

Charting Multidisciplinary and Multi-Institutional Pathways for Inclusive Growth and Global Leadership held on 4th & 5th April, 2025

Organised by: IQAC - Gossner College, Ranchi

Literary Contributions Reflecting India's Progress Reema Supriya Kujur

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Objective: To determine India's literary contributions which have been instrumental in documenting its socio-political, economic, and cultural transformation. From colonial oppression and independence struggles to globalization and modern aspirations, Indian literature has served as a reflection of the nation's evolving identity. Pre-independence works, such as Rabindranath Tagore's Where the Mind is Without Fear, express a vision of a free, enlightened society. My Experiments with Truth by Gandhi gives a strong message against racial discrimination, importance of non-violent resistance and is an inspiration for truth and self-examination. Mulk Raj Anand's Untouchable (1935) highlights the deep-rooted caste discrimination and the urgency for social reform, while Premchand's Godaan (1936) depicts the struggles of rural peasants under an exploitative feudal system. These works emphasize the challenges faced by Indian society and the need for systemic change. Post-independence literature captures the complexities of a newly independent nation. R.K. Narayan's The Guide (1958) explores self-discovery and transformation, mirroring India's own journey toward progress. Kamala Das's poem An Introduction (1965) presents a powerful feminist perspective, addressing gender discrimination and patriarchal oppression. These literary works showcase India's search for identity, social justice, and empowerment. With economic liberalization and globalization, contemporary literature has shifted focus toward new aspirations and challenges. Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* (2008) critiques the widening class divide, while Raghuram Rajan's I Do What I Do (2017) and Shashi Tharoor's Why I Am a Hindu (2018) examine India's economic policies and pluralistic cultural identity. Visionary works such as A.P.J. Abdul Kalam's India 2020 (1998) and Ignited Minds (2002) emphasize innovation, technology, and sustainable development as key drivers for Viksit Bharat 2047.

Conclusion: Indian poetry, fiction and non-fiction continue to shape national consciousness, offering insights into the nation's triumphs, challenges, and aspirations. As India moves toward becoming a Vishwa Guru, literature remains a powerful tool in defining its global identity.

Methodology: Textual analysis, historical method and postcolonial criticism.

Key Words: Transformation, Progress, Globalization, Indian Literature, Development.



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Introduction

India as a young nation, breaking its shackles from its colonial burden of three centuries was faced with a long path of recovery and progress both on its social as well as economical sphere. On social front, India faced with challenges of eradicating the social inequalities, upliftment of its marginal groups and offer equitable development opportunities among its entire population irrespective of the caste, religion, tribe, region and languages. Young India faced with a huge challenge of integrating one of the most diverse, highly populated society to work together as a single nation with a common objective of bringing about progress. On economic front the literature played a significant role in spreading awareness, educate and sharing knowledge to its citizens which in turn helped the nation move towards economical prosperity. After all, a nation requires development in all its spheres to progress.

If we look at the pages of history of various nations, literary contributions play a huge part in development of every country and in any prospering country there is also huge output of literary and works of art and philosophical ideas. This not only proves literature is important for any nation to progress but also has a direct connection with the development of the society of the nation. It's right to say that literary works and nation's progress is directly proportional to each other.

Where the mind is Without Fear by Tagore

Where the mind is Without Fear" is one of his widely read and discussed poems of Rabindranath Tagore. At the time of writing this poem, India was ruled by the British Rule and people were eagerly anticipating their freedom from the British Rule. The poem is presented in the form of a prayer to the God, the Almighty for freedom for his nation.

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high Where knowledge is free

The world should not be artificially segmented by race, economics, cultures, religions, etc. The nation should also not be broken by unnecessary divisions. Such powerful message of boldness is given by the poet at a time of strife and also a message of standing together no matter what each person is or to what religion he belongs. The poet envisions a nation where there would be free knowledge. Education should not be limited to the upper class alone but everyone should be free to gain knowledge. The poet presents a vision of free education even before 1947. If we count 100 years after that, free education for all the people would be very much beneficial to the society.

My Experiments with Truth by Gandhi

In My Experiments with Truth, Mahatma Gandhi delivers some of the main messages related to truth, nonviolence, and self-control. A few of the main themes are:



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Truth (Satya) – Gandhi used to think that truth is the ultimate virtue in life and that it should always be one's attempt to live in the truth in mind, word, and deed.

Nonviolence (Ahimsa) – He stresses the importance of the strength of nonviolence, not only in fighting oppression but also in individual action, thoughts and relations.

Experiments with Life – The book is an honest account of the trials and mistakes of Gandhi, showing that personal growth comes through regular self-improvement.

Faith and Spirituality – He speaks about his deep faith in God, influenced by Hinduism, Christianity, and other religions, and how it influenced his beliefs and actions.

Service to Others – Gandhi highlights the need to serve society, fight injustice, and work for the well-being of the poor and exploited.

The book is more of a moral and philosophical guide rather than a political one, showing how his principles developed through personal experiences.

Untouchable by Mulk Raj Anand

Nandini Bhattacharya, Reader, Department of English, Bethune College, Kolkata says: "A reading of Mulk Raj Anand 'Untouchable' forces the reader to come to terms with not only an extremely uncomfortable and painful aspect of Indian history but also to recognize the roots of several oppressive structures which flourish in contemporary India."

Untouchable examines and interrogates the relentless process by which majority community (and caste) systematically alienates certain groups of people apparently 'within' its fold, all in the name of 'religion' and 'tradition'. Bakha is the 'alien' within the system, which grades human beings on the basis of their caste identity. For Bakha, this 'alienation' is two - fold as he is both colonised subject, as well as an enslaved 'alien' within the system, which grades human beings on the basis of their caste - identity.

Dalits in India, in spite of being given constitutional protections and affirmative action, still face structural discrimination, marginalization, and violence. While some have achieved political and economic success, issues like violence based on caste and social ostracism still exist. There is growing awareness and activist activities for Dalit rights, but challenges remain in ensuring justice and equal opportunities.

Thus, we need more strict laws to protect the rights of not only the Dalits but also those communities which seem to be ostracized by the people as well as to grant them relief in the conditions where their rights have been violated. The judiciary should takes significant steps in addressing the problems faced by these kind of people. They should not be deprived of their rights and liberty, after all they are also the citizens of India.



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Equal treatment towards all people of community promotes equality among people and ensures peace and harmony which is most essential in India of 2047. Only if there is unity among the people it will provide scope for development and cooperation in the country.

Godaan by Premchand

Premchand has been popularly called as "upanyas Samrat" (Emperor among novelists). He had been very successful in giving voice to the voiceless and downtrodden and deprived section of the society. This voice enables the characters to protest against the social evils.

The novel is set in pre-independence rural India, a time of significant social and political turmoil, marked by the decline of the feudal system and the rise of Indian nationalism.

Godaan tells the story of Hori, an Indian peasant, and his family's constant struggle to maintain their dignity and survive amidst debt, poverty and social exploitation.

The character of Rai Saheb serves as a critique of the feudal system and the exploitation of the peasantry by those in power. Cruel and conventional codes of community ruin the life of the superstitious and poor labourers.

Characters like Hori and Rai Saheb are conventional and non conformists towards injustice. However, characters like Gobar, Dhaniya, Malti and Mehta are modern and unyielding and stand up for their rights in the community.

Gobar is a character of modern generation who openly challenged and protested against the injustice against inequality.

Premchand was a progressive writer who devoted his writing to social causes. "He believed that every writer could and should play significant role in changing and remodelling the emotions, values and the ways of life of his people." (Rais 190).

Gone are the days when individuals patiently tolerated the oppression and humiliation of the upper class. Now the victims of exploitation, injustice, and discrimination are voicing their concerns and claiming their rights. The period of colonial rule saw the growing exploitation of peasants at the hands of zamindars and local rulers, resulting in a number of peasant uprisings and revolts. These uprisings were important in undermining the authority of feudal lords, eventually leading to the collapse of the feudal system.

Feudalism in India strongly influenced medieval society, government, and economy. Although it facilitated regional autonomy and localized authority, it also enhanced social inequalities and political fragmentation. Its fall brought about a movement toward a more centralized and more equal system.



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The Guide by RK Narayan

R.K. Narayan's The Guide presents India's journey toward progress by exploring themes of economic, social and personal transformation and tradition versus modernity. The novel is placed in post-independence India, mirrors the nation's shift from colonial domination to self rule, similar to the transformation of protagonist Raju from a tourist guide to a spiritual guide.

Economic and Social Transformation –

The Guide is a true social picture of India especially of the villages of South India. The rural India has been painted in the life of the people of Mangala village on the Sarayu river. Raju goes there and stays in a temple on the river bank and is mistaken by the villagers as a holy man. To them a convict becomes a saint because of their ignorance, superstition and poverty. India's agriculture mainly depends on the monsoon. This has been shown by the novelist by Raju's fast. The poor villagers think that rains can come by fasting of the holy man like Raju. The snake charmer and the side of a cobra also shows at touch of rural India.

In the novel, the social values of an individual like Raju or a group change on account of urbanisation and modernization of Malgudi. The life of Malgudi changes with the arrival of the Railway in the town. Raju's father becomes a shopkeeper on the platform of railway station. Raju becomes a tourist guide and he could tell stories about places and attract customers. The villagers used to bring only those gifts which were home grown to Raju, the holy man. Food is a big problem to Raju as it is to millions of people of India. There are several groups of characters in the novel and on the basis of their economy they can be characterized as the poor villagers, the low shopkeepers, the low wage earners, Guide and low workers. The poor condition of the villagers is shown because of the drought. The poor shopkeepers are unable to hoard wealth and cannot educate their children.

"We cannot send our boys to school as you do in towns; they have to take cattle out for grazing."

Raju's rise from a small-time tour guide to a successful businessman to a respected 'saint' is reflective of India's economic evolution. India during the post-independence era was making an effort towards economic independence but grappling with moral and ethical challenges, similar to Raju's changing fortunes and ethical dilemmas.

Tradition vs. Modernity -

Raju comes into conflict with traditional morality as he seeks to realise his aspirations. The result is that the accepted order is disturbed and there is chaos and disorder. He seduces Rosy and is guilty of immorality and corruption. When she comes to live with him, conventional morality is violated and there is this displeasure all around. The changing traditional life of India is seen in the case of Raju's mother who does not like her son's ways and the rift is caused between them due to Rose's entry in the house. She had to leave the home of her husband and go away with her brother.



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Raju did not attend to his work, has to give up Railway stall and soon is in financial trouble. Raju is an egotist, an individualist, a self - seeker who exploits Rosie both physically and commercially. They earn fabulous amounts but he wastes it all in drinking, gambling and extravagant living. He is too possessive and self centred and forgets Rosie's signature to get a box of jewellery. It is a criminal act and it soon lands him in jail. It is a violation of ordinary norms of human conduct and his example shows does not pay.

Personal transformation of Raju

Raju took shelter in the temple and every day people used to come and listen to him. He gave them guidance now not as a railway guide or tourist guide but to guide people in their life. He himself was surprised with his own words of wisdom. Raju stressed the importance of education in life.

" boys must read, first. They must of course help their parents, but they must also find the time to study."

"I like to see young boys become literate and intelligent... It's our duty to make everyone happy and wise."

He undertook a 15 days fast to bring rain. The whole village had high hopes from him. He thought the best course for him would be to run away from the whole thing but he felt moved by "the recollection of the big crowd of women and children touching his feet. He felt moved by the thought of their gratitude."

Raju's tale mirrors India's conflict between modernity and traditional values. As India became modernized, it struggled to balance its rich cultural heritage with the necessities of advancement. Raju is first attracted to Westernized ideals and consumerism but eventually gets pulled back towards spiritual and moral issues, much like India's balancing act.

The White Tiger by Arvind Adiga

Just like the character Raju of The Guide the main character of The White Tiger Balram was not able to continue his studies as he was forced to work at a tea shop and also to break coals, wipe the tables and sweep the floor. It became virtually an end of his education but Balram 's education continued in another form. He was a clean observer of life even while wiping the tables. He listened to the talks of the customers and learned about the ulterior ways of making money and understand the ways of the politicians.

Had Balram been given proper education he would have been a completely different person taking a righteous path. Balram says that Bangalore is a city in which America and other countries had erected building to house their offices in which thousand Indian youths had come to work on computers because India has widespread unemployment. Other countries had taken advantage of it because the people in their own country will not work at such low wages. Indians are there to work



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without necessary safety measures such as provident fund or pension. The Government of India has also stopped these facilities.

The novelist Arvind Adiga has no doubt produced a realistic picture of life in India. The society is being ruled by such monsters as the wild boar, stock, raven and the buffalo. Poverty of the masses forces children to work as labourers even the bright children like The White Tiger are left with no option. Many of them get dejected so much that they have no fear in committing such heinous crimes as murder. It is very correct that mass unemployment has driven several of them to robbing etc. The writer has exposed the corruption of Police departments and several other departments. The writer has presented the truth that one has to resort to criminal acts to rise in the society. The ecology of cities like Bangalore, Delhi, Mumbai etc is being seriously spoiled by the influx of industries and consequent increase in population. The writer wants to forewarn the people and the state to put the check on it or be ready for the worst days ahead.

The novel The White Tiger by Aravind Adiga presents a grim but realistic vision of India, revealing the issues of corruption, class divide and economic imbalance. The novel is a criticism of "India Shining" narrative through the character of Balram Halwai, and raises awareness about the plight of those who are stuck in the negative aspects of the society.

The way Pinky Madam has been treated in The White Tiger illustrate the marginalized role of women, even at the higher strata. Until 2047, India either has to live with the vice of gender imbalance or should introduce significant shifts towards empowering women at the business, political, and societal fronts.

Balram notices how foreign companies exploit cheap labor in India. By 2047, India could either continue as a center for cheap outsourcing or a shift into a country that values fair wages, rights of labour's, and innovation-driven industries. The rise of automation and AI might also reconstruct employment structures.

The novel criticizes urban ecological pollution due to unregulated industrialization. Unless India adopts practices of sustainable development, the environmental problem may worsen. However, a focus on smart cities green city, and eco-conscious policies could make India a leader in sustainable urban planning.

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An Introduction by Kamala Das

The poem "An Introduction" is an autobiographical verse of Kamala Das that throws light on the life of a woman in the patriarchal society. This poem was composed in her maiden publication Summer in Calcutta (1965). The poet perhaps tries to show her ability in the educational sphere which is no access to most of the women and encourages women education.

Being very familiar with English, she used this language while writing. Nevertheless, her practice of this is disapproved by her friends, family members, as well as her critics. All of them criticized her for writing in English because, they believe, the language of colonists is English.

The language in which she used to write is her own along with all its strangeness and imperfections. The language is, though not completely English yet she considers it to be honest because like her, her language is also imperfect which is quite a natural thing. The language conveys the poet's "joys", "longings" and "hopes". This emphasizes the freedom of speech. The society criticized the poet for each and everything, even when she started growing up physically. She was forced to get married at a young age. As she was still a child she looked for love.

The poem is a strong criticism against child marriage and control over women's choices and career in a patriarchal society. The poem voices every woman's grief in the country who stay confined indoors. The poet encourages them to stand up for themselves.

I do what I do by Raghuram Rajan

The book is written by former Governor of Reserve bank of India and one of the leading economist of our time Dr. Raghuram Rajan and was published in 2017.

The book is a collection of his speeches made during his tenure as a RBI governor. It focuses on not only his speeches but also the context surrounding it. It provides us details about the economic and fiscal policies undertaken during his tenure in one of the highest financial regulatory body of the country. Some of the key policy decisions discussed in the book is a decision not to lower the interest rate despite a huge push from the finance industry itself to do so in order to keep the growth rate ticking higher. He advocated the policy of lowering interest rates will lead to spiraling effect of higher inflation rates if the populace gets used to it and will be a disastrous in the longer run. He believed in steady inflation rates, keeping the demand optimal and a steady growth rate.

He also spoke about Francis Fukuyama's Three pillars needed to achieve political freedom and economic success in the book. Indian context the three pillars were a strong government, Rule of law and democratic accountability. He goes on to add one more pillar along with the above three "A free Market" which is needed for economic success.



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He also discusses India being true democracy and the four pillars effectiveness in Indian context rests solely on the nature of Indian democracy. He makes comparison on how India adopted democracy easily compared to other countries that failed or remained to do so. Finally, he gives his version of democracy where democracy is a combination of investigative press, a public debate without being hindered by political correctness, multiple political parties representing the various constituencies and involvement of non- governmental organizations representing the interests of the people.

These information given above is incomprehensible for the common man especially the inner workings, reasoning for the policy changes and the other reforms undertaken by highest office of the financial institution of the country. This book made it easier that even someone with basic working knowledge of finance or economics will still be able to understand the whole process and in the way made them more financially aware which in turn is very much needed for any society which is on the path of development.

On the surface, if we look at the book it may seem as a book written by a technocrat during his time in his office which is being focused on select few of the general populace who are into finance but if we dwell deeper, the book offers an extremely valuable insight in nation building from the economical perspective. After all economic prosperity is one of the most important trait of any developed nation. This is one classical example of how a recent written work plays its role in nation's progress from an economic perspective.

Why I am a Hindu

Why I am a Hindu is a book published in 2018, written by Indian politician, former UN undersecretary general Shashi Tharoor. The book focuses on Tharoor's perspective of how the Hinduism in which he grew up and practiced is different from the political Hinduism which is on the rise in recent times. In the book he discusses about his own personal identification with the religion and how his views differs from the political form of Hinduism.

The Book is Divided into Three Parts -

My Hindusim: In this part Tharoor discusses nature of Hinduism in detail. He emphasizes on how Hinduism as a religion derives ideas from a broad spectrum and continues to adapt to the circumstances of the times.

Political Hinduism: In this part he talks about the origin of Political Hinduism. He points out the religious culture of Britishers, withholding the knowledge, modernisation, prior injustices & political power as one of the major reason for the rise in political Hinduism. He speaks about certain negative practices prevailing in Hinduism like caste and gender inequality, rigid practices within Hindu culture. He highlights that though Hinduism is the religion of variety and acceptance certain practices of caste, gender biased need to be addressed.



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Taking back Hinduism: In the final part of the book, he speaks about how Hinduism as a religion should be free flowing without someone trying to contain it with their own ideology. He points out political Hinduism shouldn't be given power to define who is Hindu and what is Hinduism. He expresses that just being Hindu makes one compatible to liberalism due to the diverse nature of the religion.

He concludes that one must value his own religious and cultural identity it shouldn't be used to bring tensions between communities, rekindling the past injustices which will hurt the sentiments of the country. The legacy of Hinduism as a religion shouldn't be restricted to political sphere rather should be proud of its diverse roots and thriving based on it.

India 2020: A Vision for the New Millennium by Kalam & Rajan

The book is written by former President of India, scientist A.P.J. Abdul Kalam and Y.S. Rajan. The book was written by Abdul Kalam and Y.S. Rajan who is also a scientist and educator. The book was written before Kalam became the president of India and was published in 1988. The book focuses on the development of India in various sectors and filled with insights from Abdul Kalam.

The book is a reflection of the experiences of Dr. Kalam and Y.S Rajan during their tenure as scientists as well as educators. The first chapter focuses on shedding the cynicism behind the idea of India become a developed country. Kalam gives his own life as an example in terms of rising above through hard work and determination. The first chapter also focuses on various socio - economic metrics like GDP, HDI indices. The authors dissect the growth patterns, the intermediary slump from 1960s to 1994 etc.

These chapters give deep insights from the perspective of 90s which is needed to be done in order for the nation to become developed. The last chapter focuses on realizing the vision to make India a developed nation within the time frame of 2020. It emphasizes on bringing technological advancement, inter linkage of resources and self-sufficiency.

The book is written based on the circumstances which were prevailing during the 90's. What makes the book impressive is how far the things mentioned being happened in the course of these past 2 and half decades. We, as a nation move forward; leaps and bounds in these past years and still we have long way to go. This book can be considered as a beacon of guide for us to achieve the destination of our nation's development.

Ignited Minds: Unleashing the Power Within India by Kalam

The book is written by APJ Abdul Kalam, published in 2002. Dr. Kalam dedicated this book to a middle school student after he raised the question of *Who is our enemy*? during a meet. The book focuses on the attitude of Indians today and focus on remedies in taking the nation towards the path of the growth.



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In this study, firstly he discusses about importance of dreams, not the dream one get while he is awake but the one which doesn't let him sleep. He wants the people to dream about the development where the dreams transform into thoughts and thoughts into actions.

Secondly, he talks about role models. He emphasizes that the parents are first role models to their children and the teachers also play a crucial role for the students and inspire and guide them to the path of greatness.

Thirdly, he speaks about great visionaries like Homi Bhabha, JRD Tata, Vikram Sarabhai, Satish Dhawan, Dr. Varghese Kurian. He briefly discusses about the importance of their contribution their respective fields and how it helped transform the country for better.

He concludes the book with Song of Youth, where he expects the youth to dream and aim in a grandeur way. The book conveys the growth doesn't happen instantly but consistent work towards the goal with an attitude to achieve greatness will definitely lead to positive results. This book can be considered to be targeted towards the youths of the country where he awards the responsibility of transforming the country into the hands of the youths.

Conclusion

In the above-mentioned books, the writers have given important messages of right to education, to have a brave outlook towards alien challenges. Through the message of truth and non-violence, our country can instill a spirit of brotherhood. The writers also emphasize on the removal of caste, class and gender discrimination to adopt the positive Western ideology and use it incorporating the Indian culture and language for a diverse but unified Nation.

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