



Atma Ram Sanatan Dharma College

(University of Delhi)

Accredited Grade 'A' by NAAC

All India 7th Rank in NIRF (Ministry of Education)

Internal Quality Assurance Cell

In collaboration with

Ambedkar & Gandhi Study Circles and Departments of History & Hindi

On the occasion of

75 years of Indian Independence: Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav

Presents

Two Day

Interdisciplinary International Seminar

On The Theme

Notion of India: History, Politics & Literature

Date: 23rd – 24th February 2023

Venue: Seminar Hall 1 & 2, ARSD College

Sponsored by Sahitya Akademi

Patron

Prof. Gyantosh Kumar Jha

I.Q.A.C. Convener

Dr. Vinita Tuli

Convener

Deepankar

Concept Note

The first *urban revolution* can be dated to the third millennium BC in the Indian subcontinent when the Indus Valley Civilization came into existence. Its sprawling remains testify to its grandeur. Unfortunately, we are not able to understand the language of that period; for this reason, some aspects of this period remain unresolved. But sources related to the Mesopotamian civilization have referred to the Indus civilization as *Meluhha*, which represents a kind of unified identity.¹ Different types of regional cultures emerged after the decline of the Indus Valley Civilization, which we know as the Vedic period. The *vis* (people) were ruled by *Rajan* (ruler) and a clear division was seen between *Aryans* and *Dasyus* in this period. We can get an idea of the geographical expansion of the early Vedic period from the word *Saptasindhu* mentioned in the *Rgveda*.²

The sixth century BC was important in many ways. The advent of iron brought a great change in human life the culmination of which we can see in the rise of sixteen *Mahajanpadas*.³ The *Mahajanpadas* were later transformed into the Mauryan Empire whose boundaries in Ashoka's reign extended from the Hindukush mountains to Bengal and Karnataka. Ashoka's Minor Rock Edicts characterize the entire empire as *Jambudvipa*. In the first century BC, Kharavela, the famous Jain ruler of Kalinga who is associated with the *Hathigumpha* inscription (written in the *Prakrit* language), refers to *Bharatvasa* (Bharatavarsha) as comprising those territories where his campaigns had taken place.⁴ The expansion of the Empire not only defined the concept of India but its cultural dimensions were also equally important. Trans-regional identities based on

¹ Shereen Ratnager, "The Earliest Notion of India: Meluhha in Mesopotamian Records" edited by Irfan Habib, *India Studies in the History of an Idea*, Delhi, 2005, pp.1-18.

² For *Rgveda* translation, Please see, T. H. Ralph Griffith, *The Hymns of Rgveda*, Translated with a Popular commentary, India Reprint, Edited by J.L. Shastri, Delhi, 1973.

³ Hemchandra Raychaudhri, *Political History of Ancient India*, with B.N. Mukherjee, New Delhi, 1997, pp. 85-136.

⁴ K.G. Krishnan, *Prakrit and Sanskrit Epigraphs 257BC to 320 AD*, Mysore, 1989, pp.151-58.

caste and religion were also emerging. The nature of social division based on 'pure' and 'polluted' castes followed more or less the same pattern throughout the Indian subcontinent. It is clear from Buddha's conversations that caste-based identities were emerging in India.

The idea of India as a geographical category is represented even better in foreign chronicles. The geographical description of India by Yuan Chwang, a Chinese Buddhist traveller who came to India in the first half of the seventh century, is spectacular. After the description of *Kapisha* (Kabul), he writes a separate chapter on India. In this section, India is described as *Indu* which probably seems to have been influenced by the word *Hindu*.⁵ In fact, the word *Hindu* was used by the Iranians for the people of the Indian Subcontinent across the Indus river because, in the Persian language, the alphabet 'sef' is pronounced as 'hef'. Another Chinese traveller I-tsing knew that this name was given by the Iranians. He further informs us that Indians also called their country *Aryadesha*.⁶ Alberuni's book *Kitab-ul-Hind* presents India as a *Mulk*.

The medieval period was a time during which the concept of India was articulated in a much stronger manner. The growth of regional languages made a significant contribution to the integration of the country. Amir Khusrau (d.1325AD), a leading court poet and historian who lived through the reigns of many Sultans of Delhi, including that of Sultan Alauddin Khalji, contributed to the maturing of the *Hindavi* language through his writings. Zia -ud -din Barani a leading court chronicler of the mid-14th century praised Amir Khusrau saying that both the quantity and quality of his works were unmatched. He got amazing success in all genres of literature. There have been very few such poets. Apart from being a poet, Amir Khusrau was also a great Sufi. He was the *murid* of the great Chisti saint, Sheikh Nizamuddin Awliya. Amir Khusrau was a master of both instrumental and vocal music.⁷ His literary works in *Braj Bhasha* or *Hindavi* were as extensive as his works in Persian. Unfortunately, many of his *Hindavi* compositions are

⁵Thomas Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India (AD.629-645)*, Vol.1, Edited by T.W. Rhys Davis and S.W. Bushell, reprint, Delhi, p.131.

⁶I-tsing, *A Record of Buddhist Religion as Practiced in India and the Malay Archipelago (AD 671- 695)*, Edited by J. Takakusu, London, 1896.

⁷Ziauddin Barani, *Tarikh-iFirozshahi*, cited in Mohammad Habib, "Hazrat Amir Khusrau of Delhi" in Irfan Habib (ed.), *Studies in Medieval Indian Polity and Culture*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2016, pp.228-29.

lost to us.⁸ But the famous historian Mohammad Habib has drawn our attention to the high quality of Khusrau's verses that are available to us. Khusrau's *Hindi* compositions are available but are very few compared to *Persian* compositions.⁹

The famous Urdu scholar Gopi Chand Narang is of the opinion that the language used by Amir Khusrau for his literary compositions in the late 13th and 14th centuries cannot be characterized either as Urdu or Hindi because these are modern Indian languages and did not exist in Khusrau's time. Sometimes the expressions *Khadi Boli*, *Haryanvi*, and *Braj* are used for Khusrau's language. All these nomenclatures have their limitations because Khusrau and other writers of the period did not pay any attention to naming the language. Research done in the last few decades showed that *Sharshauni Apabhramsha* was famous in Delhi, Haryana, and western Uttar Pradesh. *Apabhramsha* had no systematic form. Certainly, extinct regional features must have also been present in each of the *Apabhramsha*.¹⁰

Amir Khusrau spent a major part of his life in Delhi. Therefore, his language should be the same as was the common language of Delhi at that time. Amir Khusrau has given a list of Hindustani languages of his period in this manner:

सिन्दी ओ लाहोरी- ओ कश्मीर- ओ गर, धुर समंदरी तिलंगी- ओ- गुजर,
माबारी- ओ- गोरी- ओ- बंगाल- ओ- अवध, दिल्ली ओ- परमानश अंदर हम हद,
इहम हिंदविस्त जीअय्याम- ए- कुहन, अम्मा बाकरसत बहर गुना सुखन।¹¹

From this, it becomes clear that *Sindhi*, *Punjabi*, *Kashmiri*, *Marathi*, *Kannad*, *Telgu*, *Gujrati*, *Tamil*, *Asamia*, *Bengali*, *Awadhi*, and *Dehalvi* were called *Hindavi* since early times. Apart from *Hindavi*, Khusrau has described *Sanskrit* as the classical language of India. He took pride in calling himself a *Hindustani*. The glory of *Hindustan* is described in many of his poetical narratives. *Hindavi* poetry of Amir Khusrau has been transmitted from generation to generation due to its popularity and it became an integral part of the

⁸ Auhadi, *Arafat- al- Arifeen*, Cited in, *Ibid*, p.230

⁹ Mohammad Habib, "Hazrat Amir Khusrau of Delhi", edited by Irfan Habib, *Studies in Medieval Indian Polity and Culture*, Oxford University Press, 2016, p. 230.

¹⁰ Gopi Chand Narang, *Amir Khusrau Ke Hindavi Kavya*, Vani Prakashan, 2002, p.21

¹¹ Amir Khusrau, *Nuh Siphar*, cited in *Ibid*, p.23.

vernacular literature. The praise of the country of *Hindustan* by another Sultanate period chronicler, Isami was probably influenced by Amir Khusrau. Isami describes the beauty of India in this manner: “*what to say about the prosperity of Mulk- i- Hindustan, Heaven itself is also jealous of this beautiful garden. Its area is an ornament to the face of the Earth, like a mole on the face of a beautiful bride.*”¹²

The idea of India became even more pronounced during the time of Akbar. Abul Fazl wrote that *Kabul* and *Kandhar* were the two gates to enter *Hindustan* and by occupying these two passages, Akbar made Hindustan secure from foreigners.¹³ The conceptualization of the theory of *Imperial sovereignty* reached its zenith in the intellectual endeavours of Abul Fazal. Various arguments put forward by Abul Fazl to legitimize Akbar’s sovereignty and his use of ostentatious titles for the Emperor are part of this process. Thus, for example, Akbar was called *Zill- i- Ilahi* (Shadow of God), *Sahib- i- Zamana* (King of the entire universe), *Insan- i- Kamil* (the Perfect Man), etc. The rooting of Mughal rule in Indian culture and traditions is unique in many ways. *Hindustan- i- Jannat Nishan* (Paradise like India) became an official commonplace. Historian Tarachand rightly points out that the Delhi Sultanate and Mughal Empire imparted political unity to Hindustan.

The 18th century is characterized by the absence of large, pan-Indian centralized political power. By the middle of the 19th century, an atmosphere began to develop against British rule, which culminated in the Revolt of 1857. This Revolt at least showed that the *notion of India* was not limited to the ruling elite only, but it had an equally deep impression among the soldiers and common masses. As a response to the colonial historical writings on India, there emerged nationalist writings represented by Dadabhai Naoroji, Bankim Chandra Chatterji, R. C. Dutt, Surendra Nath Banerji, Lajpat Rai, V. D. Savarkar, Mahatma Gandhi, etc. In 1872, Bankim Chandra published the first issue of the newspaper *Bangdarshan*. The song *Vande Matram* which was written by him

¹²Isami, *Futuh- us- Salatin*, Cited in, M. Athar Ali, “Samagam aur Prasfutan” Edited by Irfan Habib, *Madhyakaleen Bharat*, RajkamalPrakashan.

¹³Abul Fazl, *Ain- i- Akbari*, Nawal Kishore, Lucknow, 1892, p.192.

exemplified his notion of India as a nation. However, as is clear from a letter written by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the presence of the caste system in India deprived the lower castes of patriotic feeling. When the Indian National Congress met in Bombay in 1885, W. C. Bonnerjee spoke strongly in favour of social reform, but Congress decided to restrict itself to political issues. In 1909, Mahatma Gandhi advocated improvement in the condition of women and Dalits in his *Hind Swaraj*. The idea of India as a nation developed strongly during the Indian Freedom struggle especially in the Gandhian era, due to which India got independence.¹⁴

The objective of this seminar is to find answers to these questions: How did politics contribute to the making of the Indian nation through the ages? Was the identity of India completely related to the identity of the rulers in pre-British India? What was the role of external factors in the formation of the identity of India? What was the contribution of different philosophies to this making process? How far are these philosophies related to political, economic and socio-cultural dimensions? How does one explore the changes in the *idea of India* as articulated in the literature of different periods? To what extent did the earlier literary traditions influence the later literary cultures in developing the idea of India? What was the impact of indigenous literature in the making of the Indian nation? How important was the integration of languages for nation-building? Several other interrelated themes may form the subject matter of the seminar.

The proposed seminar looks forward to receiving papers on the theme ***Notion of India: History Politics & Literature*** in Humanities, social sciences and other disciplines. The possible sub-themes may include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Notion of India: Historical perspective
2. Notion of India: Literary perspective
3. Notion of India: Political perspective
4. Notion of India: Philosophical perspective
5. Society & Notion of India

¹⁴For several aspects of nation and nationalism in Modern period, please refer, Saurav Kumar Rai, *Debating Modern India*, Manak Publication Pvt Ltd, New Delhi, 2021.

6. National Movement & Idea of India
7. Caste identity & Idea of India
8. Notion of India during the Imperialist regime
9. Nationalists & Notion of India
10. Notion of India in Independent India
11. Post-Modernism & Indian Identity
12. Indian Identity & Globalization
13. Notion of India & Indian Diaspora
14. Notion of India: Cultural Perspective
15. Gender in Indian Perspective
16. Regional Identity & Notion of India

Registration Fee: Rs. 700/- for teachers
Rs. 500/- for research scholars
Rs. 300/- for students

Important Dates:

1. Last date for abstract submission: **20th January 2023.**
2. Confirmation of selection of abstracts: **25th January 2023.**
3. Full paper submission: **15th February 2023.**

Submission Guidelines:

☒ **Abstract:** The abstract should not be more than **300 words**. The abstract must contain the objectives and content of the paper along with 3-5 keywords.

☒ Papers and abstracts sent can be either in **Hindi or English**.

☒ **Writing Format:** The paper should be written in **Times New Roman** with font size 12 and single spacing.

☒ **Word limit:** The paper should not exceed the range of **5000 - 6000 words**.

☒ Document: All work needs to be sent in **MS Word format-** (.doc or .docx)

☒ Co-authorship: A paper should not have more than **two authors** and **certificates** shall be provided to both.

☒ Review: The submissions received would be reviewed and the selection of the abstracts would be based on this **review process**. It would entirely be at the discretion of the reviewer(s) to determine whether the abstract fits within the scope of the seminar or not.

☒ Publication: The selected papers would be published in an edited volume; however, the decision of publication will solely be at the discretion of the reviewers, editors and the author(s) of the paper.

☒ Kindly mail your abstract and paper at: -

arsdnationalseminar2022@gmail.com

Patron

Prof. Gyantosh Kumar Jha

Principal, ARSD College

I.Q.A.C. Convener

Dr. Vinita Tuli

Convener

Deepankar

Department of History
(Mob : 9990179780)

Organising Committee - Mr Ajeet Kumar (9868888693), Dr Vikas Kumar (9971961377), Dr Arvind Kumar Mishra (9311558473), Dr Shri Dharam (9868325811), Dr. Vijay Narayan Mani (9868601631).