses in Samaveda originate from the eighth and ninth mandala of Rig Veda. The verses in Samaveda are chanted in ceremonies of soma sacrifices. Samaveda is related to *udgather* priest. Upasana, devotion and worship, are considered important in Samaveda. There are three *sakhas* or recensions of Samaveda, although earlier there were 1000 *sakhas*, according to Pathanjali. The three *sakhas* are Kouthuma, Jaiminia and Ranayaniya. Kouthuma again is divided into two sections. One is *Arcika* or Verse collection and the second one is *Uthararcika* or Second verse collection. Most of the verses in these two collections are from Rigveda. The two sources indicate two styles of classification.

## Yajurveda

Yajurveda is in prose form, unlike Rigved and Samaveda. Yajurveda is divided into two-part-the white Yajurveda and (pure) and the Black Yajurveda (Dark). White Yajurveda is known as Sukla Yajurveda, which is related to Adithya School. The black Yajurveda is known as Krishana Yajurveda, which is related to Brahma school. Mantra and Brahmana are mixed in

Krishana Yajurveda, unlike Shukla Yajurveda, which maintains division. Madhyandina Samhita and Kanva Samhita are two existing Samhitas of Shukla Yajurveda. Taittiriya Samhita, Kathaka Samhita, Kapisthaha Samhita and Maitrayani Samhita are the four existing Samhitas of Krishna Yajurveda.

## **Upanishads**

Upanishads is the concluding part of Vedas. Upanishads are also known as the Vendanta. It means to end, conclusion and the goal of Vedas. Upanishads originated by the end of the Vedic period. Upanishads mainly deals with the *Janma Kanda* of Vedas, meaning the portion of knowledge in Vedas. Upanishads are included in the Sruthi tradition. They deal with higher levels of philosophical discussions like moksha. There is no single opinion about the exact number of Upanishads. According to Muktikopanishad there are 108 Upanishads. Of them, the ten principal Upanishads include Isha, Kena, Kantha, Prashna, Munda, Mandukaya, Taittiriya, Aitareya, Chandogya and Brihadaranyaka Upanishads. These ten Upanishads are known as Dashopanishad. Upanishads belong to the knowledge of Brahma Vidhya. Upanishads deal with philosophical-spiritual enquires like who am I and what is this world. The nature of the world and God are the core themes in Upanishads.

## **Vedangas**

Vedangas is considered as the six limbs or appendages to the Vedas. The knowledge about Vedangas is needed to understand the Vedas in totality. More than as a referential book, Vedangas is a supplementary science of Vedas. Vedangas deal with six subjects which are Shiksha, Chandas, Vyakarana, Nirukta, Kalpa and Jyothisha.

Shiksha deals with phonetics and pronunciation. The term *shiksha* literally means instructions. In this context, Shiksha means instructions for reciting Samhitas. This part discusses the Sanskrit language accent and alphabets that are to be followed during the recitation of Vedas. Chandas deal with poetic affairs. Kalpa part deals with the application of Vedic texts, which contains instructions for rituals including marriage, birth, death and duties of the person. Vyakarana deals with grammar which is important in the recitation of Vedas, especially for the correct expression of words in Vedas. Niruktha part deals with the etymology of words, and it explains why a particular word is used. It is important to understand a word contextually. Jyothisha section discusses the right astrological time to practice rituals.

## **Smritis**

Smritis are associated with the concept of remembrance and thus belongs to the concept of tradition. The Smriti literature is related to texts on social rules and laws. Manu Smriti was one of the Smritis which Manu authored and this work is known as the law of Manu. Manusmriti includes 12 chapters and all of these chapters contain 2694 stanzas. The work Manu Smriti deals with affairs of social conduct like types of Marriages, the concept of purification and pollution, Karma and rules for wives and women. This work also discusses cosmogony and Dharma. The world order is based on the fourfold caste society. Thus, the physical law is intrinsically associated with Hindu religious laws. Smritis include sutras and *Sloka* works. Yajnavalkya Smriti is another important smriti which deals with the concept of Dharma. Naradasmriti is another smriti work that deals with the religious-legal system.

## **Ithihas**

The literal meaning of Ithihas is ‘thus it was’. Ithihasa generally means epics, which is a kind of narration of the past related to traditional history. In ancient India, there are chiefly two ithihasa or epics- the Mahabarata and Ramayana. Common features in these works indicate their origin in the same cultural era.

### **Mahabarata**

Mahabarata is a prominent epic belonging to the ithihasa tradition of ancient Indian literature. The credit of composition is attributed to Vyasa, although now the work is not considered of an individual. It was composed between 400 BC and 400 A.D. Mahabarata is divided into 18 Parvas or sections. The work originally had 8800 verses and was known as Jaya. It later came to be known as Bharata because the work included the story of the descendants of the Vedic tribe Bharata. The number of verses increased to 24000, and later in the final composition, verses increased to 100000. This became what is known today as Mahabarta or *shatasahasri samhita*.

The core theme of the Mahabharata is the conflict between Kauravas and Pandavas, two sets of cousins and a great war between Kauravas and Pandavas in Kurukshetra. Some historians opine that the war occurred around 1000 BC. The historicity of the war and its bitterness is not clearly stated in history. However, many gigantic images of the war had been created through the poets and bards.

Some contents were added in later centuries like certain did active discourses and sermons. The sermons on Dharma by

Bhishma and Bagavath Geeta, the discourse of Krishna to Arjuna on war time, were included as a later addition.

## Ramayana

Sage Valmiki is considered the author of Ramayana. The period when the Ramayana was composed seems to be the period between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century BC and 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. Ramayana originally contained 6000 verses. Later it became 12000 and finally to 24000.

The core theme of the Ramayana is the story of Rama. Rama was a prince of Kosala. The work follows Rama's life as he is banished to the forest because of the intrigue of his stepmother.

Ramayana is also included in the category of kavya poetry because of its narrative style. Ramayana is divided into two sections of recessions, the northern and southern. The northern section is divided into three sections which are north eastern, north western and western. Ramayana contains seven Kandas or books.

There developed different variants in different languages of Ramayana later. The Tamil version Iramavataram by Kamban, Ramacharitmanas by Thulasidas, Buddhist version Dhasaratha jataka, which is in pali, Jaina version paumachariu of Vimalasuri, which is in Prakrit are the examples for various types of Ramayana.

## Purana

The term purana means the old or the things that belongs to past. It began as oral tradition. Puranas belong to genre that includes the myths, sermons, and legends. The earliest Purana is

believed to have been compiled in the Gupta period. There are Mahapuranas and Upapuranas. There are 18 Mahapuranas or grate puranas and countless Upapuranas. 18 Mahapuranas are Vishnupurana, Naradapurana, Garudapurana, Padmapurana, Varshapurana, Matsyapurana, kurmapurana, lingapurana, shivapurana, skandapurana, agnipurana, Brahmandapurana, Brahmavivartapurana, Markandeyapurana, Bhavishyapurana, Vamanapurana and Brahmapurana.

Puranas are supposed to have five characteristics known as Pancha Lakshanas. They are supposed to discuss five subjects- *sarga*, the creation of the world, *pratisarga* the recreation, *manvantra* the period of various Manus, *vamsha* the genealogy of Gods and rishis, and *vamshanucharita*, an account of royal dynasties. It included *suryavamshi* and *chandravamshi* kings whose origin is traced to the sun and moon.

The concept of time in Purana belongs to the idea of the *yuga*. There are four yugas which are *kreta*, treat, *dvpara* and *kali*. The four yugas make up a mahayuga and 1000 mahayugas makes a Kalpa. It is a cyclical proses based on the concept of decline and revival of Dharma. The concept of time is entirely different from the western paradigm. The attempts to compare and consider the chronological system with the historical tradition of Europe established that history writing tradition in Enlightenment fashion did not exist in India. However, the Puranas gave importance to listing the genealogies of dynasties, whether it was fictional or historical.

These Puranas gives some information about political systems as in Vayu, Brahmanda, Harivamsha, Brahma, Matya and Vishnu Puranas. They talk of dynasties in ancient India such as mauryanas, shatavahanas, shungas, kanvas, Shishunagas, Nandas

and Haryanakasa. Puranas are one of the most relevant sources to study religious traditions, especially the Brahmanic tradition.

The Puranas frequently mentions palaces, mountains and rivers, thus giving details about the historical geography.

It also gives information about the social background of certain dynasties. For instance, it explained Nadna dynasty as Shudras.

### **Early Tamil works**

The correct date of the origin of early Tamil Literature is not traceable. But it might have begun between the AD 1<sup>st</sup> Century and A.D.2<sup>nd</sup> Century. Early Tamil Literature is related to Sangam literature. According to Nilakanda Shastri, Tamil literature is a fusion of Tamil and Aryan cultures, which are different. Tholkapiyam is one of the important works of Sangam literature. The term Sangam can be simply translated as an Academy of poets or scholars. The centre place of Sangam was the Madurai in Tamilnadu. In the later phase, Sangam literature was under the patronage of the Pandya Dynasty. Tholkappiyam is the oldest sangam literature. Tholkapiyam critically analyses the Tamil words and letters. Sangam literature is widely divided into two sections which are Ettuthokai (eight works), Pathuppatu (ten works). Based on their thematic features, two modes existed in Sangam literature. One is objective. This section is related to the concept of society. It deals with the ethics of social life, munificence and valour of king and war. Other one is Subjective. It discusses personal matters such as love and different emotional relations between lovers and elopement. The text Paripadal mention the ornaments such as *vahu-valayam*(armlets) and *mekhalai*(girdles). Pariapadal is an example of works that belong to *isat-tamil* or musical Tamil. The song discusses Upanishadic and puranic lore. Most of the works are in verse, and the prose

style is less prominent. The most important works in this period are collected together, known as “Pathinen Kizhkanakku” or “Eighteen Kizhkanakku” (kilkkanakku). The Kural of Thiruvalluvar (Thirukural) is one of the oldest works. It discusses love, ethics and polity. It included 1330 distichs and was divided into 133 sections of ten distiches. The first 38 distiches were on ethics (*aram*) and the following 70 distiches were on the economy and political matters (*porul*). And the rest of the distiches are dealing with the subject of love (*kamam*). He was probably a scholar of the Jina tradition, and he had knowledge in Sanskrit works of Kautilya, Manu and Vatsyayana. Between the AD 450 and A.D.500 is considered the time of this work. *Purananuru* is a collection of 400 poems that followed the objective mode, and it discussed social life. GU Pope, a British missionary worker, translated certain Sangam works to English in the beginning. Later, a considerable number of Sangam literature was translated into English by A.K Ramanujan through his works of ‘Interior landscape’, *Poems of Love and War*.

## **Buddhist Literature**

Buddhism was one of the prominent religions of the world, especially in Asia. Also inaugurating a prominent school of philosophical discourse, Buddhism could enjoy the patronage of different rulers of antiquity. For instance, Ashoka was one of the main propagators of Buddhism. Buddhism developed as an alternative to the dominant Sanskrit tradition. So, the texts of Buddhism were not in Sanskrit. The texts encouraged the Pali language. According to R.S. Sharma, the early Pali texts are divided into three sections. The first section includes the teachings of Buddha, and the second is about rules to be observed by the sangha. The third section comprises the philosophical expositions of dhamma. In the first three centuries of the Christian

era, the Buddhists formed a new language known as hybrid Sanskrit by mixing Sanskrit and Pali.

These writing are generally known as Tipidika or Tripidika (three Baskets) Vinaya pedaka, Sutha pedaka and Abidhamma pedaka. Buddha did not write any texts, but the preaching of Buddha was orally exchanged through his disciples. The knowledge about the basic philosophies of Buddhism, the four noble truths and the noble eightfold path are extracted from such Buddhist texts. Buddhist texts mainly contain the speeches, utterances and preachings of Buddha.

### **Canonic**

The first Buddhist counsel was held at Rajgaha (present Ragagir), organised by the immediate disciples of Buddha to form a canon of the discipline of order (Vinaya) and of the religion (dhamma). Some report of the chronicle from Ceylon indicates that the real canon of spiritual text was compiled on the occasion of the third counsel, which was occurred in the time of king Ashoka. However, there are disputes in this matter that the compilation of canon may not only be in one council.

Vinayapetaka or basket of the decupling of order is mainly for the monastic community (sangha) to maintain the order, precepts of daily life and discipline. (Vinayapetaka is considered to be older than suttapedaka.) It includes the texts Patimokkha, suttavibanga, the Khandhaakas and Parivara. The core theme of vinayapetaka is patimoksha. Earlier it contained 152 rules and later, it increased to 227. Patimokkha included a list of monastic rules with atonements for the transgression of these rules. Suttavibanga is the description of Patimokkha's suttas. Khandhakas are divide in to Mahavagga and Chulavagga. Mahavagga deals with admissions to the order, the insignificant

details of monk's daily life and the observance of uposatha ceremony. Chulavagga deals with the rules for Bhikkus, their daily life, offences and duties of nuns. Pariavara contains indexes, appendices, list of proceedings of books and catechism.

The term sutta in the Buddhist tradition means the sermon or discourse, unlike the Sanskrit meaning of sutta that connected the term sutra. It is in the form of dialogue on the subject of dhamma (religion). Suttapetaka comprises five Nikaya, which are Digha, Majjhima, Samyutta, Anguthara and Khuddaka. Digha Nikaya deals with subjects like the origin of the universe, rebirth, asceticism, self-control, caste system and nirvana. It includes 34 suttas. Some of them are in the form of a dialogue between Buddha and atheists. Majjhima Nikaya discussed subjects like principles of Buddhism and its relation with Jainism and the socio-political condition of the time. Samyutta Nikaya deals with philosophical and psycho-ethical problems. It is a collection of 56 samyuttas (groups). Anguttara Nikaya included more than 2300 suttas in eleven sections. A considerable number of suttas in Anguttara Nikaya belong to the criminal laws of the time and women. Kuddaka Nikaya deals with various miscellaneous subjects.

Abhidhammapitaka or 'Basket of higher subtleties of doctrine', deals with the subject of dhamma. It is associated with the psychological foundations of Buddhist ethics. The work is written in the form of questions and answers.

## **Noncanonical**

Most of the non-canonical literature is the works of monks in Ceylon. But prominent works Milindapanh, Nettipakarana and Petakopadesha were written in India.

Milinda is Menandros, an Indo-Greek king. The work Milindapanha is a discourse on Buddhism between Milinda and a Buddhist monk Nagasena. The work was composed in about the beginning of the Christian era. Mahakachchana, a disciple of Buddha, is the author of Nettipakarana and Petakopadesha.

The Dipavamsa, Mahavamsa and Culavamsa are other relevant non-canonical works. This is written in Pali language in Ceylon. Dipavamsa was compiled in the AD 4<sup>th</sup> century. This work deals with ecclesiastical subjects. It was considered one of the first attempts to write in Pali as an important language in Buddhism in Ceylon. The authorship was unknown, but the heterogeneous structure reflects that it may be the work of multiple authors.

Mahavamsa was compiled in about 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> century C.E. Mahavamsa means great chronicle. It is a historical chronology of Srilanka or Ceylon. It discusses the dynastic history of Ceylon from 6<sup>th</sup> century BC to the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. It also gives information about the history of Buddhism. The work is founded upon two sources- one is Dipavamsa, and the other is the oral tradition transmitted through Buddhist monks.

Culavamsa is a historical chronicle. It deals with the history of Ceylon from about the 4<sup>th</sup> century to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The authorship of the part of this work that deals with the history of Ceylon till the 12<sup>th</sup> century is probably attributed to Dhammakitti.

## **Sushruta Samhita**

Sushruta Samhita is an ancient medical text. It deals with the surgery for stone diseases and other illnesses. Sushruta is the author of this work. He described 121 implements that are used in surgery. Sushruta Samhita completed its final form through the ages. By about AD 5<sup>th</sup> century, the editing and addition were

almost over. The work is divided into six sections- *sutra*, *Nidan*, *sharira*, *chikitsa*, *kalpa* and *Uttara*. The first section Sutra discusses the origin of medicine, food, surgery, treatment of wounds and a doctor's training. The second section Nidana contains the subjects of symptoms of diseases, their pathology, surgery and prognosis. In the third section, Sharira deals with anatomy, philosophy and embryology. In the fourth section, Chikitsa discusses therapy. The Fifth section deals with poison. Uttara, the last section includes the subjects of teeth, eyes and the care of children.

### **Charaka Samhita**

Charaka Samhita is considered the encyclopedia of Indian medicine. Charaka is the author of this work. It includes many names of plants and herbs which may be used as medicine. It discusses various kinds of diseases such as hysteria, various types of fever and leprosy. The work originated around the third and second centuries BC. The main part of the Charaka Samhita contains the knowledge received by Agnivesha from Attreya, his teacher and sage. It indicates that the medical system in Charaka Samhita is an edited form of agnivesha text known as the system of Agnivesha. Charaka Samhita was edited again later in the fourth or fifth century AD by Dridhapala. Charaka Samhita is divided into eight sections. It contains 120 chapters. The first section *Sutra* discusses pharmacology, various philosophical issues, food, doctors, various diseases, and their treatment. The second section *Nidhana* contains the causes of various diseases. The third section, *Vimana*, deals with the subject of nutrition, medical studies, pathology and taste. In the fourth section, *Sharira* discusses anatomy, philosophy and embryology. Another section *indria* deals with the subject diagnosis. The section *chikitsa* discuss the therapy. *Kalpa* discusses pharmacy and the section *Sidhi* deals with the general treatment.

## Arthashastra

The term *artha* means material wellbeing, a legitimate goal of human existence. The Arthashastra considered *artha* as superior over both *karma* and *dharma*. In Arthashastra, the term *artha* means the livelihood on earth.

Arthashastra is an essential work in ancient Indian history to read the polity and economy of ancient India, especially of the Mauryan Empire. Kautilya is the author of Arthashastra. Kautilya is also known as Chanakya. He was the chief minister of the Mauryan court. The work Arthashastra is divided into fifteen books (*Adhikaranas*). The first five books discuss the *tantra*, internal administration. Then the next eight books deal with *avapa*, inter-state relation. The last two works discuss miscellaneous subjects. The books 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> are considered as earliest works.

Arthashastra does not directly mention the Mauryan empire, Pataliputra one of the important cities in the Mauryan empire or Emperor Chandragupta Maurya.

In Arthashastra, the relation between king and forest chiefs is detailed. It advises the king not to trust the forest chiefs. The doctrine of the mandala was first set out in this work. Mandala is a circle of friends and enemies. Agriculture had a prominent role in the economy of the Mauryan era. Revenue collection seems to be regular. Land was recognized as private and state-owned in Arthashastra.

According to Kautilya, the slave, if he was an Aryan, could be free from slavery or be voluntarily released by the master and could return to his status when he completed his term as a slave. A slave in India could buy back his freedom or be voluntarily released by his master; and, if previously he had the status of an

*arya*, he could return to this status on the completion of his term as a slave, according to the *Arthashastra*.

In *Arthashastra*, there are no clear references on control of irrigation facilities to establish a despotic power. Although the construction and repairing of tanks, canals, and reservoirs were considered to be a part of governance, *Arthashastra* prefers private management of irrigation. However, it clearly indicates a centralised administrative system while favouring a centralised bureaucratic system.

*Arthashastra* proposed that the provinces should be subdivided into districts, and they again should divide to villages as the final unit of administration. Each department has a Superintendent and respective subordinated officers linked to local administration and a central government. According to *Arthashastra*, there were twenty-seven *adyakshas* (superintendence) to regulate the economy. *Arthashastra* proposes a complete control of the state over the economy, and the king was superior power although there were ministers. *Arthashastra* discuss the strategies for the use of a conqueror to defeat *ganas*.

In ancient India, the first definition of the concept state is in *Arthashastra*, discussing the concept of *spathanga rajya*, which includes seven interconnected elements of a state. This includes *svami* the king, *amatya* the ministers, *janapadha* the people and territory, *durga* the fortified capital, *kosha* the treasury, *dunda* justice or force, and *mitra* the ally. The swami or the king is considered as superior in this system. King should maintain personal guards and should frequently check the loyalty of ministers. *Arthashastra* highlights the moral obligations of kingship. Security and welfare of the subjects (*yog kshema*) are

considered the duties of a king. King must be accessible to the officials as well.

The second most important position is that of the *amatya*. It is generally considered to be the position of minister and advisor to the king. Arthashastra also notes about the *mantra-parishad*, a small body of *mantrins*. It also mentions *mantri-parishad*, a larger body, which includes department heads.

Arthashastra also discusses high officers in various portfolios. It mentions the *samaharathi*, chief revenue collector, *samindharti*, the treasurer, *daurvarika*, chief of the palace attendants, *adhyaksha*, department head, and *antaravamshika*, chief of the palace guard. Office in the capital is known as *akshapatala*.

Arthashastra also gave importance to the priests or *purohitas*. He should belong to a reputed family and should be trained in Vedas, vedangasa and divine songs. It recommends the king follow purohita.

Arthashastra proposes an extensive administrative system. This includes the *sthaniya* who is the head of an administrative unit established by king who contains 800 villages, *dronamukha* for a unit of 400 villages, *karvattika* for the unit of 200 villages and *samgrahana* for a unit of 10 villages.

Arthashastra also asserts that the king should maintain social order based on varnashrama Dharma.

## **Kamasutra**

Kamasutra is another secular literature in ancient Indian history. Vatsyayana is the author of kamasutra. The age of this text is assumed to be in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D. The theme of the work is the erotic and sexual subjects and the pleasure of urban life.

The term *nagarakain* Kamasutra indicates the wealthy, educated and refined man. The term *ganiga* belongs to courtesans. Kamasutra gives details about the art in that period. It mentions of 64 *kala* arts. Kamasutra also provides information about ornaments. Kamasutra says that polygyny was there among sections of non-royal elites too.

Kamasutra's core theme is the idea of Kama which means pleasure. It contains seven sections, including general practice and precepts, heterosexual intercourse, obtaining a bride, wife's duty, relation with wife of other men, courtesans, and secret formulas for sexual satisfaction. Kamasutra prohibits sexual relations with married women and women from the higher varnas. It allowed sexual relations purely for pleasure with certain lower varnas considered them similar to the relation with remarried widows and prostitutes. It also mentions systems of arranged marriage by parents or guardians and the girls selecting the groom with mutual love.

Kamasutra explains 64 knowledge branches that women should learn, such as knowledge of poetic meters and lexicon, reciting from books, solving riddles and completing poetic verses. This work discusses the good qualities of a wife. For example, the wife keeps the house clean and decorated, serves her husband diligently; she waits for her husband, attends public events only with husband's permission and perfectly manages the household finance and servants.

## Reference

A.K. Ramanujan, *Poems of Love and War from the Eight Anthologies and Ten Songs of Classical Tamil*, Columbia University Press: New York, 1985.

K. Kailasapathy, Tamil Heroic Poetry, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1968. K. Sivathampy, Studies in Early Tamil Society, Economy, Society and State formation, New Century Book House, 1998.

K. Sivathampy, Literary History in Tamil, A Historiographical Analysis, Tamil University, Thanjavur, 1986.

Kamil Zvelebil, The smile of Murugan, Brill, 1973. Nilakanta Sastri, K.A., A History of South India, (1947), OUP, New Delhi, 1998.

Nilakanta Sastri, K.A., Sangam Literature: Its Cults and Cultures, Swathi Publications, Madras 1972.

Winternitz M., A History of Indian Literature, Vol.I and II

## MODULE II

### **Bhakti literature**

Bhakti movement originated in North India, but it developed into a mass movement in south India. Basic philosophical characteristics of the Bhakti movement include the mystic realization of God within oneself and the ultimate union of the individual with God, based on loving devotion on the part of devotees and God's grace (*Prasad*) in return.

The concept of a personalised God is historical. Sathish Chandra traces back certain roots of Bhakti thought in Vedic Literature. This personalised devotion, especially of Shiva and Vishnu, became popular later in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> century CE. In south India, it started during the reign of Pallava kingdom. Then it spread to other parts of south India, including the regions under the Pandya and the Chera kingdom.

The preachers of Vaishnava tradition are known as Alvars and of Saiva tradition known as Nayanars or Adiyars. The main difference of the bhakti culture from the Vedic Brahmin tradition is that it is more inclusive. There were people from lower castes, and there were also women in the Bhakti movement like Andal. There were also conflicts between the bhakti movement, including Alvars and Nayanars with Jainism and Buddhism, the main religions in medieval south India.

Bhakti literature is not restricted to the mainstream languages like Sanskrit. It uses more regional vernacular language.

## **Bhakti literature in north and south India**

Jnaneshwer is one of the earliest proponents of the bhakti movement in north India in the Marathi speaking region. His commentary on Gita is one of the important works in Bhakti literature. In this work, he gave equal consideration for *jnan*, *karma* and Bhakti. He used the Marathi language in his writing that was the vernacular of the region instead of Sanskrit, to propagate his ideas. He lived in the 12<sup>th</sup> century CE.

Namadeva is another important bhakti writer. He was the successor of Jnaneshwer. He travelled across the subcontinent and had communication with Sufi saints in Delhi. His writings, especially the poetries, expressed staunch devotion and love to God. He lived in the 14<sup>th</sup> century CE.

Ramanada was another bhakti saint from Banaras. He was born in Allahabad. He worked beyond the caste restriction. He discouraged the ban on co-eating and promoted common kitchens. He added the student from the so-called lower caste and other castes as his disciples. His main contribution to the Bhakti movement was that he popularised the Rama as an avatar (incarnation) of Vishnu among the masses.

Kabeer, the legend in the Bhakti movement, was the main advocator of the unity of Muslims and Hindus. He was a weaver. He had connections with Sufi saints and Hindu saints. Kabeer was illiterate. He preached his ideas through his words orally. Only later were they composed and written down. He spread the idea of the unity of God who is just explained by different religions in different ways, criticised the caste system and emphasised the concept of equality.

Guru Nanak is another important figure in the Bhakti movement. He is also considered the founder of Sikhism or Sikh

religion. He was trained in the Persian language. After he had contact with the saints and sadhus in his travels, he had mystic visions. He expressed his ideas through his hymns, which was accompanied by *rabab*, a stringed instrument played by Mardana, Nanak's loyal attendant. He had visited different places in the Indian subcontinent and beyond to like west Asia, including Mecca and Madeena. He also emphasised the concept of one God, and he preached that the idea of salvation for all irrespective of Caste binaries. He proposed the concept of an ideal state.

Chaitanya, another vaishnavite bhakti saint in north India, had made an important contribution to bhakti literature. He became an intense Krishna devotee after he visited Gaya at the age of 22. He popularised the Kirthanas as a mystical form during musical gatherings.

The works of Bhakti poets Narsinha Mehta from Gujarat, Surdas of western Uttar Pradesh, Chaitanya in Bengal and Orissa, and Meera from Rajasthan were also an essential part of the Bhakti literature. These poets came under the broader Hindu framework. But their lyrics got popularity amongst different castes. The poets followed a humanistic approach. They criticised the caste system.

Between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries CE, Bhakti traditions were popular in south India. Nalayira Divya Prabandham, a collection of 4000 songs, belongs to Vaishnava tradition or Alvars (Azhvars). Twelve Thirumurai, which comprises 18426 songs, belongs to the Shaiva tradition. Ramanuja's Visistadaita doctrines are one of the foundational principles of bhakti literature in south India. Tirumurukarruppatai was composed in the sixth century in Tamil. Tiruvasakam and Tirukkovaigar were important South Indian Saiva Bhakthi literature.

## Court chronicles and historical narratives

Although the two prominent empires, the Mughal and the Sultanate, in India during Medieval times were Muslim, literary works often produced within these empires were not in Arabic but were largely influenced by the Persian language. Arabic was used in India mostly by Islamic Scholars and in works like *fiqh-i-firozshahi* and *Fatawa-I-Alamgiri*. Most of the secular works in that medieval period were not in Arabic. Some Turkish works were also there. In the medieval period, a new language originated as a syncretic one-Urdu. With the arrival of Turks, they introduced Persian to Indian Literature. Amir Khusrau was one of the popular poets in medieval India. He created a new style of Persian known as *Sabaq-i-Hindi*, the style of India. Minhaj Siraj, Ziauddin Barani, Isami and Afeef were important historians in the medieval period. In the medieval period, there were so many translations too.

Chach Nama is a work on the conquest of Sind. It gives information about the emergence of Muslim rule in India. Chach Nama is in Persian. The work is considered as a translation of an 8<sup>th</sup>-century Arabic history text.

The work Thaju Masir was authored by Hassan Nizami. This book contains verses and prose. He lived in the times of Quthubudhin Aibak and Iltumish. Although the work was in Persian, he used Arabic and Persian verses too. It gives information about the early times of the slave dynasty in the Sultanate period. Taj-ul-Maseer was written during the period between 1206 and 1271. In this work, the literary style is prominent than attempting to provide accurate historical facts.

Minhaj-us-Siraj Juzjani is the author of *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*. He was the chief qazi at Delhi. It was compiled in 1260 A.D.

Some historians argue that it is dynastic historiography as well as a politico biographic narrative. The work *Tabaqat-i-Nasri* introduced the *taabaqat* (layers) writing style, which follows a section or a kind of chapter method. *Tabaqat-i-Nasri* contains 23 *taabaqat* or sections. Every *Tabaqa* included chapters or sections. Each section discusses different dynasties and it's each subsection discusses different rulers in the dynasty. The work gives details about the history of various ruling powers and societies not only in the Indian subcontinent but also in West Asia and parts of North Africa. His writings concentrated on individuals and he considered the events as the activities of the individual.

Yahya ibn Ahmad sarhindi is the author of *Tarik-i-Mubarak Shahi*. He was in the court of sayyid rulers. The work included the history from Muhammad Ghori to about 1434. He strictly followed the chronological order. It gives more details about the Tuglak dynasty. This work is considered an important authentic source for the first two rulers of Sayyid dynasty.

### Writings of Ameer Khusru

Ameer Khusru was the court poet from 1289 to 1325 in Delhi sultanate courts under various rulers. *Qiran-us-Saadain* was composed between 1287 and 1290 during the time of Mirzudden Kaiqubad. The meeting between sultan Kiqubad and his father Bhukhra khan in Oudh is the theme of this work. It is a new form of historical writing in the Persian language. He wrote about the cultural features of India and compared them with Khurasan. He explained that from the sultanate period, India was important for Islam. He also describes the Muslims in India, whom he says are mostly followers of the Hanafi creed, and they respect all four Sunni traditions or Schools. He discussed the qualities and beauty of India, including natural and cultural features.

Khazainul-ul-futuh is the history of Alaudheen khilji's reign. Muhammad Habbed analysed Ameer Khusru's writings, and he mentioned that he had maintained clarity in the chronology of Alauddin's reign. He had a good touch with witnesses and his works helped understand the art of wars. Amir Khusru explained the history from the Alauddin Khilji invasions to Deogri in south India in 1295 to 1312. The new reforms of Alauddin Khilji, his construction of new buildings and public works under him are explained in this work. It also discussed the price control mechanisms, which was a reform under Alauddin Khilji and its implementation and impacts. It also briefly narrates his south Indian military invasion.

Dewal Devi wa-khizar khan tells the tale of romance between prince Kizar khan and Dewal Devi. It was first compiled in 1315. It narrated the marriage of Kizer Khan. The work Ashiqqa also discussed the romantic relation between Dewal Devi, daughter of Raja Karan of Naharwala and Kizar Kahan, son of Alauddin Khalji. This work was written in 1320.

Nuh siphra a famous medieval literature, briefly narrated the splendours of Delhi on the occasion of the return of Qutubuddin Mubarak shah. This work was written in 1318. He discusses the royal court, nature, people, and language of Hindustan.

Tugluq Nama is the most important historical work of Ameer Khusru. Through the verses, the author detailed the history of Tughluqs, especially about the Giyazuddin Tuglaqshah, and explained the early military career of Gazi Malik. This work belongs to the celebration of victories of Giyas ud- Din Khalji over the Khuzru Khan.

Ijaz-i-khurazavi gives detailed information on the political economy and public welfare made by Khuzru and his contemporaries. The work Miftah-us-futuh is about the celebration of four victories of Jalal-ud-Din Khalji. Khaza'in us futuh another medieval literature praises the sultan Aludden Kalji and his army and is written in 1311.

Abdul Malik Isami is the author of Futuh-us-Salatin. It is a historic work that contains the history of the conquest of Muhammad Ghazni and Muhammad Ghori in north India. It also discusses the history of the Delhi sultanate till around 1349 and 1350. He also severely criticised Muhammed bin tugluq.

Sirat-i-firuz shahi is work by Firuz Shah Tugluq. The author ship of the work was unknown for a long time. Tarikh-i-firuz shahi is a eulogy of Firuz Shah Tugluq. The work was authored by Shamas ud-Din Siraj Afif. He was a courtier of Firuz Shah Tugluq. It discussed the welfare works of Firuz Shah Tugluq and his administration. He also throws light on the power of Nobility and Ulamas. He also notes about corruptions endemic to the system. Although the work is a eulogy praising the sultan, it also critically engages with some policies of sultans, which was ascribed as the reason for the weakening of the sultan's power.

Ziya ud-Din Barani's Tarik-i-Firuz Shahi is a famous work in medieval Indian literature. Ziya ud-Dhin Barani is one of the most popular writers in medieval India. The main source of his writing was the empirical knowledge gained from the extensive travels that he had. He could access the inner circles of courts and collect more credible knowledge. He did not often follow the correct chronology. He found the identity between Hadit and Tarikh as traditional and historical. The preface of this work throws light on the author's perception of history. Barani

explained the qualities needed of a historian and history. He stated that Historians should be and avoid the exaggeration of language.

Tarikh-i-Muhammadi another medieval literature was authored by Muhammad Bihamad Khani. Tarik-i-Muhammadi was completed in 1439.

Tabaqat-i-Akbari was the work of Nizam ud-Din Ahmad. He was the military secretary of Akbar. This work was completed in 1539. The work is in three volumes. It narrated the history of nine regions in the first 38 years of Akbar's reign. Delhi, Decan, Gujarat, Bengal, Malwa, Jaunpur, Sind, Kashmir, and Multan are those nine regions. The author discusses the dynastic history of regions after Akbar's conquest. This works information about the size of Akbar's reign and wars and rebellions. He used 28 works as his source for this work and he also used other sources like personal information.

Babar Nama or Tuzuk-i-Babari is the autobiography of Babar. Babar is the founder of the Mughal empire in India. So, his biography is important for medieval history and especially for the early history of Mughals. It was in the Changtai language. Later it was translated to Persian by Abdul Rahmin during Akbar's reign. According to the author's opinion, he wrote all that happened and explained all things good and bad. He followed chronology in his writings.

Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri is the autobiography of Jahangeer. This work has three versions. The one version was completely written by himself is about the first twelve years of Jahangir's region. Then he appointed his military secretary Muhammad Khan for completing the rest of the work under his supervision. Jahangir explains in detail his own weakness and vices in it.

Akbar Nama and Ain-i-Akbari are other two important works in medieval India. These two works can't be taken separately, and these two works are considered complimentary works to each other. These works were authored by the famous writer Shaik Abul Fazal. He was the state-sponsored historian of his time. The work was started in 1595, and in 1602, it was complete. He was very close to Akbar more than a court writer; he was also a minister, diplomat and military commander of Akbar. Hence, he could write a brief history of the Akbar's region. Ain-i-Akbari is divided into five books. This work narrates the experiments of Akbar and his institutions. Akbar Nama is trying to discuss the spirit behind such innovative institutions. The views of Abul Fazal on history is included in the second volume of Akbar Nama.

Apart from the works under Mughal and Sultanate empires, there were other literature produced within the purview of other kingdoms. Rajatharangini was one of the literary works that come under this category. Rajatharangini was a famous chronicle work in medieval India. Kalhana wrote this work in 12<sup>th</sup> century. It was Sanskrit work. Rajatharangini is divided into different Tarangas. In medieval history, Rajatharangini as a literary source is relatively considered a historical one. It gives knowledge about the history of Kashmir.

## **Works on Science and Mathematics**

In medieval times there were many works on science and mathematics. There were deliberate attempts to promote science education. During Akbar's period, astronomy and mathematics became compulsory subjects to be studied. The knowledge of Arabs in Greek science helped Indian Muslim scholars write works on science and mathematics. In the medieval period, several Madrasas were set up for science education. The two

brothers Sheik Abdulla and Sheik Azizulla, were specialists in rational science. Mathematics was mainly used for practical purposes like measurements. The Unani system was introduced into the field of medical science, and during the reign of Firuz Shah Tuglaq, the first Astrolab was introduced in India.

## Mathematics

In medieval times, most scholars of Astronomy were Mathematicians. Bhaskaracharya II was one such famous mathematician and astronomer.

Albinurni translated Sanskrit mathematical works into Arabic. The work *Kitab-al-hind* of Albiruni mentioned astronomical methods of Indian scholars. The work *Fi Rashikat al-Hind* discussed the Indian Rule of three. He translated *Karnataka* of Bijayanada to Arabic. *Ganitakaumudi* and *Bijaganitavatamsa* are the mathematical works by Narayana Pandit. Gangadhara wrote the famous work *Lilavati*, and he also wrote *Karamdipika*, *Suddhantapidika*, and *Lilavati Vyakhya*. These works discussed various trigonometrical terms like sine, cosine, tangent and cotangent. *Tantrasamgraha* is the work of Nilakantha Somayaj, a famous astronomical work. It was compiled in 1500. Other important literatures in this category include *Buddivilasini* by Ganesa Daivajna and *Navakaruna* by Krishna. Nilakantha Jyothirvida compiled the work *Tajik*. Faizy translated Baskara's *Bijaganit* in to Persian.

Nasir al-Din Tusi compiled the Arabic recessions of Euclid's 'Elements' known as *Tahrir Kitab Usul al-Handasa wa'lHisabi al-mansub ila uqlida*, generally known as *Tahirir Uqlidas*.

## Science

Ali-bin-Rabban, in his work *Firdousu Hikamat* discuss Greek medicine and Indian medicine. The work *Majiny-i-diyae* by Hakeem Diya Muhammed deals with Persian, Arabic and Ayurveda medical knowledge. Firuz Shah Tuglaq's *Tibbe Firuz shahi* is another important work. *Tibbe Aurangzebi* is based on various ayurvedic sources of knowledge.

### Musalajati-Darshikohi of Nuruddin Muhammad.

Albiruni's *Kitab as-Saydana fi't Tabib* gives information about the medical herbs and minerals used in Unani system. It is in Alphabetical order. The work of Albiruni was translated to Persia by Abu Bakr bin Ali bin Usman during the reign of Iltumish.

## Reference

H. M. Elliot, Edited by John Dowson, *The History of India, as Told by Its Own Historians. The Muhammadan Period*, 2, London: Trübner and Co.

Kesavan Veluthat, 'The Temple-Base of The Bhakti Movement in South India', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Vol. 40, 1979.

M.M. Sharifed, *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, Vol. 1, Adam Publishers and Distributors, 2007.

S.A.A. Rizvi, *History of Sufism in India*, 2 Volumes, South Asia Books, New Delhi, 1997.

Sachau, C. Edward, *Alberuni's India – An account of India about A.D. 1030*, Kegan Paul, Trench Trubner and Co. Ltd., London, 1910.

Satish Chandra, *Essays on Medieval Indian History*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2003.

Satish Chandra, *Medieval India: From Sultanate to the Mughals*, Har-Anand Publications, New Delhi, 1997.

## **MODULE III**

### **Modern Indian Literature**

Modern Indian Literature in English generally includes the writings of Indians in English and other regional languages during the colonial period. Before the emergence of full-fledged British colonialism, the influence of European literary traditions and associated modernity in Indian literature was scant. The early colonial phases of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries seldom saw Indian contributions within a modern paradigm of enlightenment rationality. The 19<sup>th</sup>-century proliferation of the printing press, however, saw the rising Indian contributions either adapting Modern parameters or reacting to it negatively. These writings thus included adaption, contestation and resistance. Newer trends appeared in regional language also. The best example of such writings includes works of Rabindranath Tagore and Bankim Chandra Chatterjee in Bengal, Indulekha of O.Chandumenon in Malayalam and Saadat Hasan Manto in Urdu.

### **Colonial Impact**

Writings in India during the high and late colonial periods were largely influenced by colonial and modern European Literature. The so-called colonial influence or impact represents the features of modernity that derived from the enlightenment in medieval Europe. Enlightenment traditions and their influence on literary traditions are clearly visible in the themes of such writings. Company-established collages also fueled these trends. Bengal was one of the first regions to directly engage with colonialism, including imperial colleges like Fort William

college. The influence of colonial traditions, an integral part of the colonising hegemony, includes mimicking their crude forms and resisting its dogma. Colonialist perception wrote-off pre-existing writings or writing culture in India by judging them from the norms prescribed by Enlightenment rationality. Such ideological contradictions and negations inspired new trends in Indian literature like nationalism and identity formation, including language identity.

Historically, the print culture enabled the popularisation of Modern Indian Literature, spurning a new print-literary tradition. However, contrary to popular belief that Printing and publish, modern modalities, would churn out literature subscribing to enlightenment norms, they generated literature that bend itself to market demands. Publishing during colonial times thus turned into the reproduction of pre-modern folktales, myths and romances that had better demand among native readers rather than bring them the tenets of European modernity.

## **Nationalism**

Nationalities or national identities, as in Nationality is to the social group what personality is to the individual, forms the basis for stitching in a spirit of nationalism that is then articulated as a political claim to a new nation-state or a separate political autonomy. These articulations are imagined and then performatively worked into existence not via political bodies and civil movements but literature backing it up as well.

In the Global South, there were resistance movements against colonial powers and the idea of nationalism churned out such resistance movements. Since the arrival of Portuguese colonialists in India, a socio-political tension between the hegemonising power of colonialism and various pre-existing

local entities began to play out though mutual imbibitions did take place.

Modernity saw multiple revolutions, forming new national identities and states which included specific features that are exclusive to them like like the concept of citizenship, restricted and mutually respected territorial boundaries and a sovereign government. However, the formative process of nationalism and nationalities vary in different parts of the world too. Some nationalities are based on ethnicity, while some are based on languages. It is also reflected in nationalist literature as in political agitations. Some of its flagbearers include the likes of Rammohan Roy, Henry Derozio, Toru Dutt, Manmohan Ghose, Rabindranath, Aurbindo, Sarojini Naidu, Raja Rao, Mulka Raj Anand, R.K Narayanan andBhabhani Bhattacharya.

### **Religion, language and Identity**

The formation of an identity has to be performatively enacted often. No other method exists as powerful as writing a new identity into existence. This requires the redefinition of a language that is claimed to be organically linked with a social identity. This is often the case with the process of religious identity formation. The anti-colonial ethic of Indian nationalism demanded a non-English language to articulate the counter-tenets of the nationalist spirit. This also had to be spoken en masse across the sub-continent. Not only was there this demand for a unifying spoken language but also a corresponding script.

### **Bankim Chandra Chatterjee**

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee is a famous Bengali novelist. He was born on June 27 1838, in Bengal. Being a government employee, he wrote novels, poems and fiction. He used the

monthly magazine *Bangadarshan* which started publication in 1872 to propagate his ideas. He had played a key role in Bengali Renaissance. His famous writings are *Durgeshnandini*, *Kapalkundala*, *Devi Choudurni*, *Ananda Matha* and *Rajmohan's wife*. The famous nationalistic verse *vantematharam* is from the *Ananthamatha* which is in the Bengali language. The theme of this fiction is the Sanyasi Rebellion of 18<sup>th</sup> century. *Durgeshnandini* is a famous romantic novel written in 1865. The background of this novel is a conflict between Mughals and Pathans during Akbar's regin. The important theme in this novel is the triangle love of between a Mugal general Jagat Sing, *Tilottama*, daughter of a feudal lord in Bengal and *Ayesha*, daughter of Pathan leader. *Kapalakundala* is another work that was published in 1866. The story is about *Kapalkundala*, a forest-dwelling girl and her affair with *Nabkumar* from *Saptangram* that ended in their marriage. But she was unable to adjust to a new urban life. The work *Devi Choudurani* was published in 1884. This is a political novel. It later influenced the patriotic nationalist movement and was banned by the British. *Prafulla* is the main character in this work, a woman who grew out of her humble origins via constant struggles. *Rajmohan's wife* is his English work which was published in 1864—one of the first Indian novels in English. *Bankim Chandra Chaterjee* in his novels gave importance to women.

## **Rabindranath Tagore**

Rabindranath Tagore is a historical personality of significant stature in the late colonial period. His contributions have not limited to his writings as he was also a social reformist and a national leader. He was born in 1861. He was very much influenced by the liberal ideals of modernity. Subsequently, he brought a change in Bengali literature through his writings. He was a noble prize winner in literature in 1913. He received

education in England and came back to India. Tagore started the Shantinikethen, which attempts to integrate and compile knowledge from the best of the west and India. Tagore severely criticised British colonialism through his works. He was considered as an eminent nationalist and at the same time, also recognised as a staunch internationalist and universalist. Famous works of Tagore included Gitanjali, Ghare-Beire, Gora and poems like Amar Shonar Bangla. The Indian national anthem Jana Gana Mana was written by Rabindranath Tagore. He was also a famous composer. Gitanjali is a collection of poems published in 1910 which was translated to English known as Gitanjali: Songs offerings. Love is the important theme of this work. The work Ghare-Beie was translated to English as The home and the world. His humanist insight was deep enough to warn of the dangers of the nationalistic spirit taking a jingoist turn when the former begins to operate solely within the paradigms of European enlightenment thought and the associated nation-state conception. Like Gandhi, he preached a nationalism that revolves around Euro-centric conceptions of freedom not restricted to its political and material meaning. Freedom of the mind devoid of unnecessary greed alone could prevent jingoism. “To worship my country as a God is to bring curse upon it,” Tagore wrote in his 1916 novel, The Home and the World. Calling it carnivorous and cannibalistic, Tagore went on to declare that “I will never allow patriotism to triumph over humanity as long as I live.”

Tagore is considered as the most revered figure in Bengal’s cultural history. He was an educator as well as a philosopher with a humanistic vision for the nation. His lines are revisited by musicians and public speakers even today for the deep wisdom they contain and their musicality. Several of his works have been adapted into films later. Tagore was also actively involved in social reform and freedom struggle movements. After the brutal events at Jalian Walabagh in 1919, he renounced the knighthood

offered by the British as a mark of protest. Tagore continues to influence the Indian intelligentsia at a time when the debate on the effects of nationalism is more relevant than ever.

## **O. Chandu Menon**

O. Chandu Menon is considered one of the first modern writers in the Malayalam language. He was employed in government service; then, he became sub-judge in Calicut. He was from the Malabar region of Kerala. He became famous in the literary world with his writing of *Indulekha*. It is recognised as the first modern novel in Malayalam. *Indulekha* and the first chapter of his work *Sharada* are notable sources to know about his literary career. He was born in 1847. His writing indicated the social relations of 19th century Malabar. His historical work *Induleka* was written in 1889. The latter half of 19<sup>th</sup> century witnessed dramatic socio-political changes in India. Emerging urban spaces, the introduction of a new western educational system and the opportunities for social mobility all created a new social-cultural sphere. These changes were less drastic in Malabar when compared to cities like Calcutta. Nevertheless, few like Chandu Menon were influenced by these changes. He was born into a Nair Family in Talassery. Among his community, a matrilineal system of inheritance existed. His famous work *Induleka* explores the then matrilineal family system and the changes it was undergoing in the later parts of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In most matrilineal families, women are better placed than in patrilineal families and they lived in their own homes after the marriage—the Tharavad (Nayar Family Houses). But by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were some changes in this system, especially in northern Malabar. Colonial intervention and new legal systems brought about by the Presidency administration considered the matrilineal family as a Joint family. New English education also brought about some changes in generational thinking. Some

people started to get a new English education and this age shows the opportunities for the occupation this new breed had. The novel *Indulekha* portrays disputes and relations within a matrilineal family. *Indulekha*, a Nair woman, is the core character in this novel. She was an educated woman and had knowledge in Sanskrit and English. *Madavan Nair*, her cousin and fiancée, is the other protagonist in this novel and he too was educated. This shows the opportunities to acquire English and western knowledge among the upper cast Nairs. *Indulekha* denied *Sambandam* marital relations with a Brahmin as *Madavan* went to *Calcutta*. The novel thus highlights the stemming cultural conflict between new westernised generations skeptical of the traditional Nair culture and an older generation averse to modernity. However, the novel and *Menon* has been critiqued for uncritically imbibing Victorian codes of morality per se. Many critics have pointed out the issues of Caste privilege in this novel. Moreover, *Chandu Menon's* conception of modernity and nascent imaginings of nationality follows the broader pattern of mainstream Indian nationalism that, as *Partha Chatterjee* reads it, develops an outer domain of physical materiality that imitates western modernity (as in English education) while attempting to preserve an inner domain that supposedly treasures traditional values.

### **Saadat Hasan Manto**

*Saadat Hasan Manto*, a Great Urdu Writer, made considerable contributions to Urdu literature. He was born in 1912. After the partition, he migrated to Pakistan. When he was young, he was a member of the Indian progressive writers association. Hence, he was also known as a Marxist writer. His short stories are very much famous. He was a student of *Aligarh Muslim University*. He started his literary career as a translator. He translated works from English to Urdu. He was thus is well

acquainted with western literature. He translated the work of Victor Hugo *The last date of condemned* in to Urdu as Sarguzashet-e-Asir. His short story Tamasha was published in the journal Khulqa. The work Tamasha was his first short story and the theme of this work is the Jallianwala bagh massacre. He was also a journalist and a film screen writer. He made a collection of about 20 short stories. He wrote explicit continents dealing with sex work and alcoholism. They eventually became the reason for charging cases of obscenity against him. The work Bu is about personal sexualities and relations. My name is Radha and Tanda Gosht are other works dealing with sexual relationships. As a film scholar, he edited a monthly film magazine Musawwir. His writings discussed the problems of everyday life of humans. He discussed the life of the middle class and its hypocritical elements. Monto never tried to romanticise his Characters, especially in the case of the sex workers. He was also a political writer. He denounced the partition through his writings and portrayed the life of people who were the victims in the chaos of partition. The work Tandagosht (cold meat) is published in 1948, deals with the events of partition. The famous work Toba Tek Sing was written in the background of post-partition identity crisis. It was published in 1955. This was the story of Bishan sing whose home town was Toba Tek Sing whose original residents were thrown into statelessness following the confusions of borderland demarcations. It discusses the several identity crises faced by its victims after the partition. He also worked as a Drama writer for All India Radio.

## **Subrahmanya Bharati**

Subrahmanya Bharati was a prominent modern writer in Tamil. He was born in 1882. He did simultaneously support the normative literary tradition of Tamil that followed complex vocabularies and difficult sentences and simple vernacular format

easily accessible to the non-elite readers. By doing this, he modernised Tamil literature. Panchaliyin Sabadham was one of the most important works of Subramanya Bharati. The work SarvaDesaGeethangal (song of All Nations) endorsed the concept of patriotism and nationalism, and this work promoted patriotism in Tamil. His writing is also related with the theme of Bhakti devotion. He expresses the desire for three kind of freedoms- one is the freedom from British colonialism, second one is the freedom of women from the patriarchy and the third one is the release of human soul from the bondage of illusion (maya). Although he doesn't follow the alwars, the Krishna devotees, he expressed his love for Krishna. Nevertheless, he was a staunch critic of casteism in general and talked of the untouchable castes needing to attain vertical mobility to get them integrated into the mainstream Hindu fold. He was also a pragmatic nationalist that devoted time to suggest better ways of nation-building, one with strong defence forces and advanced manufacturing all run on the foundations of universal education of its people.

### **Reference**

B. K. Gupta, *India in English Fiction 1800-1970*, Scarecrow Press, Metuchen, 1973.

Henry Schwarz, *Writing Cultural History in Colonial and Postcolonial India*, University of Pennsylvania Press.

## MODULE IV

### Vikram Seth

Vikram Seth is an Indian English poet and novelist. He was born in 1952. Seth received his higher education from England and studied poetry in China. He declared himself a bisexual and frequently led campaigns against section 377 of IPC, which criminalised homosexuality. A multilingual scholar, Seth is well-versed in Hindi, Urdu, French and German. He describes English language as his “instrument.” He has published 5 volumes of poetry. *Mappings*, his early collection of poems, were published privately in 1980. *The Golden Gate* (1986), *A Suitable Boy* (1933), *An Equal Music* (1999), and *A Suitable Girl* (2013) are some of his famous novels. His renowned poetry collections include *The Humble Administrator’s Garden* (1985), *All You Who Sleep Tonight* (1990), *Beastly Tales* (1991), *Three Chinese Poets* (1992) and *The frog and the Nightingale* (1994). *Beastly Tales* can be considered as his contribution to children’s literature. His non-fiction works include *Two lives* and *The Rivered Earth*. He received the prestigious Padma Shri award for his contributions in Literature and Education in 2007. He is also a recipient of Thomas Cook Travel Book Award for his work *From Heaven Lake: Travels Through Sinkiang and Tibet* and also the Commonwealth Poetry Prize (Asia and later overall winner).

Seth’s magnum opus is *A Suitable Boy*, both infamous and celebrated for its length, offers an in-depth narration of India since partition. It cuts across regions, castes and religions and the

length of the work allows him to properly dwell with each character that he develops. His characters thus truly take shape and evolve without falling into essentialising tendencies that end up as caricatures rather than characters breathing life and finding semblance among its readers. Families form the loci of novel that are tried and tested both by domestic struggles and external political tensions only to eventually prove their coherence. Despite being critiqued for its celebration and respect for elite traditions and customs, the novel's readership remains global and cross-cultural.

Seth is a talented writer who could easily switch genres. He has written an incredible number of lines in both prose and verse. His wit is supreme and his romance never slips into mawkishness. Seth rose into prominence during the sudden outpour of Postcolonial Indian English fiction in the 1980s following the rise of Salman Rushdie. He did not however, as many expected, follow it up with bestsellers over the years. Seth's fiction discusses the political and the personal without losing the flavour of fictional writing by any means. He continues to be regarded as one of the most revered Indian English Authors of his generation.

## **R.K. Narayan**

R.K Narayan is regarded as one of the harbingers of Indian English Writing along with Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao. He is the author of several works that are now considered as classics in Indian English Fiction. He created a fictional town called Malgudy in his works. *Swami and Friends* is one of his most famous novels, which is a story about the adventures of a group of school boys in Malgudi. His renowned short story collections include *Dodu and other Stories*, *Malgudi Days*,

*Cyclone and Other stories, Lawley Road and Other stories, Astrologer's Day and Other Stories and A Horse and Two Goats.*

Most of R.K Naryanan's stories happen in and around Malgudi. Through the narration of events in Malgudi, he expressed his views about human nature. Hence his writings are related generally with the features of a quintessential South Indian urban space. This place is considered as an ambitious and ideal space. Its idealised characters often influenced the national formation movements and intellectuals of his time. He presented his writing in a simple form that was easily accessible to the readers. This is one of the reasons why his works are often suggested for starters of English fiction reading.

He discussed various themes like childhood, old age, economic issues of the middle class, the gullibility of poor and the problems of south Indian families including marriages and the dowry system. He talks of various types of people through his characters. He also included animals and birds as frontal characters in his stories, as we see in *Chippy and the Blind Dog*. He also tried to present nature as a significant factor in human lives in *A Night of Cyclone*. His work *Iswaran* deals with the various features of human psychology.

*Malgudi Days* is a collection of nineteen stories. His work *Under the Banyan Tree* is about a patrol's life whose life-long career as a patrolman makes him cooperative and self-less. Narayan's works are however criticised for building caricatures out of his characters. This happens because of his overt effort to shape them into essentialist categories that fits the milieu of the social world that he has built for Malgudi. He then attempts to reproduce and keep up these attributes in almost every work of his. However, his stereotypical world of Malgudi has captured the imaginations of generations spanning both the late colonial and

the post-independent periods and continues to do so. He is able to effectively achieve this faithful readership due to its life-like neighborly sensations that it evokes, at least among the small-town populace of India. Even those older generations that now reside in metropolises are nostalgically linked up with the world and people of Malgudi that resembles a bygone era of incipient urban spaces in a young India that they themselves were born into.

Narayan's witty writing takes ordinary circumstances and turns them into thoroughly enjoyable pieces of fiction. He is as popular among English reading children as he is among literature scholars. Most of his stories are tales of morality, lessons for men whose greed and dishonesty led them to difficulties. His characters are so human that we find them around us. Being a writer who left the marks of his times in his timeless fiction, his fiction had Gandhi and the national movement in its background. Despite the publications of numerous volumes of English fiction in the post 1980s period, R K Narayan continues to get read and discussed. For students of literature in general and Indian English Writing in particular, he is almost always the starting point.

## **Arundhati Roy**

Arundhati Roy is a globally acclaimed Indian English Author. She is also an active political and environmental activist. She was born in 1961. She spent her early childhood in Kerala. After studying architecture, she was also briefly involved in the film field as a critic and screenplay writer. She was the screenwriter of the movies *In which Annie Gives It Those Ones* and *Electric Moon*. Her non-fictional works are known for their political ideas. Her first novel, *The God of Small Things* garnered widespread critical acclaim. In this work, she included her childhood experiences in Aymanam, a place in southern Kerala. This work is a semi-autobiographic work. This work received the

1997 Booker Prize for Fiction and after this work she became an internationally renowned writer. *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* is her second novel that was published in 2017.

*We Are One: A Celebration of Tribal People* is her 2009 work that works explores the diversity and culture of people around the world and the threats they face. Apart from literary works, she also wrote political essays. She is a critic of neo-imperialism, globalisation, United States' global policies, India's nuclear weapon policies and the development projects which exploit nature like Narmada Dam Project. In *The End of Imagination*, Arundhati Roy spoke up against nuclear weapons.

The work *The Algebra of Infinite Justice* is a collection of essays that includes essays which discuss various national and international issues. She is also vocal about the communal violence in India. In her work *Democracy: Who's She When She's at Home*, discusses the communal violence in Gujarat. *War Talk: Summer Games with Nuclear Bombs* is an essay that deals with the nuclear warfront.

Arundhati Roy's most celebrated work *The God of Small Things* is an autobiographical fiction that is partly inspired by her own childhood experience as daughter of NRKs in Kottayam, Kerala. Themes discussed include casteism among Syrian Christians of Central Travancore and in general that has permuted even into the ranks of communist parties. The novel endorses a female gaze and talks of the protagonist's coming of age that is early by the normal standards. Her dynamic use of language that attempts to vernacularise English in the novel to generate a new semantic sensation has won her much praise. The novel ultimately recounts how traditions and inherited forms of authorities like families break bonds of organic affection that individuals have for others. This quest for individual freedom and

space to articulate being jeopardised by established conventions and systems finds reflection in her other works too like *Things that can and cannot be said* which involves a non-fictional take on digital privacy and state surveillance by interacting with American whistleblowers like Edward Snowden and Daniel Ellsberg.

Arundhati Roy is gifted with breathtakingly poetic language as anyone who has read ‘*The God of Small Things*’ would agree. Her no other work can be compared with her first novel in terms of critical acclaim and reception. What sets her apart, though, is her active involvement in the political and historical discourse. She added her own preface to ‘*The Annihilation of Caste*’ that discussed the difference of opinion between Ambedkar and Gandhi titled ‘*The Doctor and the Saint*’. She is very vocal about the failings of mainstream political parties and their limitations in addressing the issues of minorities in India. Her polemic on social and environmental issues is so strong and critical. It is safe to argue that she would have risen to fame even if she had not published any of the novels for her non-fiction is written with literary merit. It impossible to talk about Indian popular political discourse without mentioning her name.

## **Anita Desai**

Anita Desai is an Indian English writer with international acclaim. Her works often assert a feminist view. Microscopic views and a subtle narration style of a single event are the unique features of her writings.

“*Royalty*” is her first story. In this work, she tried to depict the contrast between west and east. Raja is the central character in this work. He returned to India from California. He is nostalgically attached to India and often wears traditional Indian

attires like dhoti. Ravi, his brother-in-law, on the other hand prefers modern dresses like tweed suits and hats. This work thus attempts to demarcate western and Indian cultures. It also discusses the gap between generations. It portrays selfishness and the absence of the concept of unity and co-operation in the 'western culture'. It also depicts communication issues between educated children and their illiterate mothers. The story "Diamond Dust" discusses the theme of relationship between animals and man. The protagonist in this story is Mr. Das and Diamond is his pet dog. The dog is very rude to the neighbours. The story "Underground" is about a couple Jack Higgings and Meg. Although they search for a hotel room, they had to be satisfied with an underground room. "The Artistic Life" takes us to the world of an artist. "Tepoztlan Tomorrow" depicts gap between the old and the young. Here also she uses the binary between old and progressive ideas. "Five Hours to Shimla" is another humorous story of hers. It is the story of a Sardarji, a truck driver. The "Rooftop Dwellers" is another work of Anita Desai that discusses the problems of working women in Delhi. Moyana is the central character in this story. She lands in Delhi for a profession. After securing the job of a sub-editor in a literary magazine, she can't afford Delhi's expensive rooms and is forced to live in a roof top as room and faces problems like the lack of social life and insecurity.

Anita Desai has written that while she "feels about India as an Indian", she thinks about it "as an outsider". This forms the basis of her perception of the nation, with which she has a complicated relationship. She has written great pieces of fiction for children and also excelled as an author who brought Indian Writing the voice and struggles of women. Identity and purpose appeared as conundrums in the minds of her characters. She painted images of realistic spaces and people with utmost skills in her tales. She adopted her own experiences in her fiction. She

remains as one of the most popular authors in Indian Writing in English.

## Salman Rushdie

Salman Rushdie is an eminent writer of the post-colonial period. He is a British-Indian novelist. He wrote a number of novels and short stories. His books are translated to various languages. He was born in 1947 in Mumbai. He was a student of Cambridge University. *Grimus* was his first published novel. After the publication of *Midnight's Children* in 1981, he becomes an internationally recognised writer. This work is about the ambiguities of independent India. *Shame*, another famous novel discusses the politics of Pakistan. The work *Satanic Verses* is controversial. *Imaginary Homelands* and *Step Across This Line* are collections of essays of Salman Rushdie. *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* is a children's novel and *East West* is his short story collection. *Mirrorwork: 50 years of Indian Writing 1947-1997* and *The Best American Stories* are his other published works. His novel *Shalimar the Clown* deals with religious terrorism. *The Enchantress of Florence* is about the fictional account of the life of Akbar, the Mughal emperor. Salman Rushdie also discusses the immigration experiences in United States in the work *The Golden House*. Most of his novels are based in the Indian sub-continent. He integrated magical realism with historical fiction in his writings. *The Moor's Last Sigh*, *The ground Beneath her Feet*, *Fury*, *Quichotte* and *Two Years Eight Month and Twenty Eight Nights* are his other novels.

Midnight's Children his most famous work till date. He won the Booker Prize in 1981 for this novel. The setting of the work comprises the Independence of India, the partition, and

postcolonial India. It is a historical fiction. Saleem Sinai is the protagonist. He was one of the two boys born in a Bombay hospital midnight of August 15, 1947 and was switched for another child by the nurse. Saleem Sinai was actually the son of a Hindu lower cast woman and the other boy Shiva was the son of a Muslim Couple.

Essentially a postcolonial writer, Rushdie often deals with questions of self-consciousness and identity formation in erstwhile colonies that has to reconcile with itself- an entity that had only recently been brought into existence as a part of post-war decolonisation. Novels like *The Satanic Verses* highlight the impossibility of attempting to self-create universal identities that could freely travel between cultures that are so unevenly placed by the processes of colonisation. Such attempts often turn traumatic and end in disillusionment and self-effacement.

Rushdie is arguably the brand ambassador of Indian Post-colonial fiction who paved way for a number of writers by publishing a novel that was grand in content and form. The grandeur of 'The Midnight's Children' has not ceased to influence the Indian English publishing industry till date. It incorporated history and troubles of two nations with a touch of magical realism. No other Indian author has managed to match Rushdie's fame in the west after the publication of it. Rushdie's renouncement of Vernacular writing for its narrowness and his takes on religion and nation has their own critiques in India and abroad. His claim over the Indian experience has been questioned multiple times. But none of this has affected his acclaim as the tallest figure in postcolonial fiction.

## Ruskin Bond

Ruskin Bond is a famous Indian English writer. He became popular through his contribution to children's literature. The Indian Council of Child Education has recognised his role in developing Children's literature in India. He received the Sahitya Academy Award in 1922 for his work *Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra*. He was honored with prestigious awards like Padma Shri in 1999 and the Padma Bhushan in 2014. The town of Mussoorie and Dehra and their hills influenced his writings. *A Book of Simple Living: Brief Notes from The Hills* is one of his latest works which is based on his simple life in the Himalayas. Some of his works were later adapted into movies like *Blue Umbrella*, *Susanna's Seven Husbands* and *A flight of Pigeons*.

“Room on the Roof” is the story of a boy named Rusty. He is an Anglo-Indian orphan boy who lived with his guardian. But he is not satisfied at home and feels lonely. He had to obey his strict guardians. One day, when his guardians were away from home, he decides to go out of home and take a walk. He meets Somi, a kind boy and they became friends. Unlike Rusty, his guardian considers the Indian culture dirty. After the conflict he decides to live independently with his own decisions and runs away from the guardian's home. He starts an independent life and works as an English teacher. Again, he becomes confused and felt lonely after losing his first love and many friends. Then he plans to go England but before that he decides to meet his friends. He meets Kishen whom he had taught English. Kishen manages to change his mind from returning to England.

The work *Blue umbrella* is the story of Biniya, a little girl. It was written in 1980. Later it was adapted into a movie with the same name. She sells off her leopard claw pendant for purchasing a blue colored umbrella. Umbrella turns out to be an important

thing in her life. Later she gives it to an old man. *The Flight of Pigeon* is considered as a kind of Historical fiction. This work depicts the 1857 rebellion in India.

Ruskin Bond's novels are usually marked for their aversion to urban life and urban spaces- often portrayed via Delhi that is always hot, loud, clumsy and dirty as in the short story Love is a Sad Song whereas the mountains as in Dehra is contraposed to it. This is paralleled by his aversion to modernity itself and the market logic of competition. The former is seen in the exchange between characters on the idea of progress in 'Binya Passes By'. Everything modern is scorned upon or ridiculed be it its institutions like bank (The Boy Who Broke the Bank) or police (Who Killed the Rani) or Western schooling (My Father's Last Letter) or technology like planes, dingy boats (Escape from Java) and highways (Death of the Trees) whereas remnants of the bygone past like Tonga (The Last Tonga Ride) and Kites (Kitemaker) are romanticised.

Ruskin Bond is similar to R K Narayan in terms of his appeal among child readers. An exceptional storyteller, Bond presented magically enjoyable fictional worlds before them. Tales came naturally to him and he has written over 500 works in total. Born an Englishman, Bond evolved into the ultimate Indian storyteller. He keeps getting included in the school textbooks. His simple tales written in easy language have a relatively young readership.

## **Kushwant Singh**

Khushwant Singh, who is famous for incorporating humour into his politically charged fiction is one of the great names in the history of Indian English Fiction. He was born in 1915. He completed his education in India and London. He was a

lawyer, Journalist, politician and Member of Parliament and also worked in the Indian Foreign Service. He was the editor of a number of magazines and journals such as illustrated weekly of India, Yojana, New Delhi and Hindustan Times. He has also translated a number of books. He had received the prestigious Padma Bhushan award in 1974 which he returned in protest against the siege of the Golden temple in Amritsar by Union government in 1984. He wrote a number of fiction and non-fiction including historical works. His major works are *Train to Pakistan*, *Delhi: A Novel*, *Truth, Love and Little Malice*, *A History of Sikhs*, *I shall Not Hear the Nightingale*, *Agnostic Kushwant: There is no God*, *Khushwantnama*, *The Lessons of My Life Among Short stories*, *The Portrait of a Lady*, *A Love Affair In London* and *The Voice of God*. He was famous for his sarcastic and satirising style.

The novel *Train to Pakistan* is the most celebrated work of Khushwant sing. It is a historical novel and it talks about the partition of India. The novel is set against the backdrop of partition told via a border village between India and Pakistan named Mano Majra. This depicts the life of its Sikhs and Muslims. It talks of the mundane happenings at the village being caught up in the storm that partition unleashed. Noora, daughter of the local mullah, is in love with Jggut sing. Juggut sing and Eqbal were arrested for a murder in the locality though they had no role in it. Their arrest and subsequent release are however intertwined with the partition riots that turns their world upside down. *Why I Supported The Emergency* is a collection of essays. It discussed about the Emergency and why he supported it. This work also contains accounts of different people like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, etc. *Delhi: A Novel* is often considered as an autobiographic work. *Truth, Love and a Little Malice* is his declared autobiography.

Similar to the works of his contemporary writer Manto who also dealt with the traumatic experiences of partition and accompanying disillusionment, Kushwant Singh seldom practiced brevity in discussing the nuances of personal sexual and romantic relationships without necessarily conforming with the norms of patriarchy. Turbulence in relationships is often juxtaposed to the turbulence and theatricality of the violence associated with partition. An ardent secularist and democrat, he always used his journalistic skills to poke fun at contemporary political events in columns that he wrote. Works like Kushwant Singh's *Joke Book* is a textbook case for political satire that evokes humor and thought at the same time.

## **Jhumpa Lahiri**

Jhumpa Lahiri was born in London. She was the daughter of Indian immigrant parents who later shifted to the United States. Recently she moved to Italy. *Altre parole* (In Other words) is her work in Italian language. She received a number of awards including the Pulitzer Prize. *Interpreter of Maladies*, *The Namesake*, *Unaccustomed Earth* and *The Lowland* are her notable English works.

*Interpreter of Maladies* is her most renowned work till date, for which she received the Pulitzer Prize and the Hemingway Foundation PEN award. This anthology includes a collection of short stories that mostly involve NRIs or foreigners with Indian background as its principal characters. The title short story itself includes Mr. Das and Mrs. Das with three children who visits India on a short vacation trip.

Lahiri did not shy away from explicitly expressing her political and philosophical standings. In works like *When Mr. Pirzada came to Dine*, she expresses a humanist concern for

human sufferings brought on by political uncertainties like wars and riots. This humanist concern for fellow beings in hours of crises or facing neglect without being judgmental as in “A Real Durwan” and “The Treatment of Bibi Haldar” is omnipresent in almost all of her works. This wider inclusive world-view of hers must be a reflection of her own multi-cultural upbringings that spans continents. This is often reproduced in her works directly as in “This Blessed House where cultural compartmentalisation and binaries are looked down as absurd and inorganic.

*The Lowland*, a tale of Udayan and Subhash, two young Bengali brothers who choose shockingly different oaths in life, is a literary achievement in itself. Lahiri tells the story of the Naxalite influence among Bengali youth and the experiences of Indian migrants in the U.S in the same novel. Just like her renowned short story collection, this novel also garnered acclaim for its language. Her literary world consists mostly of Indians who leave India and experience crises of all sorts. The ambiguity and confusion associated with national identity and culture keep troubling her characters. Jhumpa Lahiri is a novelist who is celebrated globally for her fiction.

## **Shashi Tharoor**

Shashi Tharoor is a prominent politician and English writer in contemporary India. He became famous as an international diplomat, politician and writer. Now he is associated with the Indian National Congress and is a Member of Parliament. He was educated both in India and then England. He is noted for his non-fiction works. He wrote a number of columns in various Indian and foreign English newspapers. He received many awards. In 2019, he received the Sahitya Akademi Award for his book *An Era of Darkness: The British Empire in India*.

*The Grate Indian Novel, Show Business, Riot and Pax Indica: India and the World of 21<sup>st</sup> Century* are the major works of Shashi Tharoor. The Great Indian Novel is a fiction based on the story of Mahabharata and recasts it with figures from the Indian independent movement and the first three decades of independent India. The work *Show Business* is about the Bollywood. The work *Riot* deals with the conflict and collision of Indians. *Pax Indica: India and the world of 21<sup>st</sup> Century* discusses the foreign diplomatic policies of India.

His nonfiction works are *An Era of Darkness: The British Empire in India, The Five Dollar Smile and Other Stories, India From Midnight to the Millennium and Beyond, Kerala: God's Own country, Nehru: The Invention of India, The Elephant The Tiger And the Cell Phones: Reflection on India - the Emerging 21<sup>st</sup> –Century Power, Shadows Across The Playing Field: 60 Years Of India-Pakistan Cricket, India: The Future Is Now, India Shastra: Reflection on the Nation in our Time, Reason of Sate, Why I am a Hindu* and *The Paradoxical Prime Minister*. The award-winning work *An Era of Darkness: The British Empire in India* discusses the impact of British colonial rule in India. It talks about the exploitation and drain of Indian wealth and how colonial policies negatively affected the Indian economy especially in agricultural sector. *Why I am a Hindu* is one the most debatable contemporary works of Shashi Tharoor. In this work he approaches the socio-cultural history of India by connecting it with Hindu culture. *Reasons of state* is about the foreign Policy of Indian under Indira Gandhi between 1966 and 1977. This work is based on his own PhD thesis.

Sashi Tharoor, despite of boasting a huge dedicated following, is criticised for resorting to sensationalist themes, especially in his works of non-fiction. They are often read-off as mere coffee table books or showcase works by his harsh critics.

They are supposedly sold off not for their content that are often read as junk attempting to create a spectacle out of itself. These criticisms, however do not take due note of his long literary career as a writer of both fiction and non-fiction that began as early as the late 1980s, long before he became a celebrity in the Indian public sphere. He writes columns regularly on contemporary events and is arguably as good in non-fiction as he is in fiction writing. He is an influential figure among young urban Indians who read English.

### **Reference**

Arvind Krishna Mehrotra, ed., *A History of Indian Literature in English*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2003.

K.R. Srinivasa Iyenger, *Indian Writing in English*, Sterling Publishers Pvt Ltd, 1995.

M.K. Naik, *A History of Indian English Literature*, Sahitya Akademi, 1995.