

## CHAPTER 32

### HISTORY

#### Doctoral Theses

01. AAKRITI  
**Aspects of Social History of Sex Work in North India: 1857-1956.**  
Supervisor: Dr. Shahana Bhattacharya  
Th 28310

#### *Abstract*

This thesis examines the social history of sex work in North India from 1857 to 1956, arguing that it constituted legitimate labour shaped by colonial policies and laws, socio-economic transformations, and cultural shifts. During this period, colonial interventions, including legal criminalisation, medicalisation, and spatial segregation, alongside nationalist and postcolonial moral frameworks, redefined sex work from a relatively more culturally integrated (though still somewhat disapproved of) practice into a stigmatised and sharply regulated activity. This transformation brought a range of different kinds of work, from that of courtesans (tawaifs) and devadasis to poverty-driven street sex work within the same definition of 'prostitute', erasing the cultural significance of these categories of work and workers. Likewise, it transformed spaces like the kothas, which were previously centres of music, dance, and social interaction where tawaifs entertained elite patrons, into brothels. The study focuses on tawaifs, devadasis, and hereditary performers such as the bedia, kanjar, and nat among several others who came into this work during the period under study, highlighting how these policies disproportionately marginalised women from lower-caste Hindu and Muslim communities. By emphasising their agency and modes of negotiating these transformations through legal challenges, cultural preservation, and collective resistance, the thesis challenges narratives that portray the women who were sex workers solely as victims of exploitation. Based on historical evidence it draws attention to the ambiguities that surround 'voluntary' sex work and 'coerced' labour, underscoring the need to address structural inequalities like poverty, caste discrimination, and gender oppression as drivers of this work. The analysis reveals how colonial and postcolonial legal frameworks perpetuated marginalisation, while documenting sex workers' resilience in navigating these constraints. This historical perspective centres marginalised voices, particularly from North India, and provides a foundation for contemporary discussions on decriminalising sex work.

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1. Introduction 2. Tradition, Institution and Morality: Old and New 3. Cantonment to Containment: The Industrialisation and Institutionalisation of Sex Work 80-120 4. Shaping Stigma, Forging Resistance: The Legal History of Sex Work 121-168 5. Conclusion: Post-Colonial Continuities 6. Conclusion.

02. ABRAHAM (Blessy Chinnu)  
**Aspects of Indian Tariff Policy from the 1920s to the 1950s.**  
Supervisor: Prof. Prabhu P. Mohapatra  
Th 28311

*Abstract*

This thesis seeks to understand the development of a protectionist tariff against the background of imperial trade policies that were followed in colonies like India. Here, the thesis posits that it would be more appropriate to read such tariff histories as a separate but integral part of modern economic history of South Asia. It proposes that tariff policy in context of British India, should be viewed as a contestation of various economic-political imaginaries that was embedded in imperial anxieties and delayed nationalist aspirations. By looking at the period from the early 1920s till the early 1950s, the chapters of the thesis trace the evolution of the Indian tariff policy first as a revenue maximizing measure till the end of the First World War, then as a policy of discriminating protection during the 1920s, its shift towards preferential tariffs in the 1930s and finally the transition to a developmental tariff by the early 1950s.

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1. Introduction –Examining the Debates on Indian Tariff Policy 2. The Old Order Changeth, Yielding Place to New: A Policy of Compromise, 1920-1923. 3. A Balancing Act: Understanding the Operatives of the Policy of Discriminating Protection (1924-1929) 4. A Faustian Bargain: Examining the Politics of Imperial Preference (1931-1940) 5. Old Wine in A New Bottle: Planning and Developmental Protection (1940-1951) 6. Conclusion– Summary and Aftermath. Bibliography.

03. ASHU J.  
**Visual and Material Cultures of Western Deccan (350 Bce-450 Ce):  
 Historical and Archaeological Study.**

Supervisor: Prof. Seema Bawa

Th 28312 Vol.-I & Th 28313 Vol.-II

*Abstract*

This research, titled `Visual and Material Cultures of the Western Deccan (350 BCE – 450 CE): A Historical and Archaeological Inquiry,` investigates the development of visual and material expressions in the Western Deccan between 350 BCE and 450 CE. Adopting an interdisciplinary framework that combines both historical analysis and archaeological evidence, the study focuses primarily on the region of present-day Maharashtra. Focusing on three successive dynastic phases i.e., Mauryan, Sātavāhana, and Vākāṭaka, the study constructs a robust spatial and chronological framework that integrates excavation reports, field surveys, numismatic and epigraphic evidence, and comparative art historical analysis. It explores how objects such as terracotta figurines, coins, inscriptions, literary texts, as well as architectural features like urban layouts and rock-cut caves, reflect the socio-cultural, economic, and religious shifts that occurred during the rule of the Maurya, Sātavāhana, and Vākāṭaka dynasties. This study systematically examines excavation records, artefacts, coins, inscriptions, and texts to trace socio-economic and religious changes in ancient Western Deccan. Chapter one analyses 2,935 terracotta artefacts, highlighting double-mould techniques and Indo-Roman stylistic influences across four periods, noting shifts from Mother Goddess to Buddhist, Śaiva, and Vaiṣṇava motifs. Chapter two examines 1,008 coins, revealing diverse minting methods and the coexistence of local and Roman currencies, underscoring the region's key role in Indo-Roman trade. Chapter three interprets inscriptions and literature to explore religious patronage, the role of women and foreigners in donations, and occupational diversity. Chapter four investigates urban centres and cave monuments architecture along trade routes, linking monastic activity and commerce to urban growth and cultural exchange. The study shows how economic networks and religious institutions mutually reinforced regional development. The findings highlight the Western Deccan's dual role as both a

hub and a source of inter-regional interactions. Mauryan influence was key in spreading Buddhism; Sātavāhana stability fostered urban growth and Roman trade; and the Vākāṭaka era marked a shift toward Hindu artistic traditions, mirroring broader political and cultural changes. While regional differences exist, material culture reveals a shared visual vocabulary that spanned South Asia and beyond. By integrating archaeological, textual, and material evidence, this research addresses a major gap in localized historical studies and proposes a more nuanced historiographical model for the early historic Deccan. It emphasizes the value of site-specific research and promotes holistic approaches that combine artefacts, inscriptions, and landscape analysis to better understand the cultural transformations of this formative period in Indian history.

#### *Contents*

**Vol.-I** 1. Introduction 2. Terracotta Art Artefacts of the Western Deccan 3. Coinage of the Western Deccan 4. Inscriptions and Literary Sources of the Western Deccan 5. Urban Centres and Cave Monuments of the Western Deccan 6. Epilogue 7. Illustrations and bibliography. **Vol.-II** Charts, Fieldwork Illustrations, and Annexures.

04. GAIROLA (Anukta)  
**Understanding Garhwal through texts of Mola Ram: 18TH and 19TH Century.**  
 Supervisor: Dr. Yasser Arafath Pothukandiyil  
Th 28314

#### *Abstract*

This thesis examines the Braj Bhasha literary texts of Mola Ram, written during the late 18th and early 19th centuries in the Garhwal region. Mola Ram was a painter and poet who lived his life in Srinagar, the capital of the Parmar rulers. Mola Ram is renowned for his paintings and is regarded as the most influential painter of the Garhwal School of Painting. However, it is not well known that Mola Ram wrote extensively in Braj Bhasha and Urdu and was a witness to the momentous political changes that the region of Garhwal experienced in this period. Mola Ram's life straddled the Parmar rule, the Gurkha rule (1803-1814/15) and their eventual defeat in 1814-15 to the Company. Using his four Braj bhasha texts — namely, Mangat Ram-Mola Ram Samwad, Ganika Natak, Garh Rajya Vansh Kavya, and Sudarshan Darshan — this thesis attempts to explore the multifaceted concept of the region's landscape. The thesis also utilises Mola Ram's texts to highlight his views on the notion of a just war, the idea of heroism, and the understanding of gender relations as observed in the region. His writings demonstrate a distinct political awareness of the times in which he lived. Often playing the role of a mediator, his texts reveal the constantly changing dynamics between Garhwal and its neighbouring regions, including Sirmaur, Kangra, Kumaon, and Guler. His writings tend to place himself at the centre of the events in Garhwal, but the thesis attempts to disentangle his perceived notions of self from reality. Through the analysis of Mola Ram's life and works, this thesis draws attention to the pre-colonial history of Garhwal. The thesis also sheds light on the life of a gentleman poet and attempts to demonstrate how patronage and politics influenced the production of literary texts during this period.

#### *Contents*

1. Mola Ram— His Texts and Contexts 2. Home and the World—Contextualising Landscape of Garhwal Through Mola Ram's Texts 3. Exploring the Ideas of Warfare, Statecraft and Heroism Through Mola Ram's Poetry 4. Queens and Courtesans— Locating 'Rani'and 'Ganika' in Mola Ram's Texts 5. Conclusion 6. Bibliography. List of Maps. List of Plates. Appendix.

05. DRISHTI (Kalra)  
**Contested Landscapes, Enduring Memory: Bodhgaya and the Entangled Histories of Sacred Space.**  
 Supervisor: Prof. Jaya S. Tyagi  
Th 28315

*Abstract*

This study investigates the historical evolution of Bodhgayā into a central Buddhist pilgrimage site, famously known as the “Navel of the Earth.” Employing an interdisciplinary methodology—integrating textual sources, epigraphic evidence, archaeological surveys, and art historical analysis—it examines socio-religious transformations that shaped the region’s sacrality and the methods the Buddhist monastic community, the saṅgha, used to establish and sustain this sacred landscape. Crucially, sacredness is understood here not as an inherent quality but as something that was ritually produced and socio-economically maintained. This perspective highlights the human sacred, a concept rooted in lived experiences and interactions that created a landscape rich in layered memory. The Buddha’s enlightenment was the pivotal event, but the site’s significance is also tied to the reinterpretation of older sacred forms absorbed into Buddhist cosmology. The site is best described as a dynamic palimpsest, where rituals, meanings, and architectural styles have continuously evolved. Embracing the idea of “multiplicity” acknowledges the diverse layers of meaning and practice that have coexisted over time. Bodhgayā’s history is a product of the co-evolution of narratives and material practices spanning over a thousand years. Archaeological investigations have themselves influenced how the site is perceived, often shaped by early accounts from Chinese pilgrims. Ultimately, Bodhgayā is presented not as a static monument but as a living nexus of sacred memory, communal effort, and engagement with its environment, continually revitalized by devotion and human activity throughout the centuries.

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1. Introduction 2 Mapping Sacred Space: The Historical and Textual Evolution of Bodhgayā 3 Bodhgayā Before the Bodhi Tree: The Longue Durée of Multiplicity in Buddhist Sacred Geography 4 Foundations and Sustenance: Agricultural Surplus, Settlement Dynamics, and Monastic Economies in the Bodhgayā Region 5 Conclusion. Appendix. Bibliography.

06. KUMARI KHUSBOO  
**Historical Anthropology of Adivasi Communities in Santhal Pargana Region: Customary Practices, Identity and Movement.**  
 Supervisor: Dr. Surendra Kumar  
Th 28799

*Abstract*

Some of the key concerns on the Santhal tribes of eastern India, historically settled over large tracts of Jharkhand, Bihar, Bengal, and Odisha are studied in this thesis. It is based on six chapters. The first chapter offers an overview of existing research, and analyses themes and issues relevant for my search for the Santhal past. The second chapter explores the evolution of ethnic and cultural practices of Adivasi people in general and of Santhals in particular. The third chapter goes deeper into the cosmology and belief system of tribal communities. The fourth chapter examines the consequences of colonial and post-colonial forest policies, and long history of Adivasi resistance against them. The fifth chapter follows the previous one in tracking tribal movements and changing tribal identities caused by massive dislocation and migration and struggles of rehabilitation and livelihood. The sixth chapter sums up and

highlights important concerns to emphasize how the Santhal lives matter. The study explores primary sources such as various government reports and ethnographic studies and examines existing works on tribal communities by historians, anthropologists and other scholars. Contrary to general notion, Adivasi life is dynamic. Santhal culture can be understood through its lifestyle, collective progress, and development based on ownership and the principle of co-existence with nature. Animals, plants, land, and dead ancestors play an important role in their lives. Everything in the universe is as alive as human beings. The world is inhabited by a large number of spiritual beings – bongas – of various kinds. The spirits identified by them can be classified into human spirits, spirits related to nature, and spirits related to the village and surroundings. Further, there is a moral universe where virtue is rewarded and evil punished. Also, animism, fables, human-animal relations, taboos, charms, incantations, etc., animate the accounts and make them anthropologically important. These include such aspects of Santhal folk traditions as belief in witchcraft and magic, and treatment of enemies as witches.

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1. Introduction: Problems of Sources and Historiography 2. Evolution of Ethnic and Cultural Practices of the Santhals 3. Cosmology and Belief System of Tribal Communities 4. Forest Policy and Resistance 5. Movements and Changing Tribal Identities 6. Conclusion. Bibliography.

07. MANMOHAN KRISHNA  
**Visibilising the ‘Invisibles’: Leprosy in Colonial Bengal and Bihar, c.1830s-1940s.**  
 Supervisor: Prof. Bhuwan Kumar Jha  
Th 28316

*Abstract*

This thesis tries to engage with notion of invisibility with regards to leprosy in colonial Bengal and Bihar. It is an attempt to examine the legal provisions related to leprosy and argue that these provisions tried to eliminate and invisibilize the leprosy sufferers who were visible in the public space and exclude the group from the notion of public health, as they were considered a danger to public. It engages with legal provisions enacted by the colonial state, responses of civil society and typecasting the disease with certain social and cultural behaviors. Law is the greatest source of crime as it is the legal system and its management which determines and creates binaries such as “good” and “bad”, “normal” and “abnormal”, “legal” and “illegal” and others. Its efficacy can be understood in the context of proscribed activities of vagrants and the ‘lepers’ determined by the colonial legal system. Asylums which substituted for health institutions for treatment of leprosy in colonial Bengal and Bihar. Moral management, practices, validations and places for exclusionary practices were gradually gaining momentum during the late 17th and 18th century. Asylum as a site for confinement and segregation came into practice from eighteenth century in colonial India.

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1. Introduction 2. The Colonial Administration, Leprosy and the „Leper“ 3. The Healing Systems and Politics of Biomedicine 4. Asylum: Panacea or Predicament 5. Epilogue 6. Bibliography 7. Appendices

08. PAPREJA (Ishan)  
**Saddi Boli, Maa Boli (Our Language, Our Mother Tongue) Punjabi Language and Identity Politics in Punjab.**  
 Supervisor: Prof. Charu Gupta  
Th 28317

*Abstract*

This thesis deals with the debates about the identity of Punjabi language from the middle of the nineteenth century. With the establishment of colonial rule, the process of envisioning the vernacular language for Punjab, started with the contestation of identity of Punjabi as a language. Though Punjabi is not recognised as the vernacular and instead Urdu becomes the medium of instruction at primary school level and language of local administration in Punjab, the colonial government however, played a decisive role in crafting the identity of the language. In the period which follows, Punjabi language goes through transformative shifts. Beginning with the codification and the construction of knowledge of Indian languages in the form of grammars and dictionaries by Christian missionaries, the language is slowly standardised as a result of decisions taken by the colonial government and also due to the establishment of press in the region. Though Punjabi was the spoken language of the people of all religious communities in Punjab, by the late nineteenth century it became a crucial part of Sikh identity. The transformation of Punjabi is reflected in the fact that the script of the language changes from nastaliq (Persian) to Gurmukhi. Partition and independence marked a new phase in the history of the language, as Punjabi competed with Hindi to carve a distinct identity and to claim official status in the state of Punjab. Another theme which has been analysed here, is the role played by institutions like Sahitya Akademi, Language Department of Punjab, Punjabi University Patiala, etc. in the recognition, development, promotion and propagation of Punjabi language. The thesis attempts to show how the emotional attachment to Punjabi language slowly emerges due to a variety of reasons and how Punjabi is transformed from language to mother-tongue.

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1. Crafting the Identity of Punjabi 2. Community, Identity and Language in Colonial Punjab 3. Language and State 4. Punjabi Language to Maa Boli Punjabi 5. Conclusion, Bibliography

09. PRABHAT KUMAR

**Dharma Sangha and Ramrajya Parishad: Failed Attempts at Building a Nation through Holy Fire.**

Supervisor: Prof. Bhuwan Kumar Jha

Th 28318

*Abstract*

Broadly speaking this thesis is on a religious movement that took place in the middle decades of the twentieth century. The movement was led by a dandi sanyasi more popularly known as Karpatriji. This was neither a reformist nor a revivalist movement. There were similar movements in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, like Dharm Sabha, Bharat Dharm Mahamandal and Hindu Dharm Pracharak Sabha. All these movements had a deeper commitment to Sanatan Dharm. The work is divided into four chapters. The First Chapter deals with the early life of Karpatriji. Born in a traditional brahmin family in eastern UP he developed ascetic tendencies and left home when he was 19 years old. He received traditional education in scriptures and then took to sanyas. These two experiences of his early life, scholasticism and monasticism, influenced his thinking and engagements in later life. The Second Chapter examines his thoughts. His deeper commitment to the scriptures brought him into ideological conflict with the political and cultural activists of the time- Pundit Madan Mohan Malaviya, MS Golwalkar and VD Savarkar. According to him any thought or practise that was not in the scriptures was unacceptable. Scriptures were God given. The Third and Fourth Chapters deal with his social and political

activities. To establish the principles enumerated in the Shastras he established an organisation called Dharmasangh in 1940. Dharmasangh was engaged in religious activities like organising Vedic Yagyas, conserving the Vedas, organising shastrartha and teaching the Shastras. In 1947 Karpatriji framed Five Point Demands. They were related to cow protection, Hindu Code Bill, temple entry rights, governance through Shastras and representation in Constituent Assembly. In 1948 he formed a political party, Ramrajya Parishad, which fought three General Elections. The work provides an insight into an alternative view for national reconstruction.

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1. Making of a Yogi: From a Reluctant Family Man to a Wandering Ascetic 2. Shashtra Embodying the Eternal Truth: Inviolable and Complete 3. Sanyasi as an Activist: Upholding Traditional Order, Resisting Winds of Change 4. Foray into Politics: Rishi or Rajan? 5 Conclusion and bibliography. Appendices

10. RAKESH

**Ecology of India in the Seventeenth Century: With Special Reference to European Travellers.**

Supervisor: Dr. Bhupinder Kumar Chaudhary  
Th 28319

#### *Abstract*

The period of the seventeenth century was marked for exploration by the Europeans in India. Travelers of this period were not, in the strict sense of the term, traders or colonialist. They left much historical information for the modern scholars as their accounts were sufficiently attractive without adornment. I would try to touch all traveler accounts of seventeenth century but few were very important which left extensive records of their experiences in India. I would include at the very outset of the seventeenth century, travelers who were not only a traveler but also visited India as ambassadors or traders. Every traveler came to India with a different perspective; few came for the purpose of trade while others had a political mindset. They were also attracted towards the Indian flora and fauna and had recorded in their accounts about the hunting practices of rulers. When they came to India, they were confronted with a radically different topography, climate, animal and plant, and diseases which were recorded in their accounts. Under these circumstances their references becomes an important source of information in the history of India. Their references about India were later consolidated by different authors in seventeenth century. European travelers focused on economy and politics rather than religion and culture. The focus of my research is on the study of European accounts which played an important role in the construction of history of ecology in seventeenth century. Before the Mughal period, the evidences of man's natural environment in India were fragmented, derived mostly from archaeological or literary allusions. It is only from the sixteenth and seventeenth century that had direct geographical descriptions providing details of forests, deserts, river-courses, cultivated zones and human settlement become extensive and accurate enough to permits us to survey a very large part of India.

#### *Contents*

1. Seventeenth Century's India 2. European Travelers in India 3. European Travellers and Glimpses of Historical Geography of India 4. Rich and Diverse Agrarian Landscapes 5. Glimpses of Flora in European Travellers' Accounts 6 Fauna and European Travellers 7 Diverse Traditions of Hunting in the Seventeenth Century. Glossary, Bibliography

11. RANJAN (Vivek)  
**Elementary Education in Delhi: A Historical Study, C. 1911-1975.**  
 Supervisor: Prof. Vikas Gupta  
Th 28320

*Abstract*

This thesis investigates the complex and contested evolution of elementary education in Delhi, locating this regional history within the broader all-India framework. The central argument of this thesis is that the development of elementary education in Delhi, though seemingly progressive in quantitative terms, was in fact shaped by persistent structures of inequality and exclusion inherited from colonial rule and perpetuated into the post-independence era. The research highlights how the spread of education was not a consensual or neutral process but was marked by contestation, negotiation, and systemic biases rooted in class, caste, gender, and religious hierarchies. Despite official claims promoting education as a universal right, elementary schooling in Delhi was marked by elitist colonial policies that limited access for the marginalized. Through both colonial and nationalist periods, the discourse around education remained infused with contradictions—rhetorically universal, but practically exclusionary. Policy initiatives embodied ideological commitment, yet their implementation was uneven and frequently obstructed by economic and social constraints. The thesis interrogates the motivations of the colonial and postcolonial state in establishing educational institutions. It asks whether these were genuine efforts for mass upliftment or strategies driven by administrative needs and elite pressures. It explores how marginalized groups—Dalits, Muslims, women, and refugees—engaged with elementary education as a tool of empowerment. In a distinctive contribution, the thesis juxtaposes mainstream educational development with the Gandhian alternative of Basic Education (Nai Talim). Tracing Gandhi's vision from the Wardha Conference of 1937 to its declining influence by the 1970s, the thesis shows that while Basic Education briefly found resonance in Delhi, it was ultimately sidelined due to administrative resistance, urban aspirations, and evolving educational priorities.

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1. Struggles for Free and Compulsory Elementary Education in Colonial India (1911-1947) 2. Debates on Free and Compulsory Elementary Education in Post Independence India (1947-1975) 3. System of Elementary Education in Delhi (1911-1947) 4. System of School Education in Delhi (1948-1975) 5. State and Community Initiatives in the Education of Muslim Children in Delhi (1911-1975) 6. Women Education in Delhi: A Study of Growth, Disparities and Policy Interventions (1911-1975) 7. Conceptualizing 'Lower Caste' Education in Delhi (1911-1975) 8. Gandhian Model on Alternative Education 9. Implementation of Gandhian Schemes of Basic Education in India (1937-1975) 10 Gandhian Basic Education in Delhi (1937-1975). Bibliography.

12. SANJAY KUMAR  
**Food Problems and Famine in Post - Colonial India: A Case Study of Bihar, 1947 - 1972.**  
 Supervisor: Prof. Sanghamitra Misra  
Th 28714

*Abstract*

This study presents a critical perspective on the persistent food crises and famines that plagued Bihar during the first two decades of post-independence India. It argues that rural Bihar continued to suffer from widespread hunger, starvation, and economic distress despite expectations that political

independence would also bring economic democracy and relief to the agrarian poor. Landlords and zamindars preserved their economic dominance at the expense of the poor peasantry and agricultural labourers' financial independence. This kept poor peasants and agricultural labourers in conditions of economic servitude. The entrenched caste-based agrarian hierarchy, where upper-caste zamindars dominated lower-caste tenants and labourers, continued to reinforce rural inequalities. Socialist and Left-oriented groups raised concerns about land relations, food insecurity, and famine, advocating for radical agrarian reforms as the only viable solution. They argued that the root cause of starvation and hunger among tenants and labourers lay in the colonial-era exploitative land system, which remained largely intact. However, zamindars, leveraging their political influence, successfully delayed land reform implementation, exacerbating food insecurity for the rural poor. The study also critiques the failure of major agricultural initiatives like the 'Grow More Food' (GMF) campaign. Despite the major investment in irrigation, soil enrichment, and high-yield seeds, these programs largely failed to benefit the poor peasants, who lacked access to resources and institutional support. The goal of achieving food self-sufficiency remained unattainable. Recurrent droughts and floods during the two decades following independence further worsened Bihar's food crisis, pushing the region toward famine conditions. Despite government investments in flood control and irrigation projects, these initiatives failed to effectively support cultivators in overcoming agricultural challenges. As a result, food shortages and starvation became recurring issues/ features of Bihar's rural landscape, underscoring the failure of both economic planning and agrarian policy in post-colonial India.

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1. From Self-sufficiency to Dependency: Grow More Food campaign, 1943–1952  
 2. Food Crisis and Peasant Resistance 3. Food Scarcity, Famine and Conditions: Early Challenges after Independence 4. Agrarian Reforms and Food Crises 5. Floods, Droughts and Famines: Vulnerabilities and Mitigations. Conclusion. Bibliography.

13. SHANU (Saurabh Kumar)  
**Indigenous Learning and Colonial Knowledge: Power and Politics in Patna—1860s to 1980s.**  
 Supervisor: Dr. Amit K Suman  
Th 28321

#### *Abstract*

This thesis critically examines the evolving landscape of education in Patna from the 1860s through the 1980s, investigating how indigenous learning systems and colonial knowledge production intersected with caste, power, and regional politics. Challenging binary narratives of colonial imposition versus passive reception, the study foregrounds the agency of native intellectuals, reformers, and socio-political actors who actively engaged with and reshaped educational institutions in Bihar. These institutions, notably Patna College (1863) and Patna University (1917), emerged not only as instruments of colonial governance but also as contested spaces where knowledge, identity, and authority were negotiated. The thesis explores how upper-caste elites dominated early educational patronage, using Western education as a means to consolidate power and secure positions within the colonial and postcolonial state. However, from the early 20th century onward, other castes mobilized through emerging caste associations and student movements to claim educational space, cultural legitimacy, and political visibility. Institutions such as Patna University became focal points for caste assertion, culminating in the rise of caste-based student politics and the broader politicization of education in post-independence Bihar.

The study further investigates the transformation of these institutions during key political moments, including the Non-Cooperation Movement, the formation of caste federations, and the Total Revolution of the 1970s led by Jayaprakash Narayan. It argues that education in Patna evolved as a layered and contested domain—simultaneously reproducing social hierarchies and enabling counter-hegemonic mobilizations. By tracing the entanglement of knowledge, caste, and politics across colonial and postcolonial Bihar, this work provides a critical reinterpretation of the role of education in shaping regional political consciousness and institutional power structures.

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1. Introduction 2. Education in Patna till 1860s: Ancient Traditions, Indigenous Learning and Western Schools 3. Evolution of Patna College: Continuity and Changes 4. Patna University: Educational Autonomy and Political Identity 5. Non-Cooperation to Total Revolution: The Socio-Political Journey of Patna University 6. Conclusion and Bibliography.

14. SINGH (Nagwant)

**Some Aspects of Riti Literature in Eighteenth Century North India.**

Supervisor: Prof. Raziuddin Aquil

Th 28322

### *Abstract*

Thesis [Some Aspects of Riti Literature in Eighteenth Century North India]  
 Synopsis The eighteenth century was a peculiar historical phase in Indian history. Broadly, the era has been understood in terms of political and economic transition. The period is also known for the proliferation of regional empires and their centres. Interestingly, notwithstanding the political churning, Brajbhasha poets received patronage throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. While researching the aspects of the emergence of vernacular literature, scholars have found multiple agencies and the nature of patronage behind them. Because of the changing political dispensation in the first half of the eighteenth century, several political-religious-economic centres emerged, which intensified the existing pluralistic cultural practices. With few exceptions, most of the existing research indicates that Riti poetry has been assessed and interpreted through contemporary lenses. Besides rhetorical and hyperbolic expressions of Riti texts, we would collect a lot of information on political and cultural aspects through these works. They are not just artistic works of high literary values but also encapsulate the embodied experiences of the time. The Ritigranth genre was a dominant form of courtly expression that provides an 'invaluable window' for retrieving the past. This thesis investigates the historical and socio-cultural factors contributing to the making and shifting of Pan-Indian sensibilities. Through a multidisciplinary approach that integrates literary analysis, historical and psychological contexts, gender studies, and cultural theory, this research aims to elucidate the enduring relevance of Riti literature in contemporary discussions on cultural cohesion and the shared past. Conventionally, it has been considered that eighteenth-century India was a period of moral decadence in general. This thesis attempts to show the differences between early modernity and colonial modernity, which have not been properly investigated due to a lack of expertise in the concerned fields. In summary, this thesis has explored the aspects of bodily conduct and etiquettes embedded within the literary traditions of early modern India. It offers insights into the norms of masculinity and early modern sensibilities, shedding light on their significance while acknowledging their limited scholarly attention. In a nutshell, the paper has problematised the recent hypostatisation and canonisation of Hindi literature, which led us somehow into a state of cultural amnesia.

*Contents*

1. The Socio-Political History of Riti Poets: The Mughal Context 2 The Socio-Political History of Riti Poets: The Regional Context 3 Locating Sayyid Ghulam Nabi Bilgrami's Oeuvre 4 The Functionalities of Literary Genres in Culture: Transmitter Sustainer and Maker 5 The Order of Time and Emotion: Shad-ritu and Barahmasa 6 Unveiling the Half Population: Body, Love, and Eros under the Male Gaze 7 Human-Nonhuman Interactions in the Ritigranths: Cognitive, Affective and Normative. Conclusion, Bibliography

15. SINGH (Namita)  
**Humour, Folklore and Textuality: Understanding Social Relations in Medieval Mithila.**  
 Supervisor: Prof. VIPUL SINGH  
Th 28323

*Abstract*

The Thesis attempts to study the 14th and 15th century Mithila, when it was going through its political formations. The Thesis investigates the state formations and its implications on the society visible in the literature, political treatise, and Painting. It assess the role of humour and complexity of text and textuality that is reflective of the changing social relations during the period. It eventually contributes to identity formation of the region. The work is divided into four sections each section uses a particular source material that is contextualised to its period, its political scenario and is situated amongst other literatures from the period. The first section examines the evolution of kingship and state formation in Mithila under Karnata and Oinwara dynasties. The transition from Kshatriya to Brahman Kingship leads to reorganisation of the social order amongst the elites and therefore a need for patronage to writing political treatise is visible in the period. The second part uses Dhurtasmagam as satirical text as lens to understand the shifting morality and sense of unease amongst the elite sections of the society. The sense of morality is further put to texts through Vidyapati's texts and its impact in the popular classes which is evident in the popularity of the scholar and his compositions. a similar assessment of how the classes go through change is assessed through teh folk art of Mithila. Overall the thesis emphasizes Mithila's complex socio-political landscape, where kingship, religious patronage, literary expression, and artistic traditions collectively shaped regional identity.

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1. Mithila State and Kingship: A Changing Social Relationship 2 Dhurtasamagam: Humour As A Lens 3 Vidyapati's textuality : Shaping Morality through Shifting Social Norms 4 Social Hierarchies in Mithila Folklore and Painting. Conclusion, Bibliography, Appendix, Map.

16. SRIVASTAVA (Anshuman)  
**Prison and Society: Race, Caste and Penal Power in Colonial India (1840-1920).**  
 Supervisor: Prof. Sanghamitra Mishra  
Th 28324

*Abstract*

This thesis is primarily an attempt to examine the relation between prison and society in colonial India during 19th and early 20th century. It argues that the interaction between prison authorities (in the form of prison policies) and prisoners was not limited to the space of prison. Its implications were visible on society outside the prison as well. Nor was it the case that the issues that

captivated the prison space strictly emerged from the circumstances inside the prison. At times many policies implemented by the colonial state in the prison space were influenced by its larger ideological underpinnings, including those of constructed notions of racial hierarchy. The thesis focuses on various prison policies introduced during the 19th century and early 20th century and their implications on the prisoners and society at large. The attempt has been to record prisoners' narrative and agency through an analysis of the prisoner's response to the policies introduced in prison. Through its careful examination of the themes of punishment, dietary regimes in the prisons and the prevalence of short-term prisoners, the thesis draws out the manner in which the colonial state's idea of criminality remained highly influenced by the category of the caste. The notion of race also had its share in shaping the prison policies especially during the second half of the 19th century. The objective of this study was to demonstrate the connections between the prison and colonized society through the themes of caste, race and 'criminality' etc.

### *Contents*

1. 'Reforms' and Punishment: The Colonial Narrative 2 Short-Term Prisoners, Caste And 'Criminality' 3 Dietary Policies in the Colonial Prisons: Identities and Resistance 4 Reconsidering 'Reforms' In Prison Architecture 5 Writing In Jail: Prison Writings and the Experiences of 'Political Prisoners'. Conclusion, Bibliography.

17. SWARGIARY (Udit Jyoti)  
**British Imperialism in the Nicobar Archipelago: Sovereignty, Jurisdiction, and Territory, circa 1840 to 1920.**  
 Supervisor: Prof. Sanghamitra Misra  
Th 28715

### *Abstract*

This thesis examines the intertwined processes of territorialisation and primitivisation of the Nicobar Islands and their inhabitants, through which they were incorporated into the expanding British Empire during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It resulted in the political subjugation of the islanders and the transformation of the archipelago into a tightly regulated and militarised colonial space. Central to this analysis is the intrinsic relationship between the colonial state's categorisations and representations of the islanders and its concomitant projects of economic exploitation and territorial consolidation. Put differently, it argues that the occupation of the archipelago and the attempts to institute a colonial order were fundamentally driven by the political-economic imperatives of the British colonial state—anchored in both the strategic and the perceived revenue-generating capacity of the archipelago, and aimed at preventing rival European powers from gaining a foothold—but legitimised through a broader colonial discourse that, by the late eighteenth century, was articulated under the rubric of modernity. These representational and politico-economic strategies, the thesis contends, were inseparable from the coercive mechanisms through which colonial power was exercised. The transformation of the archipelago into a highly regulated and militarised space was effected through punitive expeditions, summary trials, surveillance regimes, and the routine deployment of state violence within a system in which military personnel, serving as executive officials, were vested with expansive juridico-military powers. Far from being incidental to colonial governance, such practices lay at its core. In tracing how representation, violence, and territorialisation were fundamentally intertwined, this thesis ultimately posits that British imperialism derived its strength from—and recurrently relied on—force and repression, rather than solely on the 'colonisation of the mind', as the principal means of securing and 'administering' its imperial holdings.

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1. Tropicalising the Nicobars: Representation of the Nicobar Islands in the Colonial and Pre-Colonial Writings 2. 'Piracy' in the Nicobars: Colonial Discourses on Lawlessness and Savagery in the Bay of Bengal, 1830s-1860s 3. The British Annexation of the Nicobars and the 'end' of Piracy, 1850s-1870 4. Understanding the Nature of Colonial Intervention: The Emerging Discourses on Land in the 1870s-80s 5. Paternal Despotism and the Coercive Infantilisation of the Islanders 6. Control over Trade, Political Economy, and Connectivity. Conclusion. Bibliography

18. VAJPAYEE (Ajeya)  
**Between Region and Dynasty: Interpreting the Visual Culture of Ālampur in the Eastern Deccan.**  
 Supervisor: Prof. Parul Pandya Dhar  
Th 28325

*Abstract*

This thesis explores the interactions between dynasty (ideology) and region within the specific context of the Bādāmi Calukyas and its neighbours in Madhyadēśa, Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam, and Kaliṅga in the emergence of a distinctive artistic language at Ālampur, a site featuring nine ancient shrines constructed in the Nāgara mannerism, located on the western banks of the Tungabhadra river in the Mahbubnagar district of Telangana, without simplifying its origins into a complex web of influences. Due to the incompatible locations of the temples and their patrons' nucleus, the site has frequently escaped the notice of scholars. This thesis fills established lacunae by placing Ālampur within the broader context of the historical and artistic traditions of the Bādāmi Calukyas while examining the motives that led to their expansion in the eastern Deccan and the inspirations and interactions between regions that contributed to its distinctive artistic form. It argues that the flourishing artistic traditions of its builders (in the west) orchestrated the development of the Ālampur group, shaped by a network of regional interactions—some direct and others reinterpreted—driven by the relentless desire to rule the highly contested eastern territory for martial security.

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1 Eastern Outpost of the Bādāmi Calukyas: Understanding Ālampur through Early Epigraphic Records 2 The Ālampur Group and Associated Sites: Architectural Plans and Elevations 3 The Ālampur Group and Associated Sites: Architectural Elements, Sculptures, and Artists 4 Ālampur Beyond the Bādāmi Calukyas: Epigraphy, Architecture, and Iconography. Conclusion, Bibliography, Plates, Appendices.

19. VINITA  
**Food and Food Habits in the Tribal Society of Chotanagpur (1800 to 1950s).**  
 Supervisor: Dr. David V. Zou  
Th 28326

*Abstract*

This thesis attempts to write the cultural history of food in the Chotanagpur region from circa 1800 to 1950. The thesis focuses on the local foodways of this 'tribal' region characterised by agro-forestry balance. It underlines the richness of forest-based food (such as mahua, mushrooms, etc.) in the local food culture. But the interface between local foodway and trans-local food was dynamic, and far from being fixed. Local foodways have always interacted with both upper-

caste and European attitudes toward food concerning plant-based and meat-based diets. Access to forestfood came under British colonial control with the enactment of several forest laws since the nineteenth century. Initially, colonial laws were primarily interested in timber forests and reclaimed agricultural land. Later state legislations heavily restricted access to forest resources (including non-timber food plants such as mahua). At this point, the colonial state intervened to define customary laws and practices regarding land claims and access rights. This development exposed the conflict of interests among the local forest users, the timber lobby and state interest for stability. By the middle of the nineteenth century, a section of the British administration already expressed ecological concerns (especially deforestation and drought) and the frequent occurrences of famine. Because famine is essentially the scarcity of food, the thesis tries to bridge a historiographical gap between the economic approach to famine history and the cultural approach to food history within a single framework of analysis. A reluctant colonial state intervened to provide famine relief, namely – rice in exchange for day labor in public works. Ironically, this state intervention opened the door for transplanting many local communities of Chotanagpur as “migrant workers” in different plantation colonies across the British Empire.

#### Contents

1. Local Foodways in Chotanagpur 2. Forest-Based Food 3. Forests, Food and Laws 4. Rice as Staple and Rice Famine. Conclusion, Appendix, Bibliography.

20. वर्मा, मेजर

#### पूर्वी उत्तर प्रदेश के लोक गीत : सामाजिक एवं सांस्कृतिक पहचान।

निर्देशिका : डॉ. अर्पणा बालासुब्रमण्यम

Th 28327

#### सारंश

लोकगीत किसी एक मानवमात्र के इतिहास का वर्णन नहीं प्रस्तुत करते, अपितु यह सम्पूर्ण परिवेश की जानकारी भी उपलब्ध करवाते हैं। इन्हीं उद्देश्यों को ध्यान में रखकर इस शोध कार्य को चार अध्यायों में विभाजित किया गया है। जो निम्न प्रकार से हैं- अध्याय एक लोकगीतों के नृवंशविज्ञान संबंधी अध्ययन से संबंधित है, सर्वप्रथम औपनिवेशिक नृवंशविज्ञान अध्ययन में लोकगीत और उनकी उपयोगिता की बात की गई है इसके पश्चात नृवंशविज्ञानियों और इतिहासकारों द्वारा लोकगीतों का स्रोत के रूप में किस प्रकार प्रयोग किया है और अंत में लोकगीतों के अध्ययन करते समय बरते जाने वाली सावधानियों की चर्चा भी की गई है। अध्याय दो में मुख्यतः महिलाओं के लोकगीतों की चर्चा है। जिसमें उनके प्रमुख लोकगीत- सोहर, विवाह गीत और जतसर की व्याख्या व उनका सामाजिक-सांस्कृतिक महत्व देखा गया है। इसके बाद गीतों के ऐतिहासिक अध्ययन के साथ महिलाओं के भावनात्मक इतिहास को भी समझने का प्रयास किया गया है। अध्याय तीन लोकगीतों के लिए प्रसिद्ध मुख्यतः तीन प्रमुख जातियाँ जैसे- धोबी, अहीर और कहराँ के सामाजिक-सांस्कृतिक महत्व के साथ ऐतिहासिक महत्व को भी उजागर किया गया है। अध्याय चार में पूर्वी उत्तर प्रदेश के सोनभद्र जिले के जनजातियों और उनके लोकगीतों की चर्चा है, जिसमें धाँगर (उराँव), खरवार (खैरवार) तथा घसिया प्रमुख हैं, इसके बाद जनजातियों की समस्याएँ, उनके निवारण और सुझाव की चर्चा की

गई है। इस प्रकार लोकगीतीकरण मौखिक इतिहास की एक परंपरा है। इतिहासकारों को लोकगीतों को एक महत्वपूर्ण स्रोत के रूप में स्वीकारने की आवश्यकता है और यह तभी होगा जब हम इतिहास लेखन की पारंपरिक विधि से अपनी पकड़ को कुछ हद तक ढीला करेंगे। यह शोध कार्य लोकगीतों द्वारा जातीय परंपरा, महिलाओं की भावनाओं, आदिवासियों की संस्कृति इन सभी पर प्रकाश डालने का कार्य करता है।

### *विषय सूची*

1. लोकगीतों का नृवंशविज्ञान संबंधी अध्ययन 2 महिलाएं और लोकगीत 3 जातियों और उनके लोकगीत 4. सोनभद्र क्षेत्र विशेष आदिवासी लोकगीतों का अध्ययन। उपसंहार। संदर्भ ग्रंथ सूची।