

# British Period (1800-1947)

## Language and Literature

Prem Nagar

# Language

- *Devanagari* Script became standard in north India through missionary activities. *Hindi* developed as a hybrid language. *Urdu* emerged in parallel retaining Persian script.
- English language was **imposed** in administration replacing Persian.
- The native education system was disrupted. The **new western system** was imposed.
- The well-to-do adopted English Language and gradually a liberal **intelligentsia** emerged.
- External exposure of world cultures helped awake the freedom **rebellion**.
- A hybrid Hindi and a hybrid Urdu competed for acceptance eventually **splitting the country**

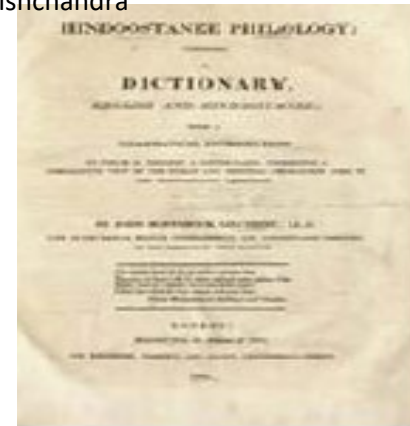
# Language Development

- Khadi (खड़ी) Boli, Awadhi, Bhojpuri, Braj Bhasha and others were called *Hindustani* language and these were written in *Devanagari*
- *Hindustani* languages were standardized by Harishchandra (1873) as *Hindi*
- *Urdu* is a form of Hindustani language written in *Nastaliq* script,
- Basic **grammatical structure** of *Hindi/Urdu/Khari Boli* were similar
- Hindi and Urdu diverged linguistically as *Hindi* drew Sanskrit vocabulary
- English arrived, intermingled and **co-existed** with local languages
- Local level in north, Persian was replaced by *Urdu* and not *Hindi*
- By 1830's English language transplantation **crept** in from Center to Regions
- **News Paper** in 1780 and **Broadcasting** in 1923 in English started.

# Hindi - a Hybrid Language

- *Hindī* referred to inhabitants of East of Indus and Amir Khusrow (1300) used *Hindavi* language,
- Most Language in Indo-Gangetic plain (Khari Boli, Braj Bhasha, Awadhi, Bagheli, Bhojpuri, Bundeli, Kanauji, Chhattisgarhi, Garhwali, Haryanawi, Kumayuni, Magahi, Rajasthani and others) were written in *Devanagari*
- These languages were classified by British as *Hindi* for training their administrators
- John Gilchrist (Fort William College, Calcutta, 18th century) authored *English-Hindustani Dictionary* (A Grammar of Hindustani Language)
- *Hindi Bible* appeared in 1818. *Udant Martand* first *Hindi newspaper* appeared in 1826
- Harishchandra (1873) standardized languages of north as *Hindi* that made him *father of Hindi*
- *Hindi* is a hybrid language that *amalgamated* languages of *Indo-Gangetic plain* and became an official language through Article 343 of the Constitution of India.

निज भाषा उन्नति अहैं, सब उन्नति को मूल  
बिन निज भाषा ज्ञान के, मिटे न हिय को  
शूल  
- Harishchandra



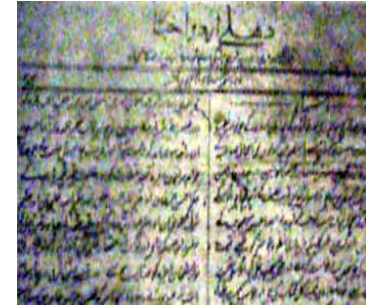
Hindoostanee Philology



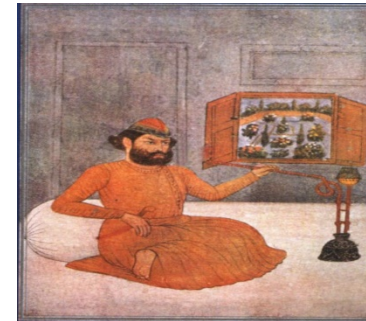
Udant Martand, First Hindi Paper

# Urdu - Language

- Word *Urdu* was first used by poet Ghulam Hamadani Mushafi around 1780,
- *Urdu* replaced Persian as an official language in India in 1835
- *Urdu* was **co-official language** along with English
- Urdu was written in *Nastaliq* script, right to left
- *Urdu* was referred to as *Hindustani* Language and considered a **Hybrid Language**
- **Spoken Urdu** is mutually intelligible with *Hindi*
- *Oudh Akhbar* by Munshi Nawal Kishore was first Urdu newspaper published from Lucknow
- *Urdu* language became linguistic identity of Muslims in India



Delhi Urdu Akhbar (1836-1857)



Mir Taqi Mir (1723–1810) Urdu poet,



Ghalib on a stamp of India

# English Language in India

- English was taught through Christian missionaries and later in schools (1813 Act)
- Thomas Babington Macaulay (1835) introduced English and Western concepts of education, Macaulay Minute in 1835 - Education Act 1835
  - English became Education medium and English-speaking Indians were trained as teachers
  - By 1857 universities were established in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras, later Allahabad and Lahore (Punjab)
  - Use of English Language dominated public discourse
- English became Language of administration. Education in new system and the national Media became the inflection point for the struggle for freedom!



University of Calcutta, established 1857, is one of three oldest state universities in India

English, Indo-European and Germanic language, has:

- 24 Consonants and 13 Vowels
- Written in Latin script and left to right, and
- Typology consist Subject (S), Verb (V), Object (O)

# English - Utilitarian Education in India

- British concluded that “1200 civil servants could not rule over 300 million people without indigenous collaborators”, thus:
- By 1890, 60,000 Indians **matriculated** and one third joined public admin.
- **They formed state bureaucracy** and 21,000 appointed in civil service (1887): Hindus (45%), Muslims (7%), Eurasians (19%), and Europeans (29%)
- 1000 civil services positions held by Britons with **Oxbridge** degrees
- **Local** philanthropists opened **186 colleges** of higher education by 1911 and enrolled 36,000 students (> 90% men)
- By 1939, institutions **doubled** and enrolled 145,000 students
- **Curriculum** set by Oxbridge **stressed** English literature and European history
- By 1920s, **student bodies became hotbeds** of Indian Nationalism,
- **21 Universities were established by 1947**

# English - New Class in India

- **Macaulyism** produced “a class of Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, opinions, morals and intellect”
- They flocked to colleges to be groomed in English and Western Literature but recognized their **beliefs in freedom**.
- Rammohun Ray demanded widespread use of **English for education**
- Allan Octavian Hume founded **Indian National Congress (1885)** a platform for civil and political dialogue for the educated Indians,
- Gandhi’s and others’ successful interactions with Britishers reinforced ‘**ability to converse in English**’. Belief developed that **prosperity** depended upon **communicating and using English**
- By 1920s-1930s English literature became central in Indian Nationalist Movement that **questioned** British assumptions of **India's future**.
- This triggered **revival of reform movements** in Hinduism and Islam,



THE FIRST INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS, 1885.



Dayananda Sarasvati (1875)



# Hindi-Urdu Controversy split the Country

- John Barthowick Gilchrist (1800) prepared education material for India in Persian script for Muslims and Devanagari for Hindus.
- British (1837) replaced Persian with local vernacular but in north Urdu in Urdu script chosen instead of Hindi in Devanagari script
- Mughal Empire fell and British promoted Hindi (1857) and Hindu Nationalism
- Hindi-Urdu controversy sowed seeds for two Nation Theory
- Indian National Conference (INC) with Gandhi (1931-37) for communal harmony proposed use of Hindustani written in Devanagari and Nastaliq
- Muslim League promoted Urdu as their linguistic identity,
- Indian constituent assembly (1940) proposed Hindustani a national language, but partition idea promoted sense of “their language”
- Constituent Assembly (1949) adopted Hindi (Devanagari) language,
- Pakistan adopted Urdu with Perso-Arabic script (Nastaliq)

# Literature

- *Bhakti* literature gradually transformed into Nationalistic literature
- Sanskrit Texts were Translated in English, German and French Languages
- Use of **Media** and Newspapers **transformed** literature creation and proliferation
- Literature played **crucial** role in India's Independence
- Western Language and Literature brought **paradigm shift in Indian thinking**
- English writers emerged among native Indians

# Emotional Devotionalism (*Bhakti*)

## Transformation to Nationalism

- *Chaupal* (चौपाल; common meeting space in village) became place for: *Kirtan* (group singing) for devotional expression, Storytelling or *Pravachan* (प्रवचन) or recitation of a scripture or text
- Taxes, Fear of losing land or Farm produce made *Chaupal* a place for Exchanging News and Views that enhanced **Political Awareness**
- Gandhi's and others' public discourses had *Bhajan's: Vaishnava jana to*, and Nationalistic songs, *Vande Mataram*, *sarfaroshī kī*, *Rang de*, etc
- Regular interactions among villagers and outsiders resulted in **Nationalistic feeling**
- Mood of People gradually transformed to pursue freedom
- Nationalistic emotions brought **grass root** participation in India's Independence

# Revolutionary Poets (1870-1947)

*Vande Mataram* - **वन्दे मातरम्** (1870) by **Bankim** Chandra Chatterjee, marching song for Indian freedom movement and became National song (1937)

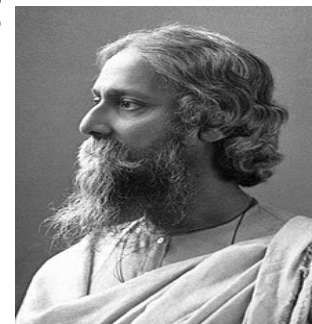
Jana Gana Mana **जन-गण-मन** of **Rabindranath Tagore** (1913) poems evoked Nationalism (became Indian national anthem)

Ram Prasad "Bismil" (1921) composed songs *sarfaroshī kī tamannā ab hamāre dil meñ hai* (written in Urdu by Bismil Azimabadi of Patna in 1921) and *Rang de basanti chola*; and sung by many revolutionaries and their followers,

Many Poets wrote poetry along patriotic themes:

- Slogan "Inquilab Zindabad" coined by Hasrat Mohani (1921) a Urdu poet.
- Subhash Chandra Bose coined slogan 'Jai Hind'
- Subhadra Kumari Chauhan's (1904–1948) Hindi poems *Jhansi ki rani* in *Veer Rasa*, Maithili Sharan Gupta (1886–1964), Ramdhari Singh Dinkar, Makhanlal Chaturvedi,
- Sarojini Naidu (Nightingale of India, 1879–1949)
- *Cutechakitankal* by Chinna Swami Subramania **Bharathi** in Tamil (1908)
- Svaraj Sangit, Assamese by **Padmadhar** Chaliha (1895-1969) inspired freedom fighters

**Nazrul Islam** (1899-1976), revolutionary and national poet of Bangladesh, wrote Islamic and Hindu devotional music, explored Islam and Hinduism,



Rabindranath Tagore  
Nobel Prize in  
Literature in 1913



Ram Prasad "Bismil"



Kazi Nazrul Islam

# Sanskrit Text Translation in English Languages

- **Manusmṛti** (Manu and Brighu of 200BC): Creation of world, Source of dharma, four Varna, Law of karma, translated by William Jones (1794) to formulate Hindu law,
- Kālidāsa's: Recognition of **Sakuntala** (English) Jones published (1789)
- **Bhagavad Gita** (English) published by Charles Wilkins in 1785,

## Vedas translated in English

- Rig-Veda in 1896, Sama-Veda in 1895, by Ralph Griffith and Max Müller's edition of the Rigveda appeared in 1849–75.
- Yajur Veda (Taittiriya Sanhita) by Arthur Berriedale Keith (1914)
- Atharva-Veda by Maurice Bloomfield (1897)

## Upanishad translated in English and later in German

- Upanishads Part I, by Max Müller (1879)
- Upanishads, Part II, by Max Müller (1884)
- Thirty Minor Upanishads, translated by K. Narayanasvami Aiyar (1914)

**Puranas translated in English** : Vishnu Purana by H.H. Wilson (1840); Garuda Purana by Ernest Wood and S.V. Subrahmanyam (1911)

# Sanskrit Text Translation in German and French

**German** - Indological study of Sanskrit literature, by:

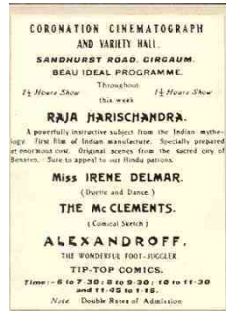
- St. Petersburg Sanskrit-Wörterbuch (1850-70)
- Otto von Böhtlingk's edition of **Pāṇini**'s grammar appeared in 1887.
- Poet Friedrich Rückert (1788-1866) translation of Mahabharata legends
- August Wilhelm Schlegel (1808) published book on **Language and Wisdom of Indians**, and became first professor (1818) of Indology at Bonn University,
- Philosophers and poets: Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Arthur Schopenhauer and Friedrich **Nietzsche** their Sanskrit works shows Sanskrit "mania" of the time,

**French: Bhagavad Gita** (English) published by Charles Wilkins in 1785, and in French (1787), and Many others

**USA:** Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau influenced with Hindu and Buddhist literature (1845): Bhagavad Gita and The Laws of Manu, wrote essays



# Media Development in India



Publicity poster: film  
Raja Harishchandra  
(1917) at Coronation  
Hall, Girgaon, Bombay

**Printing** (1556) Portuguese Christian missionary through Goa  
**News Media:** First Newspaper **Hicky's Bengal Gazette** (English) founded in 1780, then

- The India Gazette, The Calcutta Gazette, The Madras Courier (1785),
- and The Bombay Herald(1789); **Sambad Kaumudi** (Bengali weekly newspaper)
- published in 1821 by Ram Mohan Roy ; **Bombay Samachar (1822)**
- **printed in Gujarati and still in print;** Udant Martand (1826) **First Hindi-** newspaper, published from Calcutta,; Balshastri Jambhekar (1846) published first Marathi newspaper '*Darpan*'; Lokmanya Tilak's newspaper *Kesari* (1880), Times of India, Bombay (1850); Pioneer, Lucknow(1865); Mail, Madras (1867) and *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, Calcutta(1868); *Bala Bharatham* (1906) Chinnaswami Subramania *Bharathi* and M.P.T. Acharya edited **Tamil** weekly; V.B. Patavardhan (1870) edited Marathi paper *Sudhakar of Agarkar*; Gujrati (three) and English (four) daily papers in India exist for over 100 years

**Motion pictures** Auguste and Louis Lumière **screened in Bombay (1895)**

- Raja Harishchandra, a full-length feature film initiated in 1912 and completed later,
- Alam Ara (1931) was the first **Indian movie with dialogues**

**Broadcasting** began in 1923 at Bombay Presidency Radio Club by 1927, Indian Broadcasting Co. operated two radio stations: Bombay & Calcutta and Radio Broadcasting in 1937 was named as: **All India Radio (AIR)**

# Role of Literature in Indian Independence

(Bengal Renaissance: 1800 until 15 August 1947)

Thinkers of Bengal were exposed to Western Culture, Christianity, English Language and Literature, and they understood 'Vedanta Philosophy was the Common Binder of Indians'.

- Re-imagined Vedic Values that infused sense of oneness, encouraged nationalism and redirected *bhakti* towards poor
- Initiated movements of:
  - **Brahmo Samaj** (1861) introduced by Pandit Nobin Chandra Roy, Disciple of Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1828, who started reform of Brahmanism),
  - **Arya Samaj** (Noble Society) by Dayanand Saraswati (1875), promoted values and practices of Vedas
  - **Ramakrishna Movement** by Vivekananda (1897, disciple of Swami Ramakrishna) promoted: philosophy of Vedanta (Advaita) and four yogic ideals: jnana, bhakti, karma, and Raja Yoga, with Moto: Atmano Mokshartham Jagad-hitaya Cha (आत्मनो मोक्षार्थम् जगद्हिताय च, For one's own salvation, and for good of world),
- **Aurobindo** (1872–1950), translated Vedas, Upanishads and Bhagavad Gita, he was a poet and a nationalist,



Ramakrishna Paramahansa





# Role of Literature in Indian Independence

(1857 until 15 August 1947)

- Spread Message of Patriotism
  - Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay (1882): spread patriotism by writing about:
    - Anandamath (1882) - *Sannyasi Revolt* (Famine of Bengal 1770-1820)
    - Devi Chaudharani (1884) - women to take up cause of independence,
  - K. S. Venkataramani (1891-1952), wrote on Southern rural life and Independence in Murugan, the Tiller (1927) and Kandan, The Patriot (1932)
- Media spread Social and Political Awareness to unite Indians
  - Jungantar Patrika (Barindra Kumar Ghosh, Abhinash Bhattacharya and Bhupendranath Dutt, 1906), Bengali News Paper
  - Pamphlets written and distributed in India as propaganda against British
- Literatures (1912-1940) role in Nationalist Movement:
  - Premchand (Hindi novelist) 1915 who set stories in rural-urban divide
  - Mulk Raj Anand, 1940, (English) stories of urban poor, and disempowered,
  - Bhartendu Harishchandra of Vārānasi used theatre as a tool to shape public opinion using *Hindi* (अन्धेर नगरी, 1881) 'अंधेर नगरी चौपट्ट राजा, टके सेर भाजी टके सेर खाजा', his idea of *Hindi, Hindu, Hindustan* resonated

# Regional Literature



- **Hindi:** Hindi Harishchandra (1873) titled as Bharatendu (Moon of India) wrote: Satya Harishchandra 1876; Vaidika Hinsa Hinsa Na Bhavati , 1873; Kavi-vachana-sudha (1872); Chandrakanta by **Devaki Nandan Khatri** in 1888 considered first authentic work of Hindi prose ; Realism in prose literature by **Munshi Premchand**, Hindi fiction and progressive movement
- **Urdu: Poetry:** **Mir Taqi Mir (1760)**, **Mirza Ghalib (1800)**, Mir Anees, Allama Iqbal and Josh Malihabadi and **Dastan-e-Amir Hamza** storytelling tradition published (1855)
- **Sanskrit:** Bhattoji Dikshita (1700-1800, **Marathi** Sanskrit grammarian) authored **Siddhānta-Kaumudī** (Illumination of established position), a commentary on Pāṇini,
- **Odia:** prose and poetry by Swabhab Kavi Gangadhar Meher (1862-1924), Fakir Mohan Senapati (1843–1918), Gouri Shankar Ray, Gopal Chandra Praharaj, Pandit Nilmani Vidyaratna, Kabibar Radhanath Ray
- **Tamil:** **Subramania Bharathi** (Bharathiyar, 1882–1921), a Tamil nationalistic poet, edited journal Vijaya and Kaṇṇan pāṭṭu (1917; Songs to Krishna), Panchali sapatham (1912; Panchali's Vow), and Kuyil pāṭṭu **Telugu:** Viswanadha Satyanarayana (**Veyipadagalu**) (1895–1976) and **Maha Prasthanam** (Telugu) a compilation of poetry written (1930-1940) by Srirangam Srinivasarao considered anthology of poems
- **Sindhi:** Abdul Wahhab Sachal Sarmast (1739–1826), enriched bhakti poetry and Dayaram Gidumal, wrote essays on Japji Sahib (1891), Bhagavadgita (1893), and Yoga darshan (1903)
- **Punjabi:** Sassi Punnun by Hashim Shah (1735-1843) and Qissa Puran Bhagat by Qadaryar (1850)
- **Marathi:** Essay by Baba Padamji (1857), Jyotiba Phule, Lokhitwadi, Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade, Hari Narayan Apte (1864–1919)

# Dravidology

Study of Dravidian languages, literature and culture of South of India

- During 16-18th century missionaries wrote **Tamil** grammars and Henrique Henriques (1520–1600) Portuguese missionary became first European **Tamil** scholar who believed “**religious doctrines should be in local languages**”
  - **First book printed in Tamil script** was "Thambiran Vanakkam" (தம்பிரான் வணக்கம்) (1578), a 16-page translation of Portuguese "Doctrina Christam".
  - **Tamil became the first non-European language to be printed on a printing press**
- Francis **Ellis** (1777-1819) proposed a **Dravidian family of languages**
- Charles Phillip Brown (1798–1884) Collected 2106 hand written books and authored numerous translations of **Telugu** works into English.
- Hermann Gundert Authored **Malayalam** grammar "Malayalabhaasha Vyakaranam" (1859) and a **Malayalam-English dictionary (1872)**
- Ferdinand Kittel authored **first Kannada-English dictionary (70000 words)** in 1894
- Benjamin Lewis **Rice** (1905) authored "The **History of Mysore and Coorg**" from inscriptions: Epigraphia Carnatica

# English Literature Developed In India

- Influence of Western thought and introduction of **printing press** Revolutionized and **repurposed literature** that supported:
  - Cause of **freedom struggle** and Removing existing **social evils**
  - Introduction of Western scientific education in India (Ram Mohan Roy)
- **Other Literature:**
  - **Sri Aurobindo** (Pondicherry) published essays and articles: The Life Divine, The Synthesis of Yoga, Essays on The Gita, The Secret of The Veda, Hymns to the Mystic Fire, The Upanishads, The Renaissance in India, The Human Cycle,
  - **Vivekananda's** works became great examples of English literature in India
  - **Mulk Raj Anand's** 'Untouchable' (1935) and 'Coolie' (1936),
  - **R.K. Narayan's** tales of village in southern India like 'Swami and Friends',
  - A. K. **Ramanujan** (1929-1993) wrote in English and Kannada
  - Sarojini Naidu, Raja Rao, G.V. Desani, M. Ananthanarayanan, Bhadani Bhattacharya, Monohar Malgonkar, Arun Joshi, etc.
- Old bases of British traders transformed as:
  - **Calcutta as Center of Culture, Madras as Center of Intelligence, Bombay as Center of Commerce, Delhi became Center of politics**

# Gandhi's Contributions

- Gandhi's first publications, *Hind Swaraj* (Gujarati) in 1909, became "intellectual blueprint" for India's independence movement,
- Gandhi edited newspapers:
  - *Harijan* (1932) in Gujarati, Hindi and in English to create socio-political awareness
  - *Young India*, in English, and *Navajivan*, a Gujarati monthly,
- Gandhi wrote his Autobiography,
  - *Story of My Experiments with Truth*, સત્યના પ્રયોગો અથવા આત્મકથા,
  - *Satyagraha* in South Africa about his struggle,
- Gandhi's non-violent methods: *Satyagraha*, સત્યાગ્રહ - truth-insistence or *Ahimsa*, અહિંસા: compassion became pivotal tools in India's freedom and source of inspiration of millions,
- Gandhi provoked multi-class movement of people from different ideologies for freedom
- Gandhi wrote in Gujarati and translated in Hindi and English,
- Later, Gandhi's works published as *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* in 1960s (comprises about 50,000 pages in about a hundred volumes)



Women hold demonstrations during the Quit India movement.



Satyagrahis making a human wall.

# Effects of English in attaining Independence

- New Education revealed western thoughts and **new intelligentsia emerged**
- Printing press, Media, Roads and Railways gave wider **exposure to idea of freedom**
- **Repurposed** literature enhanced expression and became popular
- *Chaupal* (चौपाल) became a place to exchange news and views and devotional expression and now became more **vibrant**
- *Bhakti* literature gradually transformed into **nationalistic** literature,
- Hybrid *Hindi and Urdu* **competed** for acceptance but **split** the country
- **Grass root** awakening **galvanized** by Gandhi and others that accelerated sense of Independence!
- Indian cultural **resilience** claimed **freedom** in 1947!



Thank you!



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