



## THE GOLDEN AGE OF HINDI LITERATURE IN ALLAHABAD

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In Hindu scriptures, Allahabad is revered as the prayag (confluence) or Triveni Sangam, that is, the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati. While the Ganga and Yamuna still flow today, the Saraswati, named after the goddess of knowledge, rests as an invisible force here.

It was likely Goddess Saraswati's influence that spurred Allahabad to become the cradle of the Hindi literary world, attracting writers, poets, and scholars who celebrated knowledge and enlightenment through their art. The 14th of September is celebrated as Hindi Diwas or Hindi Day, commemorating the acceptance of Hindi as one of India's two official languages, along with English. The date was chosen since it was the birthday of Beohar Rajendra Simha, a scholar, artist, and Hindi campaigner whose work in 1949 led to the Constituent Assembly of India granting Hindi official language status.

The centre of my paper, however, is Allahabad, a city steeped in spirituality, history, and Hindi literature. While the city has produced many outstanding Sanskrit and Urdu-Persian writers, Munshi Sadasukh Lal stands out among the first writers of Khari Boli, the mediaeval dialect prevalent in and around Delhi. Lal, born in Delhi in 1746 CE, became the tehsildar (district administrator) of Chunar, a town in the Uttar Pradesh district of Mirzapur. In 1811 CE, he settled in Allahabad and wrote Srimad Bhagwat and Vishnu-Purana in Hindi under the pen name Sukhsagar. In Allahabad, Lal also initiated social reforms through the Hindi language and literature.

### **Bharatendu Era & Balakrishna Bhatt**

Allahabad, a former Mughal and British city, became the centre of Hindi writing in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This was a period when contemporary Hindi was taking shape. Born in Benaras, Bharatendu Harishchandra (1850–1885) established the groundwork for the 'Bharatendu Era', the first phase of the contemporary age of Hindi literature. Consequently, he is regarded as the "founder of Hindi literature and Hindi theatre."

In this era, the nationalist thought of modern India displaced the orthodox thinking of traditional literature. In the Bharatendu era, Khari Boli enjoyed a renaissance and earned a place of distinction in Hindi literature.

### **Balakrishna Bhatt |**

In 1844 CE, in the Allahabad neighbourhood of Yahiyapur, Pandit Balakrishna Bhatt was born. His contribution to the Hindi literary canon is priceless. In 1876, inspired by Harishchandra, he created the Hindi Vardhini Sabha in Allahabad, and in 1877, he began publishing the renowned monthly journal Hindi Pradeep. Bhatt, who served as the magazine's editor until his passing, set the groundwork for contemporary education, literature, and journalism in Allahabad. In addition to writing essay collections, plays, and novels, he also translated Sanskrit and Bengali plays into Hindi.

### **Hindi Nationalism & Madan Mohan Malaviya**

Allahabad is credited with laying the foundation for Hindi nationalism in India, and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya is famous among its pioneers.

Malaviya was born in Yahiyapur, Allahabad, in 1861 CE. After finishing his elementary education at Sanskrit School, he enrolled at Muir Central College, Allahabad, and later graduated from Calcutta University.

AO Hume and Malaviya ji at the second Congress session in 1886, Calcutta since the founding of the Indian National Congress in 1885 CE, he was a devoted Congressman and patriot until his passing in 1946. Malaviya has also contributed significantly to the Hindi language. Due to his perseverance, Hindi was adopted as the official language for court proceedings. In 1910, Malaviya was elected chairman of the first session of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan in Benaras, and it was as a result of his efforts that a branch was created in Allahabad. The early decades of the 20th century were a time when, under the influence of the British, English was gaining ground in India and organisations such as the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan played a crucial role in establishing Hindi's prestige.

Malaviya, along with Motilal Nehru, Mahatma Gandhi, and then Jawaharlal Nehru, was a pivotal figure in the freedom fight and was always committed to the nation's best interests.

Malaviya went on to co-found the Banaras Hindu University with Annie Besant in 1916. He also founded various institutes in Allahabad dedicated to the service of Hindi, notably the Bharati Bhavan Library. This famous library of Hindi literature is located at Chowk-Loknath in Allahabad, and it plays



a significant role in the freedom fight. Malaviya together with Balakrishna Bhatt and Brijmohan Lal Bhalla formed it.

### Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, Allahabad

Purshottam DasTandon, a prominent Congressman from Allahabad, was another figure who strove to popularise the Hindi language and link it to nationalism. Tandon was a lifelong member of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, and he is still regarded as the institution's "spirit."

### Allahabad: A Center for Publication

The fact that Allahabad was a publishing hub, seizing the mantle from Lucknow and attracting Hindi and Urdu writers from all over the country, was a major factor in Allahabad's rise to prominence as the centre of Hindi literature. In the 19th century, Lucknow was a significant publishing centre in northern India, and the Naval Kishore Press was the most important publishing business. However, when Allahabad became the capital of the province in 1858 CE, the Government Press arrived in Allahabad. Thus, the legendary Pioneer Press was established in 1864 CE. The renowned English author Rudyard Kipling also worked at this publication for a while.

### Indian Press, Allahabad

In a short time, numerous small and large printing presses arose in the city, which encouraged Hindi literature. The Indian Press, founded by Chintamani Ghosh in 1884 CE, was one of the publishing enterprises founded at the time. It published all of Rabindranath Tagore's works from 1908 to 1914 in both English and Hindi, including his Nobel Prize-winning Gitanjali.

### A letter from Abhyudaya | Board of record

The Leader Press and Abhyudaya of Madan Mohan Malaviya are both notable Allahabad publishing houses. In 1910, Purshottam DasTandon wrote the first piece for the inaugural issue of Maryada magazine, which was published from the headquarters of Abhyudaya. Female-targeted publications such as Allahabad's Grihalakshmi and Chand acquired popularity in India.

Sunderlal's controversial and much-discussed book Bharat Mei Angrezi Raj (English Raj In India) was published by Onkar Press in Allahabad, and it shook the British administration to its core. Panini Office, located in Allahabad's Bahadurganj neighbourhood, was another renowned publisher.

### Dwivedi Era

The Dwivedi Era, named after Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi, is the second period of contemporary Hindi (1864 – 1938). Born into the family of an English company Bahadur soldier in Rai Bareilly, he studied Persian, Sanskrit, and Hindi while working on the railways in Jhansi. Numerous of his works were published, and he was regarded as a prominent Hindi author. After that, Dwivedi settled in Allahabad and devoted himself to

literary service. He was the first Hindi author to be awarded the title "Acharya."

### Acharya Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi

The Indian Press launched India's first Hindi monthly magazine, Saraswati, in 1900; its popularity and stature expanded after Dwivedi assumed the editorship in 1903. By 1920, Saraswati held a position of prominence.

Saraswati is a publication edited by Acharya Dwivedi.

Dwivedi gave the magazine a literary and nationalistic tone, which contributed to the growth of writers including Singh Upadhyay, 'HariOudh,' Maithilisharan Gupta, and Nirala. Dwivedi fostered nationalist ideals through Saraswati, but his primary purpose was to promote literature. His greatest accomplishment was promoting the prose and poetry of Khari Boli.

### Munshi Premchand

The author Munshi Premchand

Dhanpat Rai Srivastava 'Premchand' was born in 1880 CE in the Lamhi village of Benaras. His elementary schooling was in Urdu and Persian, and he began his career as a writer in 1901. His first well-known Hindi fiction, Saut, appeared in the December 1915 issue of Saraswati, and his last, Kafan, appeared in 1936.

Sharat Chandra Chattopadhyay, a renowned Bengali writer, dubbed Premchand "Upanyas Samrat," or "King of Fiction," and he is still considered as the "founder of modern Hindi fiction." He established the 'realistic tradition' in Hindi literature, emphasising social ills and the struggles of the lower classes. The changes in society were reflected in Premchand's Hindi-Urdu stories, which acted as a mirror.

Although Premchand spent considerable time in Benaras, Kanpur, and Lucknow, Allahabad held a particular place in his heart. Both of his sons, Shripat Rai and Amrit Rai, who eventually developed their own identities in Hindi writing, resided in Allahabad, which prompted Premchand to frequently visit the city.

Premchand, who brought us such classic works as Namak Ka Daroga, Godan, and Gaban, used to say, "Banaras and Allahabad are the most fertile regions for creativity. I shall only be at peace when I take my last breath here. In Allahabad, not only do two rivers converge, but Hindi and Urdu are also commonly spoken. A successful inventor must be born in Allahabad or spend a significant portion of his life there. Unfortunately, he did not pass away at Allahabad; he died in 1937 in Benaras.

### Hans Magazine

Saraswati Press, which Premchand founded in Allahabad, and his magazine Hans were taken over by Premchand's eldest son Shripat Rai, who aided in their growth and ascent to new heights. Amrit Rai, his second son, was also devoted to Hindi and evolved as a modern storyteller and progressive author.



### **Chhayawaad (Neo-Romanticism) and Allahabad**

Following the Dwivedi Era, the contemporary period of Hindi literature introduced Chhayawaad or Neo-Romanticism. Similar to the romantic period in English literature, which emphasised human sensibility and a love of nature, Neo-Romanticism in Hindi literature centred on a love of nature, female love, humanisation, cultural awakening, and imagination. The four foundations of Chhayawaad were Jaishankar Prasad, Suryakant Tripathi 'Nirala', Sumitranandan Pant and Mahadevi Verma. Three of the four poets, Nirala, Pant, and Verma, achieved literary prominence in Allahabad.

### **Suryakant Tripathi 'Nirala'**

Suryakant Tripathi 'Nirala' was born in 1899 CE in Medinipur, Bengal. His name is at the top of the list of notable Neo-Romantic poets in Hindi literature. After working as an editor in Calcutta and Lucknow for a few years, Nirala resided in Allahabad as an independent writer and translator from 1942 until his death in 1971. He was a talented author of short stories, essays, novels, and translations and a poet, but his fame stemmed primarily from his philosophically profound poems.

### **Suryakant Tripathi 'Nirala'**

His first essay, *Bang Bhasha Ka Uchchaaran* (the Accent of the Bangla Language), was published in 1920 in the Allahabad-based *Saraswati* magazine, and his first collection of poems, *Anamika*, was published in 1923. His major published poetry volumes included *Parimal*, *Geetika*, *Bela*, and *Geet-Kunj*. His most well-known works include *Apsara*, *Alka*, *Nirupama*, and *Jasmine*. *Nirala Rachnavali*, a four-volume compilation of his published and unpublished works, appeared in 1963 under the title *Nirala Rachnavali*.

### **Sumitra Nandan Pant**

Sumitra Nandan Pant is an additional notable poet of the Chhayawaad school. He was born in 1900 in the village of Kausani, Almoradistrict, Uttarakhand. He attended Muir Central College in Allahabad around 1920 and remained in that city for the remainder of his life.

### **Mahadevi Verma**

Another notable and prominent Neo-Romantic poet in Hindi literature is Mahadevi Verma. She was born in 1908 in Uttar Pradesh's Farrukhabad. She was married at a relatively young age, just as she was beginning her education, and she never had children. In Hindi literature, she is therefore described as the "Meera of the modern era."

### **Mahadevi Verma and Nirala**

As a prominent Chhayawaad poet, she possessed a profound comprehension of human emotions and the complexities of life. In addition to her commitment to promote Hindi literature, she was inspired by Mahatma Gandhi and the social reforms brought

about by the liberation movement, and she continued to work in that direction.

The magazine 'Chand' is edited by Mahadevi Verma.

Verma began editing the renowned Hindi publication *Chand* in 1923. In addition, she established the feminist movement in Hindi writing. As a result of her efforts, the *Mahila Kavi Sammelan* or Women Poets' Conference was organised for the first time in India on 15 April 1933 at the Prayag Mahila Vidyapeeth, under the leadership of Subhadra Kumari Chauhan.

Verma's classic poem *Atripta* provides a look into the renowned literary spirit of Allahabad. Her most important lyrical works include *Nihar*, *Rashmi*, *Deepshikha*, *Sandhya-geet*, and *Agni Rekha*. Even now, Verma's prose, articles, speeches, and memoir are read. She was the brightest light in Allahabad's golden age of Hindi literary, and it is nearly impossible to find a poet comparable to her in the modern age of Hindi literature.

### **The Actor Harivansh Rai Bachchan**

Harivansh Rai Srivastava was born in 1907 to a modest Kayastha family in the Babu Patti hamlet close to Allahabad. 'Bachchan' was his nickname, which was a customary local phrase for children, and it persisted even after he achieved literary fame. He earned his Master's degree in English from the University of Allahabad and completed his research on the poetry of W.B. Yeats at the University of Cambridge in England.

During this time, Bachchan was a professor of English literature at the University of Allahabad as well as a renowned poet of Hindi poetry. He was well known for his 1935 poem *Madhusala*, which is still widely read and recited in the Hindi-speaking world.

He released numerous further poems, including *Madhubala* (1937), *Madhukulash* (1937), *Nisha Nimantran* (1937), and *Satarangini* (1937). (1945).

Bachchan, a notable poet of the post-Chhayawaad era, expresses his affection for Allahabad in his poetry, as well as his passionate picture of the Ganges-Yamuna banks. His works are distinguished by their beauty, appreciation of nature, and rustic undertones.

### **Dharamvir Bharti**

Born in 1926 in the neighbourhood of Atarsuiya in Allahabad, Dharmveer Bharti attended the University of Allahabad and conducted research on Siddha literature under the direction of Dr. Dhirendra Varma, a prominent Hindi writer and historian.

Bharti and Ilachandra Joshi co-edited the magazine *Sangam*, and Bharti was later named a teacher at the Hindustani Academy of Allahabad.

In his latter years, Bharti edited the renowned weekly publication *Dharmayuga*.



Bharti's novels *Gunahon Ka Devta*, *Suraj Ka Saatva Ghoda*, *Prarambh Ka Samapan*, etc are evergreen masterpieces. His drama *Andha Yuga* is considered one of the classics of Hindi literature. Bharti will be known for perpetuating the Khari Boli tradition in Hindi literature. In 1997, Bharti breathed his last breath in Mumbai.

Allahabad was the centre of Hindi literature during the Dwivedi and post-Neo-Romantic periods. It was the cradle of Hindi's development and heralded the golden period of Hindi literature. The complexity of Allahabad's literary history makes it nearly hard to construct a list of its authors. Allahabad also boasts a long list of Urdu literary heavyweights, such as Akbar Allahabadi and Firaq Gorakhpuri, who shed fresh light on Urdu literature in India and polished the city's Ganga-JamuniTehzeeb (combined culture).

### Amarkant

Amarkant, who was just awarded the Jnanpith Award; UpendraNath Ashk's son, Neelabh Ashk; poet Kailash Gautam; Dudhanath Singh; and Nandal Hitashi, among others, are notable contemporary Hindi authors from Allahabad. Sadly, this illustrious custom is on the decline. Where literary giants once met every evening in one other's homes, publishing houses, or the old

Indian Coffee House, and where major seminars in Hindi were held at the university, a lack of composite identity now exists. Notable Hindi publishing houses have either shut down or are close to doing so. Only a few have survived, including Lok Bharati Publications and Hindustani Academy.

Irony is difficult to miss. While Allahabad was once a confluence or 'prayag' of literary minds that propelled the creation of Hindi literature, this tradition is rapidly fading now that the city's name has been changed to Prayagraj.

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