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DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

SCROLLS

INDIA'S HERITAGE JOURNEY:
WHERE THE PAST MEETS THE
PRESENT



PRINCIPAL



It is with great pride that I acknowledge the release of the latest “Scrolls” edition, entitled India’s Heritage Journey: Where Past Meets the Present, from the Department of History. This edition is indicative of the academic concert and cultural consciousness our students are fostering in our community.

India’s heritage is a rich story told through centuries of tradition, resilience, and transitions. Through this magazine, students have delved into these depths both artistically and creatively while establishing a connection between the professional world and the past. This initiative supports the development of a full-circle academic environment that enables critical thinking, research skills, and a level of cultural consciousness each student can take with them.

I wish to thank each of the faculty coordinators and the editorial staff for their hard work on this project. May Scrolls continue to be an open space for academic discussions and historical experience.

Fr Dr Augustine George
Principal

DEAN



I am delighted to convey my congratulations to the Department of History for the successful publication of Scrolls – India’s Heritage Journey: Where Past Meets the Present. The theme of this publication represents a thoughtful orientation to India’s cultural milieu—a study of how traditions have recast themselves while retaining their core meaning over generations.

This magazine is indeed a noteworthy effort, which marries an academic response with a student’s inquiry. It affords the opportunity for the reader to appreciate the symbiotic relationship between history and modernity, encouraging the learner to consider heritage as having not just a reality in the past but as a living, claiming continuum that shapes identities, values, and communities.

Kudos to the students, editorial board members, and faculty mentors for their commitment to academic rigor and artful expression, and may, at the very least, this endeavor spark more engagement with, and appreciation for, India’s historical inheritance and presence!

Dr Gopakumar AV
Dean, Faculty of Humanities

FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND LANGUAGES



Scrolls has once again blended a beautiful tapestry of culture, literature, and heritage through the lens of history. This issue—India's Heritage Journey: Where Past Meets the Present—consists of varied narratives, well-established traditions, and the voices of young people who have much to offer with gusto in this imaginative endeavor.

This magazine is a fine reflection of the Department of History's academic spirit. It illustrates the commitment and collaboration entailed by students and faculty to render history in a way that can be understood and appreciated.

My best wishes for the Department of History and the editorial team for their excellent work.

Dr Kaveri Swami

Head, Dept of Social Sciences

FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY



With each new volume of Scrolls, we have the privilege of stepping back from our work and appreciating the unfolding depth of creativity, research, and insight that our students possess. This year, as we present Scrolls – Volume 7: “India's Heritage Journey: Where Past Meets the Present,” we feel exuberant joy and pride. This magazine is not just a collection of articles; it reveals the intellectual curiosity our students bring to engaging with the depth of India's historic civilization.

What makes this edition unique is the earnest endeavor to uncover the daily nuances of heritage, whether we are speaking of stories of rituals, of meaning, of food, of folklore, of festivals, or of lost spaces. They are not simply a collection of facts—they are explorations of one's own facts combined with scholarly work and emotional investment.

The best part of this whole experience is watching students take the leap from being just learners to being storytellers or from being readers to being researchers. Each scroll represents the joy, passion, and exploration that our young storytellers experienced along the way, supported and nurtured gently but insistently by the ideas of historical inquiry and cultural empathy.

As capstone teachers, we were privy to the behind-the-scenes process of how this issue was created, from hours of thinking and discussing to printing a physical scroll that is now in your hands. This wasn't merely an academic endeavor; it was a labor of love and working together.

Thank you to our incredibly talented and creative editors and design team for your vision, perseverance, and creative ways of seeing. To all the contributors—thank you for providing your voice to India's eternal story.

May scrolls continue to inspire the younger generation to wrestle with challenging questions, commemorate what is beautiful, and never stop following the threads that weave our past into everyday life and the present.

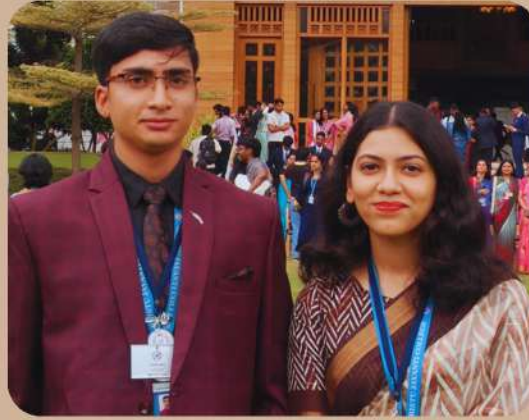
Miss B. Ramya,

Coordinator, Department of History

Dr. Ashwini Barla and Dr. Karthik Manoharan,

Assistant Professors, Department of History

INSIGHTS FROM STUDENT COORDINATORS



“India’s heritage is not just about what we inherit but how we relive it in every breath we take.”

Greetings, To the Curious Minds of History and Beyond,

It is with great pleasure and gratitude that we are presenting to you Scrolls—Volume 7: **“India’s Heritage Journey: Where Past Meets the Present.”** As student coordinators of the History Club and the team designing and editing the publication, this edition is not just a magazine—it is our sincere expression of respect for the very essence of the great cultural heritage of India.

The theme we have chosen for this year is centered around continuity—how remnants of our traditions, rituals, and local customs continue to condition the rhythm of contemporary India. While curating and designing this issue, we dove into narratives that traversed the sands of time—from **the mythic symbolism of sindoor** & cultural ethos of Chhath Puja to the **durable legacy of biryani**, from **ancient festivals of the Northeast to architectural and artistic manifestations of forgotten communities**. The articles, poems, and artistic haven in this issue have each been carefully read, edited, & selected and have received editorial and contextual feedback to unveil this dynamic engagement of history and the present moment.

The creative journey behind Scrolls was as enriching as the stories it contains. We’ve worked tirelessly to ensure that every alignment, layout, design element, and the articles stipulated in this magazine will harmoniously bring out the essence of the current year’s theme. With 26+ vibrant entries from passionate students across the various departments, **each page is a testament** to our best effort in **making history both accessible and alive**.

As editors and designers, we viewed this not merely as a duty but as a creative endeavor: to discover a space in which the **ideas could breathe**, the **heritage could speak**, and the **stories could spark inspiration**. Our gratitude goes out to every contributor, faculty member, and team member whose hard work, partnership, dedication, and collaboration brought this publication and project to life.

We trust that this beautiful and well-designed edition of scrolls will do more than just inform; it will ignite curiosity, invoke a sense of pride, and remind all of us that **history is not just confined to textbooks; it is alive in every moment of our lives**—in our languages, customs, foods, and celebrations.

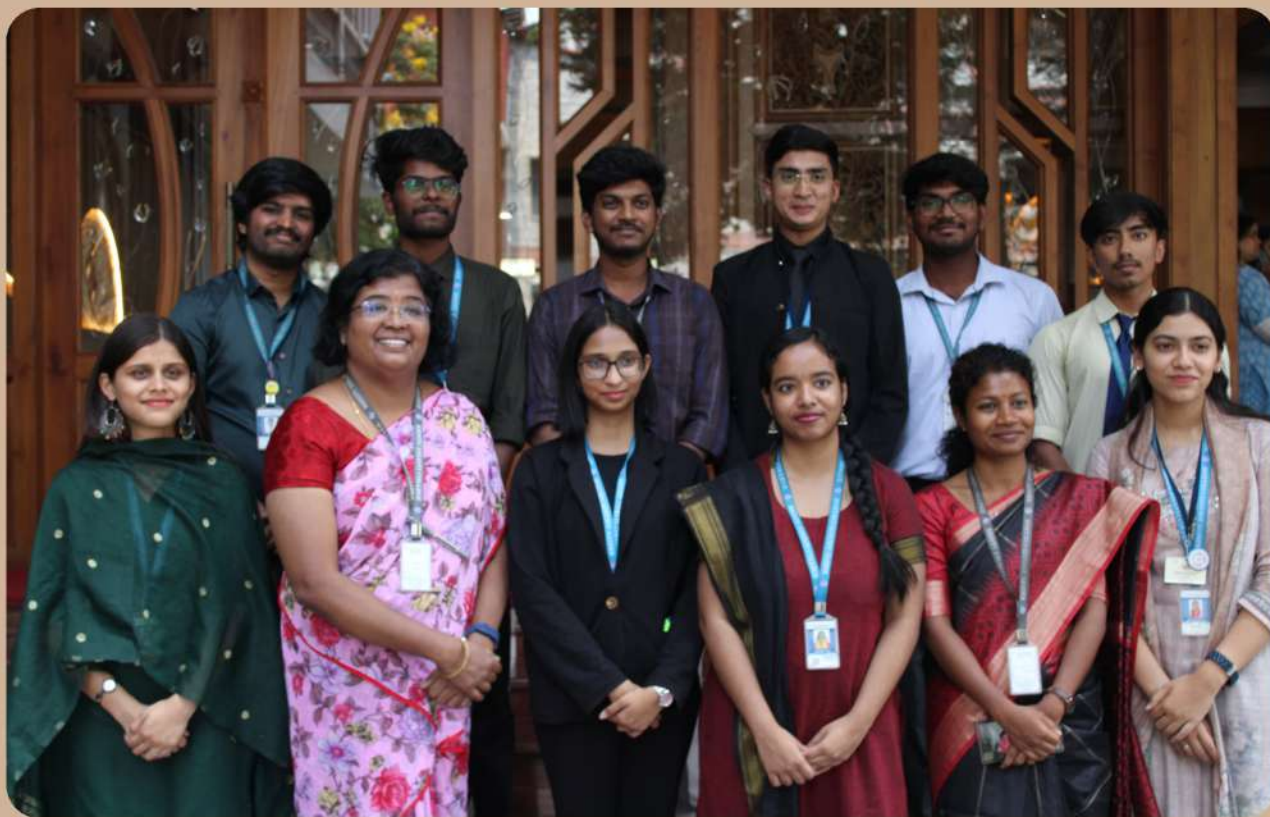
May Scrolls—Volume 7 serves as a bridge between generations, a canvas of expression, and a beacon of light that continues to illuminate the vast and vibrant cultural heritage of India.

Warm regards,

Vivek Raj & Deepika Seervi P

Student Coordinators, History Club

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Reports**

TIMELESS GRACE: SINDOOR, A SYMBOL OF TRADITION

1

Vivek Raj
22HSPS35



India is a land of traditions; every custom is meaningful and holds some significance in history. Sindoor, along with various other rites, is a cultural symbol in India. For centuries, such meaning has connoted marriage, devotion, and prosperity. Traditionally applied along the parting of a woman's hair, sindoor lends not just a red hue but embodies an expression of love, faith, and identity. This particular piece takes you through sindoor's history, mythology, science, and shifting themes associated with it and its deep-rooted connection to Indian heritage.

The Search for the Ancient Roots of Sindoor

The history of the sindoor dates back to ancient India. From the time of the Indus Valley Civilization (2600-1900 BCE). Terracotta figurines of women with red markings on their hair parting have given archaeologists something to ponder. Sindoor was used about 4500 years ago.

In the Vedas, Upanishads, and epics like the Ramayana and Mahabharata, there are references to sindoor being used. It describes sindoor as representing the longevity and well-being of a woman's husband in one of the oldest scriptures of Hinduism, the Atharva Veda.

Credible traces show that sindoor was made from such natural ingredients as turmeric, lime, and mercury due to their cooling and medicinal properties. Hence, sindoor was not simply a cosmetic tradition; it constituted a sacred practice knitted in the very fabric of Indian civilization.

Mythological Significances of Sindoor: A Mark of Faith and Strength

1. Sita and Hanuman—A True Devotion

Ich, he married wherever her hair was parted with sindoor. Having noticed this, Hanuman asked Sita why it was that she wore sindoor. Sita replied by saying that it was a mark of her love and prayers for the long life of her husband. The faith moved Hanuman, who anointed his whole body with sindoor, believing that if just a small streak was enough to bless Rama with life and immortality, it was surely damn worth it. At that point, sindoor made its way into temples dedicated to Hanuman as a symbol of steadfastness in devotion and selfless love.

2. The Sindoor of Draupadi—A Mark of Honor

In the Mahabharata, during a significant disrobing incident, the sindoor of Draupadi is wiped off. This was an attack on her honor and an intrusion on her dignity. One could see reflected in Draupadi's anguish over the loss of her sindoor the pain and deep spiritual vision tracing back towards its significance in the life of a woman, some sense of empowerment and self-respect. The traditions convey that sindoor is not merely the seal of a married woman but transcends into a force of faith, devotion, and sacrifice, a mark of divine protection.

Ayurvedic & Scientific Aspect of Sindoor

Sindoor was originally made from naturally occurring substances that had medicinal qualities. Turmeric (*Curcuma longa*)-anti-inflammatory and antiseptic. Lime (calcium hydroxide)—a natural adhesive that holds sindoor in place. Mercury (in small amounts) was supposed to cool nerves and heighten concentration.

Turmeric's presence in sindoor not only adds color but also imbues it with cultural, medicinal & spiritual significance, making it an integral part of traditional Indian rituals and customs.

Ayurvedic Actives



TURMERIC

Rich in Curcumin & is antiseptic.



LIME

Gives red colour when combined with Turmeric.



ALOE VERA

Hydrates & soothes the skin.

According to Ayurveda, applying sindoor on the Ajna Chakra (Third Eye Chakra) is believed to promote mental clarity, alleviate tension, and achieve harmony inside. It conforms to current psychology in that red is the color of energy, devotion, and strength.

However, nowadays, many synthetic variants contain toxic substances like lead and mercury, hence leading women to prefer organic sindoor made from saffron and turmeric.

Sindoor Across India: A Tradition with Regional Variations

Sindoor, also known as vermilion, is a common practice throughout India, though individual states adhere to their particular methods of application and celebration.

1. North India (Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan)

A woman makes bold, thick streaks of sindoor across the parting of her hair, sometimes extending to the forehead, signifying prosperity and good luck.

In many South Indian states, kumkum is used in place of sindoor. This is a red powder made from turmeric and lime. It serves the same purpose—a mark of marriage and divine blessings. Despite the regional variations, the essence of sindoor is still the same: a token of love, commitment, and culture.

Modern Perspective: Sindoor-The Choice

In modern India, the meaning of wearing a sindoor is changing. For some women, wearing sindoor is still a tradition embedded with pride as representing a sacred bond between the husband and the wife. Still, others view it as an irrelevant symbol, questioning why women must mark their marital status and not men.

Feminists insist that sindoor is the symbol of choice and not coercion. Many women wear sindoor nowadays, not as a mark of ritual but out of tradition, identity, or respect for heritage.

Sindoor, whether by choice or not, becomes a reference inseparably linked with India's cultural and historical identity.



Conclusion: A Timeless Legacy

Sindoor is not just a powder but a story of devotion, strength, and cultural heritage. For over 4,500 years, the sindoor has been an integral part of Indian society and represents love, tradition, and spiritual energy. Although the process of modernization forges ahead, the legacy of Sindoor continues. Be it through daily wear, donned during festivals, or recounted in stories, the symbol manifests the bond that links India's past, present, and future. It symbolizes not merely a mark applied to a woman's forehead but a testimony of history, belief, and an eternal tradition.



THE HUMAN JOURNEY IN TIME

Oh! what a journey, a tale so old!
the journey that humans uncountable told separating from Apes, walking and running
so began the journey unfolding
Fearing all, they came together.
For safety, food, and company forever.

Soon, safe and fed, the social community spread.
Moved with rivers for food and abundant water. Heart caught by plants, there was no turning
back.

Somewhere in the journey, some fire and the wheel and fear of nature arose the wrath of God.
So, to appease came rituals, temples, altars, and song, which in the future became culture.

Survival is now almost a guarantee; humans are now as bored as can be.
And so arose kingdoms and kings, empires and emperors, first ruled by fear of God and rulers,
then chosen by the people.

Paired with this boredom was also a desire, a curiosity, and a hunger for learning, a yearning for
something new.

This desire knew no bounds, and so began an endless spree of invention and discovery.

Many kings and many scholars used all they had as need arose: science, math, and art and
literature.

With it came monumental architecture for cities, kingdoms, temples, and structures. The fabulous
palaces and forts with big, big doors.

As praised as this desire was, it was also feared; in the name of God, new things were declared
heresy.

Despite all hardships, knowledge arose.
And now gave rise to computers we use.

The desire always boundless, rose all creations, monumental and small,
Fire and wheel, poison and medicine, chairs and pots, tables and spoons, goods of all kinds, traded
through lands.

The hunt for knowledge culminated in a way, now going beyond the skies once feared, and
computers for all.

Oh! What a wonderful journey it was, a tale from time, the tale of humankind.
A tale in continuance, etched in time,
What is next? The words the right of only time.

MANOJA YADAVILLI
22HSPS20

Colors of Departure: The Untold Story of India's Saubhagyavati Ritual

3

Khusi Singh
(22HSPS17)

"In death, she wears her best not for vanity, but for love—wrapped in silk, sindoor-adorned, she leaves not as a widow, but as a beloved."

Hindu death rituals are closely entwined with spirituality, social tradition, and the belief in an afterlife. One of these is dressing married Hindu women in their best clothes—tending to resemble bridal wear—if they die prior to their husbands. This is not only a religious tradition but also part of India's strong cultural heritage that symbolizes the holiness of marriage, perpetuation of customs, and veneration of the deceased soul.



But before I say anything about the cultural importance that it carries, let me first tell you what "Saubhagyavati Bhava" means: "May your married life bloom with everlasting glory."

The Role of Attire

In Hindu funeral practices, the way a dead person is attired is extremely important. Widows and unmarried women are generally attired in white, indicating renunciation of worldly life. A married woman (Saubhagyavati) who passes away earlier than her husband, however, is dressed in colorful clothing, with jewelry, sindoor (vermilion), and bangles, as an indication of her continued marital prosperity (saubhagya).

This tradition is a testament to the fact that she departs the world in an esteemed manner, yet retains the benedictions of matrimony. In contrast to widows, who, according to traditional rituals, are bereft of matrimonial symbols, a Saubhagyavati is dispatched with a gesture of respect for her being a faithful wife, a notion well established in Hindu cultural beliefs.

Spiritual and Religious Beliefs

Hinduism views marriage as an eternal and sacred bond (pavitra bandhan). The notion of pativrata dharma emphasizes the constant loyalty of a wife to her husband, and it is held that a woman who stays loyal to her husband takes her saubhagya even into the afterlife. Some scriptures and oral traditions even go so far as to say that such women achieve divine status upon death, sometimes becoming celestial beings (apsaras) or achieving a higher birth in their next life. The colorful clothing used for their cremation represents their ongoing spiritual and social standing, guaranteeing they are respected even in death.



ORAL TRADITIONS AND MYTHOLOGICAL STORIES

Savitri and Satyavan

India's vast oral tradition has numerous stories that reinforce the importance of saubhagya and the revered status of married women. One of the most well-known stories is that of Savitri and Satyavan, where Savitri's devotion to her husband was so strong that she could outwit Yama, the god of death, and bring her husband back to life. This tale highlights the belief that a woman's marital status transcends life and death.



Goddess Sita and Lord Rama

Another widely quoted is the tale of Goddess Sita, Lord Rama's wife. When she departed from the world by falling into the earth, she remained a Saubhagyavati, retaining her wedded status until death. This belief reinforces the cultural aspect of ensuring that wedded women who predecease their husbands are attired in their finest, as a sign of their continued blessings.

A Reflection of India's Cultural Heritage

The tradition of dressing deceased Saubhagyavati women in bridal-like fashion is not merely a religious tradition; it is a reflection of India's living cultural heritage. It reflects how tradition, family values, and respect for social roles still influence Indian society.

Continuity of Tradition Across Generations

This tradition has been transmitted for generations, kept alive through family and community traditions. It is a reflection of how Indian customs are embedded in historical, religious, and social beliefs so that cultural identity is not lost over generations.

Marriage as a Sacred Institution -

The emphasis laid on the saubhagya of a woman at death indicates the sanctity attached to marriage in Indian society. Contrary to the beliefs of some cultures in which death brings an end to all social bonds, Hindu rituals highlight the continuation of the marriage bond beyond death, showing the special cultural insight into relationships and afterlife notions.

Regional and Social Variations

Although the tradition is largely observed, there are variations depending on the regions in which each of them lives. In Bengal, the bride could be clothed in a red bridal saree, while in Rajasthan and Gujarat, sindoor and glass bangles adorn her. In South India, her body might be adorned with flowers and conventional gold jewelry. All these serve to show how rich India's culture is yet upholds the nature of the practice.

Honoring the Departed with Dignity

Indian cultural traditions emphasize dignity in both life and death. Just as people celebrate life milestones with rituals and traditions, they also ensure that the journey beyond life is marked with respect. Dressing a deceased married woman in her finest attire is a way of acknowledging her contributions, devotion, and role within the family and society.

Conclusion

The practice of dressing married Hindu women in their finest clothes for cremation is a strong symbol of India's rich cultural heritage. It represents the respect for marriage, the importance of auspiciousness (saubhagya), and the perpetuation of traditions that treat the dead with dignity. By religious conviction, oral tradition, and local practice, this ritual is a deep expression of India's spiritual and cultural life—one that unites generations through common rituals and abiding respect for the cycle of life and death.

Dressed in Red, She Goes

She rests in peace, dressed in red,
With sindoor shining on her head.
Her bangles are still; her hands are at rest.
But love and beauty still remain.

No white cloth is wrapped around her today.
She wears her happiness in her own way.
Her wedding symbols are still with her.
Symbolising her love will remain forever.

The fire rages, but cannot wipe out
The love she gave and her gentle touch.
She departs from the world, but not alone,
Her heart forever bound to the love she's known.

A bride she was, and remains to be,
In every sparkle of the divine fires.
The sky greets her with a smile—
A soul in red, with love that's worthwhile.

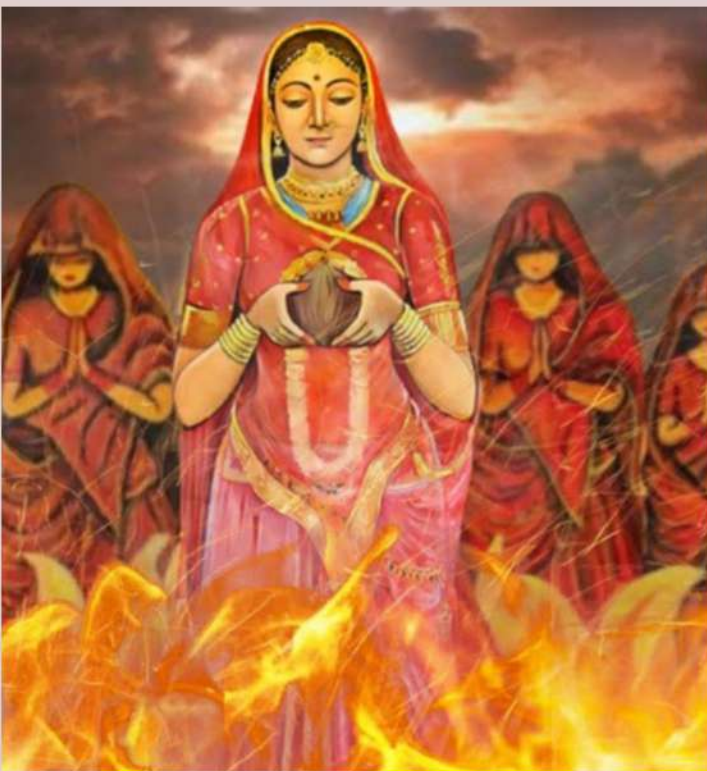
Khusi Singh
(22HSPS17)

THE GHOONGHAT

5

Deepika Seervi.P
(22HSPS06)

The ghoonghat is a traditional veil worn by women in many parts of North India, particularly in Rajasthan, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and parts of Madhya Pradesh. It typically involves draping a portion of the saree or dupatta over the head and often across the face, especially in the presence of elder male relatives or in-laws. While it may seem like a simple act of covering the head, the ghoonghat carries deep cultural, social, and historical significance.



The origins of the ghoonghat can be traced back to ancient India, where veiling was not widespread but gradually developed with time. The practice gained prominence during the medieval period, particularly with the advent of Islamic rule in northern India. The idea of modesty and seclusion of women became more formalized, influenced in part by Persian and Mughal customs like purdah (seclusion of women). Over time, these practices blended with existing

local traditions and evolved into the ghoonghat system we recognize today.

Bringing this exercise to the Indian mainland during Mughal conquests, the Rajputs were among the most dominant groups to be stern believers of the purdah system. Such is also witnessed from the tale of Queen Padmavati. She jumped into the pyre of fire (sati) along with other married women, never to be seen by Allaudin Khilji, the Delhi Sultan (internalized patriarchy is visible even in such instances in the most nuanced way).

When this practice came into contact with Hindu culture's rural areas, it was translated as laaj. The newly married daughter-in-law was to cover her head with the pallu or dupatta in the presence of her husband or in-laws. However, the purdah observed during the colonial era was exclusively practiced by the Muslim community. Nonetheless, this system stood its ground in Hindu practices as well.

Women's seclusion was so strongly associated with the ghoonghat that the honor of the families and the feminine code of modesty were upheld and tied to it.

The concept of ghoonghat is initiated after marriage in Hindus. While the Hinduized version of purdah was staunchly followed in the Northern belt (Punjab, Rajasthan, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, parts of Madhya Pradesh, Kashmir, and Himachal Pradesh), Ajanta caves provide us with the information that the Southern part of India had no reference to this system. There is no rapid shift from purdah to no-purdah regions.

Instead, there is a gradual transition through the areas while the uniform idea remains of establishing supremacy over the womenfolk. Such is translated through the custom of ghoonghat followed by the daughters-in-law.

In the Rajput era, the purdah represented economic superiority along with it being a marker of good behavior from a religious point of view. In Rajasthani culture, the ghoonghat is more than just a veil—it represents a woman's duty, respect toward elders, and adherence to traditional values. It is most often seen during festivals, weddings, or religious ceremonies, though in rural and conservative households, it remains a daily practice. The ghoonghat is especially important during marriage rituals, where a bride veils her face not only in modesty but also as a sign of transition into her new role in the family.

The size, style, and strictness of the ghoonghat vary depending on community norms, age, and geography. In some regions, the veil only covers the head, while in others, it conceals the entire face.

Henceforth, down to the present century, dominant groups and royal families remain anxious to introduce purdah in their families to command respectability. The affluent homes could afford to observe strict behavior imposed on women, while those who were financially vulnerable were to send womenfolk for employment opportunities. Hence, those belonging to the base of the pyramid could not forgo their labor power to gain better economic opportunities/livelihood.

The Ghoonghat In The Current Context

These garments have held women in the pits of patriarchy for long. For instance, in her work, Tasneem Chowdhury (1992) provides examples from the households of Lucknow wherein Shusheela Bajpai had to cover her face every time she stepped out of the house. Only after she reached the outskirts of her village would she be free from the ghoonghat, freed by her anonymity.

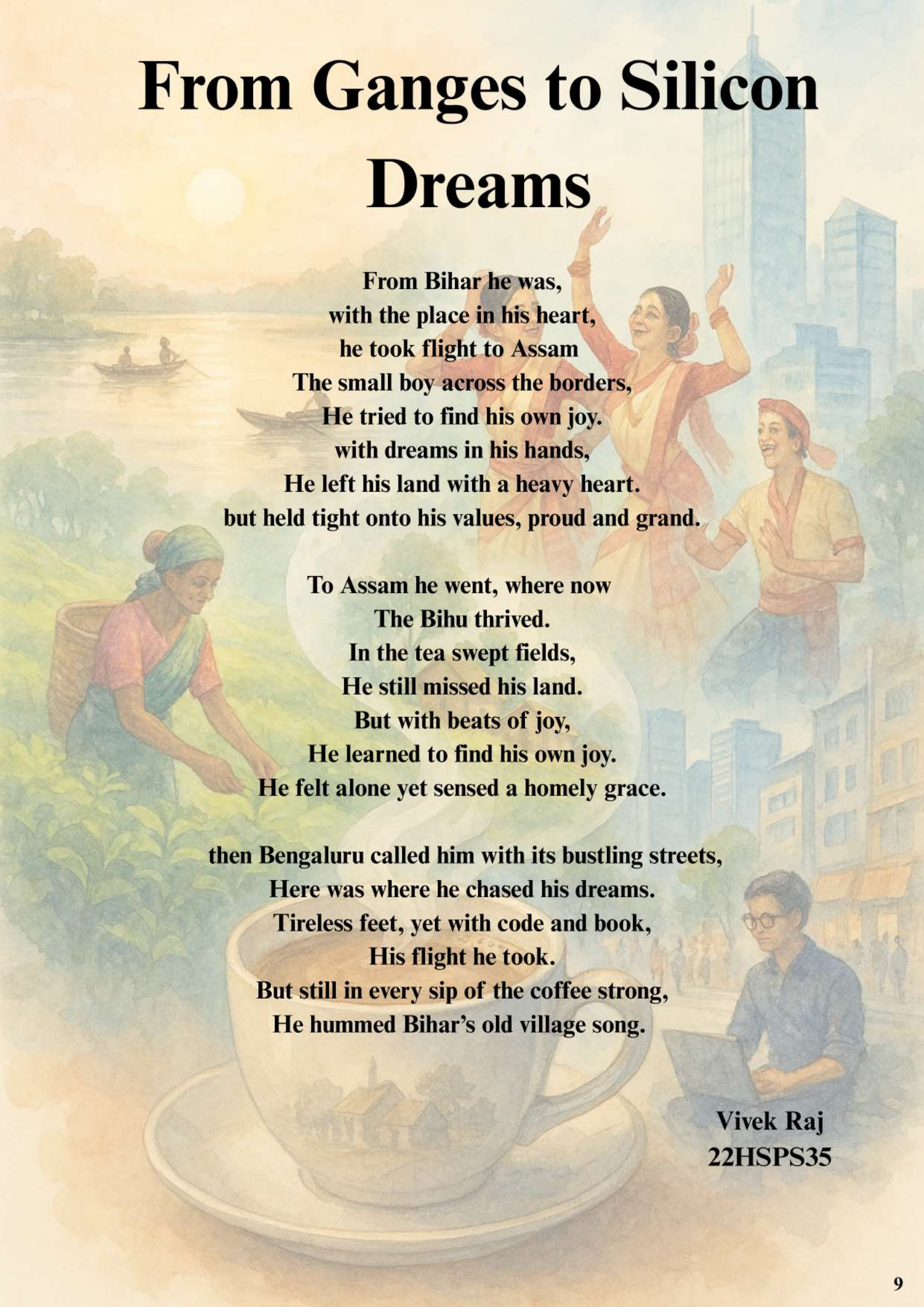
On the other end, Sudevi, a non-dominant caste woman working in the fields, did not cover her head due to her working conditions. However, both of them were expected to look after their in-laws. The purdah system strikingly demarcates the task between men and women, as the latter is supposed to be associated with the housework while the former sets foot in the public spaces.

Whether the purdah is implemented as a form of oppression, protection, or empowerment, voluntarily or through generations, is crucial. Purdah and its numerous manifestations have been a controversial topic sensitive to various levels of the social setup. In the contemporary era, this theme has been a weapon in the social war to appease some and target others.

In a society where male pride is very significant and simultaneously fragile, the seclusion of women has remained an essential aspect of male control to date. The custom of purdah or ghoonghat requires a woman to isolate herself from those who are not immediate family by veiling her face, thus controlling her access to the world. The lack of institutionalization surrounding this issue is reflected by the absence of legislation around this ingrained practice. One also needs to simultaneously acknowledge the choice of a woman in her attire without imposing any norms. Yet, this does not hinder us from spreading awareness and trying to deconstruct the historicity of such practices.



From Ganges to Silicon Dreams



From Bihar he was,
with the place in his heart,
he took flight to Assam
The small boy across the borders,
He tried to find his own joy.
with dreams in his hands,
He left his land with a heavy heart.
but held tight onto his values, proud and grand.

To Assam he went, where now
The Bihu thrived.
In the tea swept fields,
He still missed his land.
But with beats of joy,
He learned to find his own joy.
He felt alone yet sensed a homely grace.

then Bengaluru called him with its bustling streets,
Here was where he chased his dreams.
Tireless feet, yet with code and book,
His flight he took.
But still in every sip of the coffee strong,
He hummed Bihar's old village song.

Vivek Raj
22HSPS35

Yash Kumar
(24HSPA37)

Bihar is a land encompassed with culture and tradition, but if there is a single festival that gives a glimpse of the life and soul of the state, it is Chhath Puja. It is an ancient festival devoted to

Lord Sun (Surya Dev) and Chhathi Maiya.

It's not just about religious rituals—it's a celebration of life, faith, and the bond between people and nature. Chhath Puja brings out the true beauty of Bihar—its rivers, its people, and their deep devotion.

Let's understand what makes this festival so special.

Chhath Puja: More Than a Festival, It's an Emotion for the People of Bihar. Chhath Puja is not just a festival; it's an emotion that connects everyone. It's celebrated with great joy and faith. It is a four-day festival filled with fasting, prayers, and offering thanks to the sun. What makes it unique is that it is celebrated in the open, near rivers, ponds, or any water body—not inside homes or temples. When you see thousands of devotees standing in the water, praying to the setting and rising sun, it's a sight that touches your heart, uncomplicated and pure.

Chhath Puja - Four Significant Days

1. Nahay Khay (First Day)

The first commences with 'Nahay Khay,' meaning bath and eat. Usually, the female devotees take a holy dip into the river and thereafter bring holy waters back home. The house is cleaned, followed by the simple and pure cooking of a meal composed of pumpkin, rice, and lentils.

That is how the ritual fasting starts, and from here, it starts the traces of fasting nature for the following days.

2. Kharna (Second Day)

On the second day, it is called Kharna, where the devotees fast for the whole day, with no drinking of water. It would even be dauntless to talk of breaking a day's fast in the evening, with the only possible food of kheer, puris, and fruit shared by people—sometimes family or even neighboring people—the sign of togetherness and unity. After that, there's another stretch of such ritual fasting—again, intensity growing—to observe for 36 hours without food or water.

3. Sandhya Arghya (Third Day)

Then comes the third day, the most important and emotional regarding family dresses in traditional garbs and congregation side to the river or pond where they distinguish bamboo baskets that are filled with offerings—fruits, sugarcane, thekua, and coconut. It is at sunset when all of them start bathing in the waters and pray to the sun going down. Folk songs raise their tunes as people clap. True joy comes with the sight of the sun sinking in the west and its glorious reflection upon the surface of the water; kept awhile praying—it is something magic This can make a small village of Bihar in great pride.



4. Usha Arghya (Fourth Day)

On the final day, before sunrise, devotees return to the river to pray to the rising sun. This is called 'Usha Arghya.' It symbolizes new beginnings and hope. After prayers, the fast is completed with the partaking of prasada (a sacred offering). The offering is then passed around amongst near and dear ones. Peace and happiness prevail when the festival is completed.

The Incredible Beauty of Bihar During Chhath Puja:

On Chhath Puja, Bihar's beauty reaches a level that can hardly be explained in words. The banks of the Ganges, Gandak, and Son must witness colorful celebrations. Ghats are decorated with lights, flowers, and colorful rangoli. The air reverberates with the fragrances of incense sticks and the sounds of devotional songs. But the greatest beauty lies in the people and the process, for during Chhath Puja, all forget caste, religion, or status. In Chhath Puja, everyone is equal before divinity and in celebrations. Given that it's about purity, simplicity, and unity.

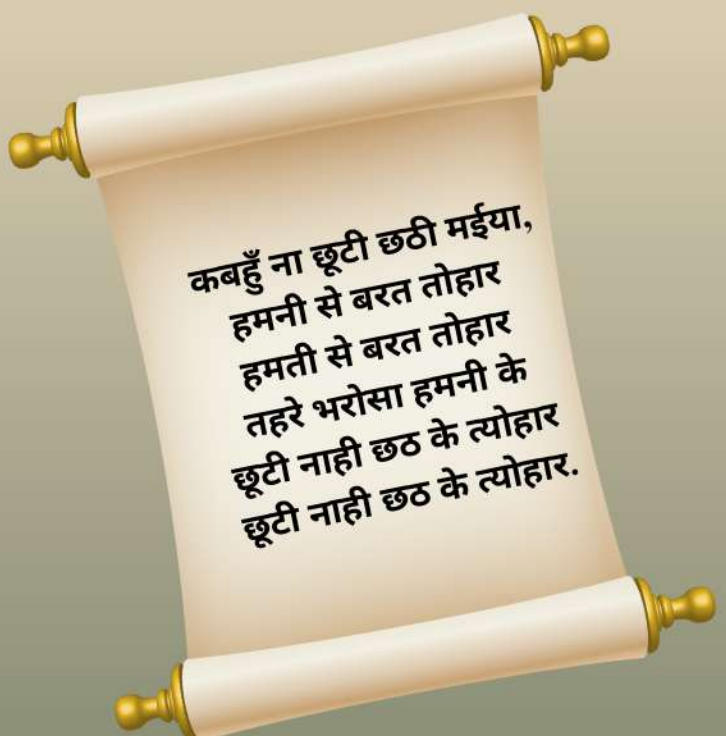
An Emotional Bond to Chhath Puja:

Chhath Puja is more than a ritual; it is a life force that lugs us to our roots; it connects Biharis and their culture. Even the ones away from Bihar feel a draw this time of year. They make the long journey home just so they can take part in the festivities with their families. It is a celebration of femininity and faith and trust. Walking barefoot to wade in the river through the freezing waters for hours, all with baskets on their heads, they retain their commitment and faith. What they sacrifice and pray for reflects the true spirit of Chhath Puja.



Conclusion:

A Festival That Lives in the Heart Chhath Puja is not merely worshipping the sun. It is a moment to thank nature, to appreciate life, and to celebrate togetherness. It brings forth the beauty of Bihar, represented by its rivers, its people, and its folklore traditions. The festival teaches us to be grateful at heart, to live in purity, and to prevail in unity. The rising and setting sun during Chhath Puja is more than a physical sight—it is a symbol of hope, renewal, life, and our deep, heartfelt bond with each other and nature.



The Flame Beneath the Jasmine Sky

**In Madurai's golden hush, where jasmine scents the air,
Rises a palace carved from dawn, divinely rare.
Spirals of stone in cosmic dance,
Echo chants in time's old trance.**

**There stands Meenakshi, queen of light,
Crowned in emeralds, draped in night.
Her eyes—two fishes from celestial streams,
Swim through souls and stir their dreams.**

**Not of mortal silk or skin,
Her form is woven from within.
Moon-dust breath and thunder heart,
She splits the dark, a mystic art.**

**Each step she takes, the temple sings
Lotus blooms and silver wings.
Tigers kneel, and planets pause.
To honor her unspoken laws.**

**Brahma weeps in silent awe.
Shiva dances, struck with flaw
For none could match her vision's tide,
That fish-eyed flame no gods could hide.**

**Not from scroll nor ancient page,
This song escapes the poet's cage.
It lives in marble, wind, and fire
In Madurai, where gods conspire.**

**Gopi N
22HSPS09**

BHAONA: A THEATRICAL ART OF STORYTELLING

8

Anandita Das
23HSPS03

We are all aware of the Bhakti Movement, which spread across the Indian subcontinent, especially with the emergence of new teachings, religion, and Bhakti Saints like Mirabai and methods of propagating the teachings of a particular faith or religion. However, significant changes also happened in the northeastern part of India, especially in Assam, and that was the birth of Bhaona.

Assamese Bhaona is one such theatrical tradition that has captivated audiences for generations. It is more than just a performance, as it embodies Assam's cultural richness, deep-rooted traditions, and spiritual devotion. This unique art form was introduced in the 16th century by Srimanta Sankardev, a visionary saint-scholar of the Bhakti movement. Through a fusion of drama, music, dance, and storytelling, Bhaona not only entertains but also educates, conveying profound religious and moral teachings to the masses. The birth of Bhaona can be traced back to the Bhakti movement, a spiritual renaissance that spread across India, emphasizing devotion to a personal deity. In Assam, Srimanta Sankardev played a pivotal role in shaping the movement by propagating Neo-Vaishnavism, a sect centered on Lord Vishnu.

He understood the power of art in influencing society and created Bhaona as a medium to engage the common people with religious narratives. His Ankiya Naat, a one-act play written in Brajawali, laid the foundation of this art form, with classics like *Rukmini Haran* and *Parijat Haran*, which are still performed today. Sankardev's disciples played a crucial role in the preservation and expansion of Bhaona. Notable among them were Madhavdev, Damodardev, Haridev, Narayan Das Thakur, and Gopal Ata. Madhavdev, in particular, became a key figure in the Vaishnavite movement and contributed significantly to Assamese literature and culture.

The structure and elements of Bhaona include:

1. **Ankiya Naat** – The core of Bhaona, these one-act plays depict stories from Hindu epics such as the *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, and *Bhagavata Purana*.
2. **Music and Dance**—Traditional Assamese instruments like the dhol (drum), taal (cymbals), and flute create a rhythmic atmosphere, while graceful dance movements bring characters to life



3. **Types of Music**—Bhaona incorporates various musical styles, including *Borgeet* (devotional songs composed by Sankardev and Madhavdev), *Gayan-Bayan* (ensemble music played during performances), and instrumental compositions using traditional Assamese instruments.

4. **Sutradhar (Narrator)** – A crucial figure, the Sutradhar, who acts as the narrator, introduces the play, explains its significance, and also explains the story to the audience at each stage, reciting slokas, singing, dancing, and essentially ensuring the audience understands the plot and characters throughout the play; he is a crucial element of the performance and introduces each scene and character to the stage.

5. **Costumes and Makeup**—Bright, elaborate costumes and expressive makeup define each character, making the visual storytelling more impactful. While rooted in tradition, Bhaona has undergone significant transformations to stay relevant over the centuries. After Sankardev's time, his disciples introduced linguistic changes, replacing Brajawali with Assamese to make it more accessible to the general populace. The post-Sankari period saw the diversification of Bhaona

into different forms, reflecting regional influences and societal changes. Some of the notable variations include:

- Phaujiya Bhaona—Originating in Koch Behar, it introduced slight modifications to suit local tastes.
- Mukha Bhaona—a unique form where performers wear intricately designed masks, predominantly popular in Majuli.
- Matribhasha Bhaona—adapted to be performed entirely in Assamese, making it more relatable to audiences in upper Assam.
- Baresohoria and Hazari Bhaona—large-scale performances where multiple Bhaonas

are enacted simultaneously under a single pandal.

Over the years, Bhaona has embraced modern influences without compromising its traditional core. The emergence of English Bhaona, pioneered by cultural figures like Arup Saikia, has expanded its reach beyond Assam, allowing non-Assamese audiences to appreciate its essence. Technological advancements, including digital documentation and live-streamed performances, have further facilitated the preservation and dissemination of Bhaona, making it more accessible to younger generations.

Bhaona is not an isolated art form but an amalgamation of Assamese folk traditions. The influences from pre-Sankari performances like *Oja Pali*, *Puppet Dance*, and *Kushan Gaan* can be seen in its storytelling style. Moreover, Sankardev defied classical Sanskrit drama conventions by incorporating battle scenes, love stories, and other dramatic elements, making his plays more engaging and relatable. The costumes of Bhaona also reflect Assam's cultural diversity, where locally sourced materials are used to craft elaborate headgear (pag), worn differently by the Sutradhar and musicians (Gayan-Bayan), each design carrying symbolic meaning. This seamless blend of artistic expression and Indigenous craftsmanship makes Bhaona a true representation of Assamese identity. Bhaona is not merely a form of entertainment; it is a cultural force that unites people across Assam. Performed during major festivals like Raas Leela, it fosters communal harmony and reinforces shared traditions. Historically, it has served as an inclusive platform where people of all backgrounds could come together to experience collective devotion.

It also has profound educational value; through its engaging narratives, it imparts ethical teachings, promoting virtues such as honesty, compassion, and righteousness, and by making moral lessons accessible to people of all ages, Bhaona continues to serve as an instrument of social reform and spiritual enlightenment. Assamese Bhaona is a testament to the enduring power of art as a vehicle for cultural preservation, spiritual exploration, and social connection. Its rich history reflects a journey of adaptation and resilience, mirroring the very evolution of Assamese society. In this rapidly globalizing world, Bhaona stands as a symbol of identity and continuity as it invites us to immerse ourselves in a world where the divine intertwines with the mundane, where music and storytelling become a pathway to deeper understanding. By embracing both tradition and innovation, Bhaona continues to enchant audiences, inviting new generations to partake in this timeless dance of devotion and artistry. Its melodies, narratives, and vibrant performances are not just echoes of the past but living conversations that speak to the present and inspire the future. As we reflect on Bhaona's journey, we are reminded of the profound impact that cultural practices have in shaping our collective narratives. This form of theatrical art, with its harmonious blend of spirituality and creativity, remains a shining jewel in the cultural mosaic of India—a celebration of life, faith, and the enduring human spirit. Bhaona is not just an art form; it is a living tradition that continues to evolve while preserving Assam's cultural and spiritual essence.

As efforts continue to revitalize it and share it with the world, Bhaona remains a bridge between the past and present. As long as people appreciate its beauty and significance, this timeless tradition will thrive for generations to come.

KARAGA FESTIVAL OF KARNATAKA

9

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23HSPS34

The Karaga festival has a history of over 300 years. It is a folk festival celebrated mostly in Bengaluru, known as Bengaluru Karaga in Karnataka; it originates from a ritual dedicated to the character Draupadi in the Mahabharata [at the time of Draupadi's death, Veera Kumaras (soldiers created by Draupadi to defend demons) asked her not to leave them, but instead she promised to return every year on the day of the full moon day of Chaitra Massa (March/April/May)]. The festival starts 11 days before the full moon day with chariot pulling, and it ends with a grand celebration of Karaga in which even pallaki [palanquins] are also included. Karaga marks the return of Draupadi in the form of Adishakti.

Basically, Karaga is similar to a mud pot and a pyramid decorated with Jasmine flowers carried by a priest on the head from the Thigala community [Veerakumaras]. Veerakumaras accompany the karaga carrier for the procession. The procession takes place from Sree Dharmaraya Swamy Temple in Thigalarpet in Bengaluru for about 18-20 km. The temple is dedicated to Draupadi & Pandavas, and the temple is built in Dravidian style. The procession starts at midnight, around 12:30am, and gives visits to all houses. Rangoli are drawn in front of the houses, which marks the welcome of the Karaga procession. The procession also involves the Dargah; it is believed that a saint was suffering from physical illness & the visit of Karaga has cured him. Veerakumaras hit them on their bare chest with swords by saying, "Dik-di, dik-di."



Where does Bengaluru Karaga begin?

Shri Dharama Raya Swamy temple in Nagarathpete, Bengaluru, is the starting point for the Karaga procession and the main temple associated with the Karaga festival. Nagarathpete is 37 kms from Bengaluru airport and 5 kms from the city center (Majestic).

Stay: Lots of stay options are available in Bengaluru in the KR Market and Gandhi Nagara area, very close to the Sri Dharmaraya Swamy temple.

ZAANGTA LAAM – THE TRADITIONAL DANCE OF THE PAITE'S

10

T.Lianmuanthang
(23HSPS32)

Lying in the northeastern part of India, there is a tribe called the Paite. They mainly reside in Lamka, Churachandpur, the second-largest town of Manipur, as well as in parts of Mizoram and along the Myanmar border. They are primarily descendants of the Zo People. The Paite tribes mainly identify themselves as Zomi, which literally means "People of the Zo."

The Paite Puandum, the traditional shawl of the Paite, is known for its striking color combination of red, yellow, green, and black, making it visually appealing. This shawl is worn by both men and women of the tribe. The hornbill, a bird of great cultural significance, plays a vital role in shaping the famous tribal dance known as "Zaangta Laam" in the local dialect. The term Zaangta means "victory" or "triumph," while Laam means "dance." The dance mimics the courtship movements of the hornbill, with men and women dancing together in pairs.

Performers wear traditional attire, which enhances the visual appeal of the dance while also preserving the tribe's cultural heritage. As they dance, other participants hold hands and swing their arms and legs in sync with the rhythmic pattern of the music. The accompanying music is often sung by the dancers themselves, with lyrics like "Dial Dial in Diam Diam Leng Lawm," which translates to "Doing things together with one heart and one mind."

The dance was originally performed to celebrate happiness, unity, and victories, whether in battle, successful hunting, or other significant achievements. Today, it is performed on special cultural occasions and plays a crucial role in preserving the rich heritage of the Paite people. Historically, warriors returning victorious from battle would perform Zaangta Laam as a symbol of their bravery and community spirit.

Over time, it evolved into a communal dance, performed during festivals such as Chapchar Kut, Thangsuang Laam, and Kut festivals in Manipur and Mizoram.

In modern times, Zaangta Laam remains an integral part of Zomi festivals, state-sponsored cultural programs, and community events.

It serves as a way for the younger generation to connect with their roots and continue the Paite traditions. Cultural organizations and schools actively promote and teach the dance to ensure that its significance is preserved for future generations.



CHAVANG KUT: AN IMMEMORIAL FESTIVAL OF THE CHIN-KUKI-MIZO ETHNIC GROUPS

11

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Chavang Kut, popularly known as Kut, is one of the largest and most popular festivals primarily celebrated post-harvest of Chang (Paddy) by the Chin-Kuki-Mizo ethnic groups of Manipur, who are also the indigenous peoples of the northeastern regions of India and parts of Myanmar and Bangladesh. The terms 'Chavang' and 'Kut' are Kuki words meaning 'autumn' and 'harvest,' respectively. Therefore, Chavang Kut is the celebration of the post-harvest of paddy in the autumn. In other words, it is a day of thanksgiving to the nature deity in the pre-Christian era and to the Almighty God, the Lord Jesus, in the Christian era.

The origin of the Chavang Kut is not a written record but is based on oral tradition, legends, and folktales. There are also various theories about the origin of the Kut festival propounded by renowned and intellectual figures of the community. The beginning of Kut's practice is in oblivion. However, it is believed that the Passover celebration of ancient Israelites could be one of the roots of the festive celebration. The festival has been celebrated in different geographical divisions under varying names, depending on dialectical usage. The festival is an embodiment of Kuki mosaic culture. The other kinds of Kut festivals celebrated by the people of Chin-Kuki-Mizo ethnic groups include Mim Kut, Pawl Kut, Chapchar Kut, etc.

Celebration of the Kut festival is commonly witnessed in areas where the Kuki community resides. It is a day to showcase the rich and diverse culture of the Chin-Kuki-Mizo ethnic groups by wearing locally manufactured traditional attires. These attires and garments are a hallmark of the Kuki society and hold cultural and ceremonial significance. They are known for their complex patterns that symbolize various aspects of the tribes of the community. The festival signifies the cultural unity and the common identity of the Kuki people as a nation with the same origin and history. The celebration of the Kut festival is one of the prominent cultures of the community, which delivers the unique cultural and ethnic identity of its people.

The Chavang Kut festival is celebrated every year on 1st November in Manipur, a state holiday. Officially, the first state-level Kut festival was celebrated on 1st November 1979 at Keithelmanbi Village in the present-day district of Kangpokpi. The festival is a one-day event with multiple cultural shows from dawn to late evening.

The celebration starts in the early morning when the Thempu (priest) conducts a religious practice called 'Khothensap,' which bestows blessings on the living and non-living beings in the village. The festival is marked by several events, such as praying, feasting, singing, dancing, and sports. These events are all based on the culture and traditions of the Kuki people. There are traditional and cultural dances with songs of ancient origin, such as 'Sagol Keng Khei, Sagol Twi Pal, Lom Chang Suh, Heisat, and Suhta Lam.' The most famous and popular among them is the 'Suhta Lam,' which is called the bamboo dance in English. During the dance, songs are sung by the traditionally attired aged men and women of the community while standing in a circle or otherwise accompanied by the soothing sounds produced by the traditional musical instruments such as the dahcha or dahpi (gong), a drum made of hollow wood and animal skin (probably buffalo, cow, or mithun hide), and the selki (mithun horn). Pengkul (a long bamboo trumpet made of gotha and selki) is blown, and a few gunshots from Asubi or Thihngang (muzzleloader), etc., signify the solemnity of the festival.

Prayer is an essential component of the festival. The prayer of gratitude is directed towards the Almighty God, who gives a bountiful harvest to His people. It is usually led by the priests, religious leaders, and elders of the village, where Haosapu (chief of the village), Semang Pachong (council of ministers), and heads of the clans in the village are the key figures of the occasion. However, the participation of the common public is vital and appreciated, as the festival itself is the occasion to celebrate God's blessings.

On this day, the folks have Changlhah (a traditional rice bread that is chewy in its texture) during the day and a common feast in the evening wherein the communal meat could be mithun, cow, pig, or buffalo. Whatever aforementioned instruments, cuisine, and attires are the traditional and original cultural heritage of the Kukis. Using a specific animal for the communal feast is a part of the culture and ethics of the tribal Kuki community. On this day, the people enjoy participating in various entertainment events that are culturally significant, such as kungkal (high jump), selkal (a jump over mithun), chungpi (javelin throw), archery, wrestling, tug of war, shot put, etc. It is important to note that the Kukis once worshipped nature, or in other words, they were animists or naturalists. They offered prayers to their native god, termed 'Indoi.' 'Indoi' is the household deity and is visible to human eyes through a collection of good things (Doibom) around their space and time to signify longevity and God's blessings. The articles inside the Doibom are obtained from nature, hanging on the verandah of the traditional house.

In the olden days, the sanctity and dignity of the social and cultural practices of the Kukis were highly respected and valued. There was no external influence that could obstruct the practice of orthodox Kuki customs and traditions. There is no doubt that the culture of the Kukis at that time was indigenous and monoculture, which was uncontaminated and isolated. However, this does not necessarily mean that the orthodox Kuki customs, culture, and traditions are entirely abandoned today. With the advent of Christianity and the influence of Western civilization, certain cultural practices that were indigenous and immaculate are now abandoned, forgotten, modified, and replaced alternatively. However, this is not a surprise because the nature of culture is dynamic and changes over time.

Kut celebration evolved, and notably, the contemporary celebration significantly differs from the ones in the early days, primarily in the pre-Christian era. The festival, which was once celebrated only in the countryside villages and towns, is now celebrated at various levels, such as the village or town level, district level, and even state level. Change is inevitable, and adjustment is necessary. According to the elders of the tribal Kuki society, the principles of Christianity and the orthodox customs, culture, and traditions of the Kukis do not contradict each other. They could go hand in hand, enhancing the sanctity of one another.

In today's celebrations of the Kut festival, practices of Western influence, such as beauty pageants and night gatherings in the form of concerts, are incorporated into the festival's events. Not only that, the evolving characteristics of the human mind promoted non-cultural entertainment into practice during the celebration, and this has become one of the challenges in preserving the orthodox Kuki customs and traditions as a cultural heritage of its people. In today's modern world, where modernization and globalization continue to shape societies, maintaining and preserving the customs and traditions of the Kukis has become a significant challenge. It is essential to teach the younger generations about their culture through literature, seminars, conferences, etc. They must be aware of balancing the developing culture of the external world and the diminishing cultural heritage of their tribal community.

Kut, in general, is also an effective instrument of socialization across communal boundaries. The festival signifies the unity, integrity, co-existence, and oneness among the celebrating tribes of the community. It has always been a unifying force and the source of communal cohesion for the tribal Kuki community. The festival produces the feeling of love, peace, and harmony in the hearts and minds of the people. This must continue to be a source of greater understanding and cooperation among the tribes of the Kuki community in Manipur, as well as the Chins and the Mizos in general.



SENHUN: AN INFORMAL LOAN

12

T.JENNY LHINGHOITHEM
(23HSPS33)



Senhun is an economic activity actively practiced in Churachandpur, one of the 16 districts of the Indian state of Manipur. This district, which is the largest in Manipur by area, is predominantly inhabited by the Kuki-Zo community and is located in the southwestern part of the state. Churachandpur is commonly referred to as Lamka, a tribal term for the district. The district is home to several tribes, mainly belonging to the Chin-Kuki-Mizo-Zomi group, including the Thadou, Hmar, Paite, Vaiphei, and Zou tribes. Other tribes present in the region include the Gangte, Simte, Mizo, and Tedim Chin, as well as some Manipuri Meitei communities.

In this context, “Senhun” refers to a financial arrangement where a sum of money is provided as capital. The borrower agrees to repay a set amount daily according to the terms of the agreement, resulting in daily collections. For example, if a borrower receives 5,000, they would return 150 per day for 40 days, resulting in a total repayment of 6,000, which includes a profit of 1,000. Similarly, with a loan of 10,000, the borrower would repay 300 per day over 40 days, totalling 12,000

The primary reason people prefer Senhun over other sources of informal loans is that, with Senhun, borrowers repay the full amount borrowed according to agreed-upon terms, whether on a daily or weekly basis. In this system, the borrower does not pay back the principal once the collection period is over, which distinguishes it from other informal lending practices where borrowers must repay both the principal and monthly interest. Vendors often face various challenges in accessing loans and financial support. Senhun addresses these challenges by providing easier access to credit and offering flexibility in repayment terms and schedules. This allows borrowers to adjust their payments according to their financial situation, promoting stability and empowerment. Additionally, these lending activities typically rely on personal relationships, trust, and social networks.

Senhun is a prevalent informal economic activity that serves as both a source of income and a means of livelihood for many individuals. Local lenders often extend loans to vendors to support their business startups, creating benefits for both parties. This practice enables individuals to generate income that has increasingly become their primary financial resource. In this predominantly Kuki-Zo district, Senhun acts as a vital support system, helping many people establish and sustain their livelihoods.



So, why choose biryani to trace India's heritage from past to present? The answer is why not.

INTRODUCTION

India is, no doubt, a land of diversity. Starting from its geography to the people that reside here, everything is unique. So is India's culinary heritage. India's tryst with spices dates back millennia, making it the spice capital of the world. It is only wise to consider the culinary history of India, as they form a part of our heritage, and there is nothing better than biryani that tells the story of India's culinary evolution. A dish of the past that still connects to the present. A dish that sparks debates, unites food lovers, and continues to evolve in every region.

When the British deposed Nawab Wajid Ali Shah to Kolkata (formerly Calcutta), the Calcutta biryani was created. Nizams governing small territories in Northern India encouraged regional variants like the Hyderabadi biryani and the Arcot Nawab biryani. Biryani recipes of the Mughals can still be found in places where their empire had a foothold. While biryani is popularly associated with the Mughals, there is some historical evidence to show that there were other, similar rice dishes prior to the Mughal invasion. There is mention of a rice dish known as "Oon Soru" in Tamil as early as the year 2 A.D. Oon Soru was composed of rice, ghee, meat, turmeric, coriander, pepper, and bay leaf and was used to feed military warriors. So, it can be said that biryani was developed as a dish that could feed a lot of people, and at the same time it would contain a lot of spices, making it aromatic and tasty.

The Origins of Biryani:- Different stories that link to a great dish

The word "Biryani" comes from the Persian word "birian," which means "fried before cooking." One could conclude that the biryani originated in Iran (previously known as Persia). Another interesting story traces the origins of the dish to Mumtaz Mahal (1593-1631), Shah Jahan's queen who inspired the Taj Mahal. It is said that she once visited army barracks and found the army personnel undernourished. She asked the chef to prepare a special dish that provided balanced nutrition, and thus the biryani was created.



The capital of the large north Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, Lucknow has a long and checkered history woven around the growth of Islamic culture in the country. The city saw its zenith during the time of the royals known as Nawabs, who governed their province from here for over eight decades, beginning in 1775. The Nawabs were known to be connoisseurs of all forms of art. The biryani is a culinary gift from the heyday of the Nawabs. Lucknowi biryani, however, is arguably the favorite for most Indians, thanks to its subtle spicing and flavoring. It is also known as the Awadhi biryani.

It is believed that the origin of the name “Awadhi Biryani” can be traced back to the establishment of the Nawab of Awadh, which took place in 1722 under the command of Mughal Emperor Muhammad Shah. The Nawab, a Persian nobleman of immense discretion and military prowess. The region had already been introduced to biryani during the time of the Mughals; however, the quality of biryani from that period is inferior to the refined biryani from Awadhi. The Awadh Nawabs had a desire for a dish that was full of flavors and aromas; however, it had to be delicately adjusted in flavors. The challenge lay in incorporating the flavors of spices into the dish without overpowering the senses with each bite. The Awadhi chefs created an ingenious arrangement by wrapping the entire spice list in cheesecloth. This allowed the spices to penetrate the food without overpowering it. This ingenious adaptation became the signature of the Awadhi biryani, an orchestra of spices that sang rather than shouted. Awadhi biryani is delicate and one-of-a-kind.

The Nawab of Oudh, Wajid Ali Shah, was banished from Lucknow in 1856 and brought his personal chef with him to Kolkata. His royal chefs knew the recipes of the Awadhi Kitchen. Awadhi cuisine was distinguished by its delicious biryani, a dish of spiced rice and meat that was popular for its aromatic richness and flavor balance. Due to a shortage of funds following the banishment, the cooks started using potatoes and eggs instead of a large quantity of meat to maintain the royalty.

Thus, Kolkata biryani, as we know it today, was born. Potatoes were brought to India by the Portuguese and were considered a novelty since they were imported. It was also quite expensive, though not as much as meat. As a result, the volume of the dish was maximized, and it added a unique texture. The potatoes absorbed the rich spices of the meat and were complemented with the flavors of basmati rice. Today, the Kolkata biryani has become an iconic staple in this city's cuisine. Be it tourists or locals, everyone enjoys a plate of it and celebrates this meal on every special occasion. It is found in the fanciest of places and also at roadside diners. Biryani now forms an essential component of Kolkata's culinary culture.



কলকাতা

Sindhi Biryani The Spicy, The Sour and the Sweet

While Sindhis are infamous for their dal pakwan and koki, very few are aware of our ability to whip up a mean biryani. The Sindhi version of biryani, originating from the Sindh region of Pakistan, is recognized by its spicy, sour, and sweet taste. Its collection of ingredients — dried plums, sweet caramelized onions, rich yogurt, sour tomato, fresh chillies, potatoes, nutmeg, and mace—makes it spicy, sweet, and sour. The involvement of saffron and turmeric suggests the Persian connect.

Biryani is not just about food; it is about stories, legacies, and shared experiences. Whether it is a plate of Hyderabadi dum or Kolkata-style with potatoes, one thing remains constant—Biryani is not just food; its history is served on a plate.

The Hyderabad Nizami Legacy

Hyderabad's Nizams, who were known for their refined tastes and exquisite cuisine, were influential in the development of Hyderabadi biryani. When it was first served as a regal treat, the Nizams helped to perfect it and turn it from a simple dish into a work of art. A staple of Hyderabadi cuisine, Kacchi biryani is made by slow-cooking partially cooked rice with raw meat that has been marinated in spices for a symphony of flavors to develop. In contrast, dum biryani is a fragrant and tender dish that is made by layering partially cooked rice and marinated meat, sealing, and slow cooking. The ancient Dum Pukht method, which is as complex as it is flavorful, is the foundation of Hyderabadi biryani's culinary creativity.

Thalassery Biryani (Malabar Biryani):

No visit to the Malabar region is complete without digging into a scrumptious plate full of delectable biryani served all the way from Kozhikode (Calicut) to Kasargod. There have been many accounts of the history of the Malabar biryani, and only a few remain privy to the secret ingredients that make the biryani what it is today. Kerala's northern region is known as the 'Spice Coast of Malabar,' so it is only fitting to imagine that this region could perhaps be the birthplace of the Malabar biryani. The Malabar Coast used to serve as the landing point for Arab traders for many centuries. Over the years, these traders married local women in the region, thereby creating a new Muslim community called Mappilas, and the blending of these two cultures is believed to have been the reason behind Malabar biryani's birth. Malabar's culinary capital is Thalassery, and it is one among the four places (Kozhikode, Kannur, and Mahe) that are famous for biryanis. The biryani in each region tastes different and employs different methods of cooking.



Biryani and its cultural influence

Biryani is more than just a dish in India—it is a symbol of cultural heritage, social identity, and culinary diversity. The way biryani is prepared, served, and consumed reflects the history, religious practices, and traditions of different communities across the country. One of the key aspects of biryani's cultural significance is its role in festivals and celebrations. Be it Eid, Diwali, weddings, or any grand occasion, biryani is often the centerpiece of the feast. Among Muslim communities, biryani holds a sacred place during Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Adha, symbolizing generosity and abundance. It is often prepared in large quantities and shared among family, friends, and even strangers as an act of hospitality.

The biggest controversy surrounding vegetarian biryani is the name itself. Traditionalists argue that a dish without meat should not be called biryani but rather “pulao,” as pulao also involves spiced rice but without the signature slow-cooking dum process. However, many chefs and food historians counter this by emphasizing that biryani is not defined by its meat content but by its unique cooking technique—layering rice and protein (vegetarian or non-vegetarian) and slow-cooking it with aromatic spices.

Biryani in the contemporary age:-

Today, biryani is not just a dish but a booming industry, with numerous brands competing to serve the best version of this iconic meal. Several biryani chains have emerged across India, standardizing recipes while still preserving regional flavors. Some of the most popular brands include • Paradise Biryani (Hyderabad) • Biryani by Kilo (Pan-India) • Behrouz Biryani • Dindigul Thalappakatti (Tamil Nadu, South India Expansion) • Meghana Foods (Bangalore, Karnataka) • Arsalan, Amenia (Kolkata Biryani) These restaurant chains have made an immense contribution towards bringing about the evolution of an age-old dish.

The Vegetarian Biryani Debate:

The evolution of vegetarian biryani is closely linked to India's diverse dietary and religious customs. Many Hindu communities, particularly in regions where vegetarianism is dominant—such as Gujarat, Rajasthan, and parts of South India—needed an alternative to the traditionally meat-based dish. Over time, a variety of vegetarian biryanis emerged, using paneer, jackfruit (kathal), mushrooms, soya chunks, and mixed vegetables to replicate the texture and richness of meat. In North India, especially in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, Tahari biryani (or Tehri) became popular among vegetarian communities. Tahari biryani substitutes vegetables but retains the key spices like saffron, cardamom, and cloves, ensuring a rich and aromatic flavor. In South India, mushroom biryani and Chettinad-style vegetable biryani have gained popularity, infused with coconut milk and curry leaves to enhance the depth of taste.



Beyond Decorations: The Legacy of Naga Tattoos

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Lima Senla
(24HSPA15)



Ink, etched into the skin—a gentle reminder of who we were, who we are, and who we long to become. It is a common belief that tattoos are a modern form of art and are quite alien to the ancient cultural history of the human race. However, for millennia, peoples around the world have tattooed human skin to communicate various ontological, psychosocial, and sociocultural concepts encompassing beauty, cultural identity, status and position, medicine, and supernatural protection.

One such group, nestled away in the far northeastern folds of India, is the indigenous people of Nagaland. Long feared and respected as a warrior people, the Naga are comprised of more than 30 local tribes, each with its own language, tradition, and culture. In Naga culture, tattoos carry profound cultural and social meaning. They are not simply ornamental; they serve as symbols of identity, status, accomplishments, and spiritual values. Across the indigenous world, tattoos are rarely described as an artistic or aesthetic practice because there are no terms for 'art' or 'artists' in the majority of the indigenous languages.

Mostly inked in the chest, arms, torso, forehead, and chin and sometimes extended to the entire face, these tattoos are known for their intricate and diverse designs, varying from tribe to tribe. Each design carries deep cultural and spiritual meanings, often linked to the tribe's folklore and beliefs. These tattoos also serve as markers in rites of passage, signifying key life events like coming of age, marriage, and mourning. They act as a visual language, expressing the wearer's personal history and their standing within the community. The Ao tribe's tattoos, for instance, signify a warrior's valor and achievements in battle, whereas the tattoos of an individual belonging to the Konyak tribe are a mark of social standing and headhunting prowess. Other tribes that had tattoos as an integral part of their lives include the Chang, Phom, Khamniungan, Pochury, Sangtam, and Yimchunger tribes.

Naga tattoos were usually geometrical in shape. Traditional tattoo artists use handmade tattoo needles and natural pigments sourced from the environment. The process of getting tattooed was not merely a physical act but rather a spiritual journey, a sacred act.

For men, the most important tattoos had to be earned through warfare, and for the womenfolk, it was a puberty rite and a beauty standard.

However, with the arrival of missionaries in the late nineteenth century, the end of tribal warfare and headhunting in the mid-twentieth century, and the adoption of European dress and Western-style tattooing in recent decades, indigenous forms of Naga tattooing are becoming increasingly rare in the twenty-first century. Today, the sole vestiges of this once flourishing cultural ritual can be found on elderly people, many of whom are between the ages of eighty and one hundred. And in one more generation, the last traditional Naga tattoo holders would vanish forever.

Recognizing the importance of preserving their unique cultural heritage, community leaders, artists, and researchers have collaborated to document traditional tattoo designs, techniques, and meanings.

By engaging with younger generations and nurturing a sense of pride in their cultural identity, these efforts are essential in ensuring the survival and continued relevance of tattooing culture among these communities (N. Sangtam, 2020). In recent times, tattoo artists like MO Naga and various other artists that are coming up are playing an effective role in preserving the art of tattoo culture by incorporating modern designs with the traditional art and taking a modern approach to educate the youths about its intricate and beautiful patterns; while at the same time, by doing this, they are keeping the art alive. Tattooing has long held significant cultural and social importance among the Sangtam and the Tikhir Nagas and also among the communities living in the Phelunger and Samphur villages, serving as a means of personal and communal identity. Ultimately, taking the steps to preserve the rich culture of tattooing tradition can help maintain the rich tapestry of diversity that defines the cultural landscape of these communities.

Emida Dhar
(23HSPS10)



From the misty hills of Meghalaya, tucked amidst Sohra's breathtaking landscapes, lies Dainthlen Falls, where once existed a legendary mythological creature called 'U Thlen.' It is one of the most famous urban legends that existed in Khasi society now and then. This creature, 'U Thlen,' is a huge serpent-like being found in Khasi folklore, capturing both fear and interest. 'U Thlen' is believed to have resided in the secluded caves near the village then. Back in the old days, people travelled mainly by foot, and to reach the local market, they had to pass through the Thlen's cave. There, the Thlen would camp and ambush individuals who were travelling to and fro. It had an unusual, weird tendency of killing half of the people that were passing by and leaving half of them untouched. These occurrences instilled fear in the population, and they believed travelling alone would be the best choice. The people were terrified and were eager to put a stop to the problem they were facing, but they had no idea how to do so. Law Suidnoh, who was a saint, was ordered to kill this demonic creature. Suidnoh developed a close friendship with the Thlen by providing it with goat meat. With time, the Thlen have begun to develop trust with Suidnoh, and once Suidnoh calls upon him, he would willingly come out of his cave with his mouth wide open for the meat he was about to receive.

Once he was assured that the Thlen would pay heed to his calls, he prepared to ambush it. That day, he heated an iron lump till it became red hot like the meat he usually eats. Later in the day, Suidnoh approached the cave, calling out to the Thlen. The Thlen came out with its mouth wide open, and at that moment, Suidnoh threw the heated iron lump into its mouth. The Thlen could not bear the pain; it shook to its death so violently. The people living in the village nearby heard the news of its death and came to further dispose of the creature. They all cooperatively pulled out the Thlen from the cave to the riverbed right below Dainthlen Falls and chopped the serpent into many pieces. The place since then was called Dainthlen, meaning 'the place where Thlen was cut.'

The villagers were overjoyed that they were all finally free of Thlen's terror. They all participated in a huge feast, consuming the entire meat of the Thlen. It was believed that all of the Thlen's flesh had to be consumed, or else the Thlen would be able to reproduce itself back; they were all mistaken. An elderly woman saved up her portion of the Thlen meat for her son, who was out of station and could not participate in the feast, but she forgot. The meat she had forgotten about recreated itself back to life, and it demanded 'Khasi Blood.' Since the Thlen was killed with an iron lump, it demanded of the old woman that the person whose blood he was going to get should not be killed with an iron weapon. The Thlen then began to reside in the elderly woman's house and had to be satisfied only with Khasi's human blood. The Thlen is said to be a shapeshifter and could shift into a cat, fish, leech, or snake. Thus, the elderly woman inadvertently became the first of the 'Thlen keepers,' also known as 'Menshohnoh'; they are dreaded all over the region. The Menshohnohs are compelled by the Thlen to supply him with the blood (Khasi man or woman) he requires whenever he yearns for it. When the Menshohnohs supplied him with Khasi human blood and properly cared for him, he bestowed upon them immense riches and wealth.

The Menshohnoh does all this for the wealth he receives from the Thlen. The Menshohnoh, after performing rituals, goes in search of his target, who must be a pure Khasi. People then and now are afraid to walk in deserted areas alone because Menshohnohs prefer to track their prey in such deserted areas and ambush their victims. The Menshohnoh throws rice (that has been ritually prepared) on the victim's face, leaving them confused.

The victim is then bludgeoned to their death. The Menshohnoh removes their victim's nails, eyebrows, earlobes, and lips. The Menshohnoh uses a silver dagger to puncture the man's nostrils and collect the blood (khasi only) in a bamboo tube.

Meanwhile, at the residence of the Thlen Keepers (Menshohnoh), usually in the dead of night, arrangements are made to welcome the sacrificial offerings they murdered for the Thlen. During that period, all entrances of the house are kept open, long garments are spread across the floor panels of the house, and a brass plate is kept on the ground. On this plate, the Menshohnoh placed the bloody bag full of the victim's remains. The ritual is then followed by the beating of a drum to summon the Thlen from its hideout. The Thlen, after receiving the sacrifice, rewards the Thlen Keepers with immense wealth.

Thlen Keepers (Menshohnohs) who wish or desire to eliminate the influence of the Thlen are required to exit the house completely unclothed (naked) and must not accept any of the wealth or possessions from their own home. This act alone would liberate the individuals from the curse of the Thlen. Although Thlen keeping is regarded as a remnant of a dark past, one can occasionally hear of fatalities at the hands of the Thlen Keepers (Menshohnohs).



Beyond the Vault: Unravelling the Mysteries of Padmanabhaswamy Temple's Rich History

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Neha.S.Nair
(24HSPS53)

The Padmanabhaswamy Temple in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, is not just a major spiritual hub but also a vault of secrets that have fascinated the minds of many. It is situated in the heart of Thiruvananthapuram. The Padmanabhaswamy Temple is a symbol of faith, architectural excellence, and, interestingly, secrets yet to be completely unravelled. This temple is dedicated to Lord Vishnu. What is different about it, however, are the shrouds of mystery surrounding its history, architecture, and staggering wealth.

The Legendary Vaults Deep in the temple's mystery Vault B might unleash catastrophes. It is even thought to be guarded by gods' serpents, and it supposedly contains secrets that can change history.

Historical accounts and local legends are full of information about the temple's importance. From accounts of ancient visitors to royal proclamations, the temple has been a center of religion and culture for ages. Legends talk of secret passages linking the temple to other places of importance in Kerala, traversed by royal families and priests in centuries past.

The Padmanabhaswamy Temple, with the synergy of spirituality, history, and mystery, still manages to fascinate devotees, historians, and inquiring minds similarly. Although much still remains a mystery. As attempts at saving and discovering its past go on, one can only hope that some of these mysteries will ultimately be revealed, contributing to its rich heritage. Yet another layer is added to its legend: its subterranean vaults.

The Padmanabhaswamy Temple is a masterpiece of Dravidian architecture, with innumerable carvings, imposing gopurams, and large corridors. However, there are rumors of secret chambers and tunnels that are yet to be explored. Ancient scripts hint that these secret chambers could possess important historical documents or maybe even treasure. The architecture of the temple is believed to be on the lines of astrological and cosmic ideas, adding to its mystical mystery.

Another interesting aspect is the legend of the divine guardian. It is said that the god, Lord Padmanabhaswamy, himself guards the temple.



Henna Benny
(23HSPS13)

Kerala, a place known as “God's Own Country,” is well known for its rich culture and exquisite temples. The land is filled with temples, mosques, and churches that carry historical importance. Kerala is also well known for its cuisine and hospitality towards other people. Different temples that are spread throughout Kerala hold various religious beliefs and myths, like the famous Guruvayur Temple, which is believed to have been built by the lord of preceptors (guru) and lord of wind (Vayu Devan); hence, the name Guruvayur. And also the wealthiest temple in the world, Sree Padmanabha Swamy Temple, Trivandrum, which is known for its hideous treasures and hidden doors. These are just two examples of different temples. Even the first Muslim mosque to ever be built in India was the Chairman Jama Masjid at Kodungallur, Kerala.

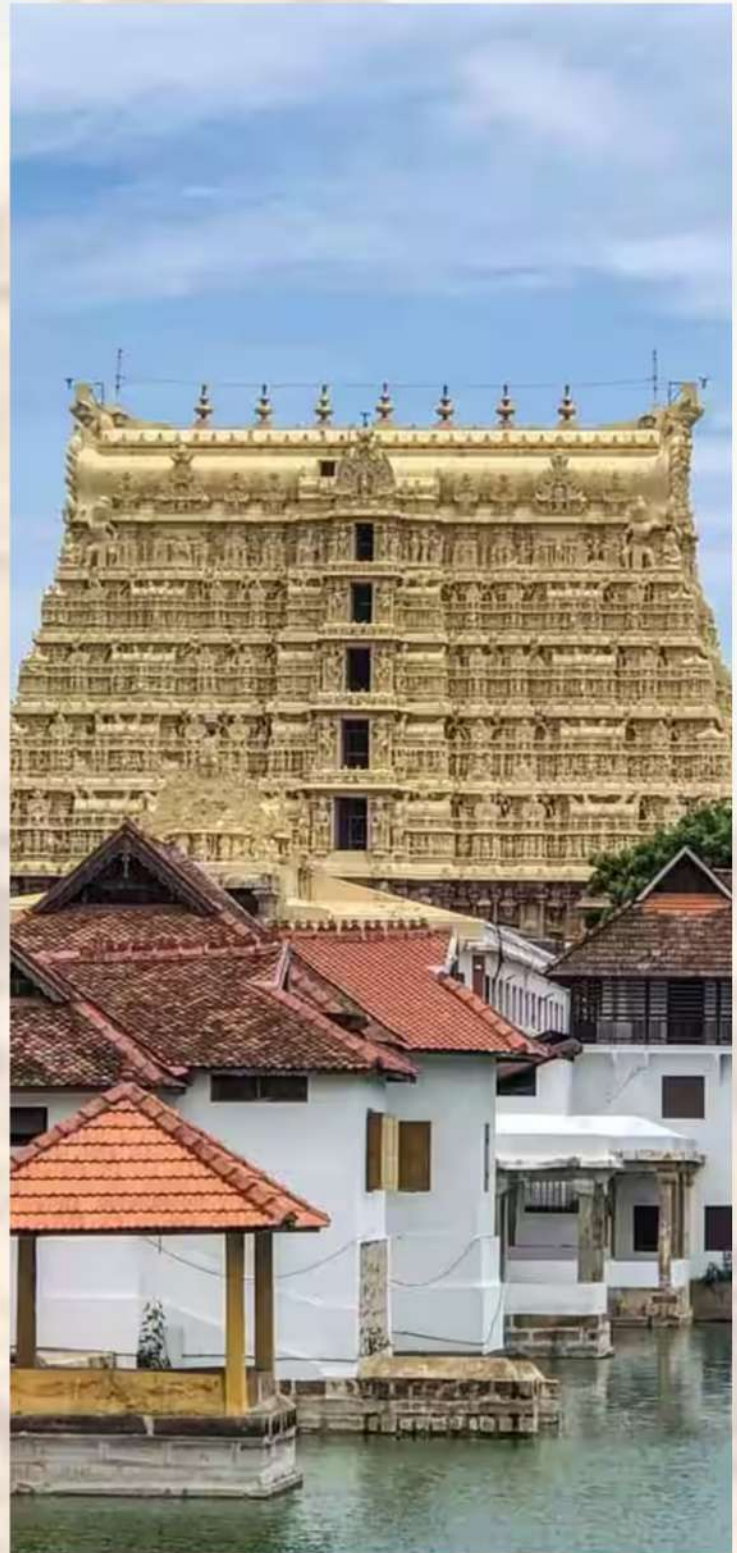


Kerala was one of the places where St. Thomas set foot; as a significant remembrance of St. Thomas, the Malayattoor church was made, where the believers climb the hill while carrying a wooden cross to signify their devotion. The famous St. Thomas Church in Malayattoor is significantly known among the Christian communities in Kerala. People belonging to different religious faiths visit this place, especially during the holy week; large groups of devotees climb around 3 kilometers, and the hill is 1269 feet high. ‘Pudunjayar,’ or the first Sunday after Easter, is celebrated as Malayattoor Perunnal (Malayattoor Feast). When it is celebrated, many pilgrims visit the church to fulfill their vows. The journey starts at the foot of the hill; people usually carry heavy wooden crosses, stones, and brooms to signify the burdens of their lives. On the journey up the hill, devotees chant “ponnum kurish muthapoo, ponmala kayattom,” meaning, O patriarch of the golden cross! Climb we shall, this golden hill!” They stop at 14 prayer spots called “14 stations of the cross,” which feature the journey of Jesus to crucifixion. The legend has it that St. Thomas, while traveling through Malayattoor, is said to have fled to the hilltop and drew a cross on a rock and prayed. It is said that at the locals' barani festival, the Devi is bathed with a special medicinal mix that is believed to heal the wounds of the Devi. There is also vellichapaad, where it is supposed that the Devi enters the body of the people. In some cases, people get stabbed or injured. It is said that the Devi will enter the body of nearly everyone who took the fasting and prepared themselves for this ritual. Another myth is that in the temple pond, there is a Yakshipana (house of a yakshi or ghost); it is believed that she feeds on people's blood. No one is allowed to enter the pond after a time in the evening, as it is not safe. Kshetra Palakan is a very small statue of Vishnu that is believed to be growing year by year. The prophecy has it that the statue is believed to protect the temple during times of natural calamities like floods; the statue is said to be the protector of Devi.

There is an old tale of thieves who tried to enter the vault and saw snakes appear out of thin air, which scared the thieves, and they ran away scared. This story adds to the stories of the priests of the disasters that can happen from the opening of the vaults. The police officer who filed the petition to open the vaults died of unusual reasons after a week of opening the vaults, and one of the other persons lost his mother after opening the vaults. Even though the temple is surrounded by unusual myths and beliefs, it is a must-visit place for anyone who loves exquisite temple structures.



Kerala is a land of myths and beliefs; there are numerous temples around the state, and each of the temples has its own beliefs and stories that are known mostly to the local people. There is a temple where women who have their menstruation are not allowed to enter until they reach menopause; the famous temple is Sabarimala Temple. People from various parts of north India and south India visit this temple; the devotees must live a Brahmacharikal life (life or a Brahmachari) for 40 days (for first-timers) and 21 days (for second-time visitors). Pampumekkattu mana is where the rituals are done by an elderly woman who is the wife of the first son of the Padipura Maalika (family name). There are many more such stories from different parts of Kerala.



MIZO : HISTORY AND CULTURE

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C.Vanlalvehima (23HSPS08)

Lalrinkima (23HSPS19)



Mizoram is a state in the northeastern part of India. Its capital is Aizawl city, also known as the silent city of India, famous for the people's obedience in following traffic rules. Mizoram is among the few Christian states in the country and has a rather rich and interesting culture and history, with its people indulging in writing plays, songs, and other forms of literary art.

Mizo people primarily lived in villages, each with their own chiefs who ruled over their respective villages. There was a group who would advise the king, and among them were a few whom the king would personally appoint called 'Upa Min,' whose roles are comparable to the roles of the cabinet ministers in today's government.

Mizo people primarily lived in villages, each with their own chiefs who ruled over their respective villages. There was a group who would advise the king, and among them were a few whom the king would personally appoint called 'Upa Min,' whose roles are comparable to the roles of the cabinet ministers in today's government.

The most recurring object when reading Mizo history and folklore is the 'Zawlbuk.' It was a traditional communal dwelling and a community center, typically built with wood, thatch, and bamboo and was generally located at the highest point of the village, opposite to the chief's house. The Zawlbuk served as a place of leisure as well as a place for young men to learn the tribe's customs and traditions while also maintaining defense against surprise attacks from neighboring villages. Young men would sleep at the Zawlbuk in order to be ready for an invasion at all times. No woman was allowed to enter the Zawlbuk.



The Mizo chiefs were ambitious in conquering neighboring villages through invasions to assert their dominance over their lands. However, invasions also often originated from a minor quarrel or comments made by a member of one village about a chief of another. These invasions would often result in entire villages getting burned down. The warriors would often get beheaded by the warriors of the invaders. The chief would not be killed; women and children were spared but taken as slaves. Later, the defeated chief can claim back his people by paying the enemy chief. These payments were in the form of animals, mainly buffaloes, which were highly valued for agricultural use and were also a symbol of wealth. Mizo warriors would take the heads of enemy tribes as it served as a token of pride, which would allow them to make a name for themselves and earn the chief's acknowledgement. The Mizo people indulged in literature; they wrote stories of warriors, folklores, and even love stories with a small

comedic touch given to them. These stories always contained moral lessons and would often be based on a brave warrior fighting for his loved ones or his principles, with bad endings or bittersweet feelings implemented in them. Such stories and folklores are the main elements that shaped the values and lifestyles of the Mizo people, teaching them to be hospitable and generous at all times. The Mizo people also loved to write songs, mainly about their loved ones, often times requiems or how they miss their villages. These songs are what truly exposed their proficiency in literature and are the subject of studies till today. However, most of these songs, stories, and folklores were lost with the passage of time, and all we have now are simply the remains of what Mizo literature used to be. The main reason for the loss of this precious literature is that our main sources for these were oral, which get heavily altered with passing generations.



The Mizo people continued to live this way until 1894, when Christianity was introduced. This led to a mass shift in lifestyle and culture, teaching the people about the value of life and the correct way to live. Since then, people stopped taking life unnecessarily and started making peace with other villages instead, working hand in hand to create a peaceful economy from their newfound education. Today, the state takes pride in calling itself a Christian state, abandoning the past and embracing a more peaceful and brighter future.

Priscilla Lal Rawngbawl (23HSPS24)

Lalhruaimawii (23HSPS18)

The Mizos are a group of tribal people living in the northeastern hills of India. Before the British missionaries brought the light of education to this tribe, the Mizos had a bachelor dormitory system where young boys were taught different moral values prevalent at the time. This can also be recognized as an unofficial learning institution for young boys. In the traditional Mizo society, every village or cluster of villages has a chief who is the political head as well as the secular head. The chief plays an important role in the administration of the village.

The chief's house was located at the heart of the village, and opposite to it was the bachelor's dormitory, also known as Zawlbuk. The presence of 'Zawlbuk' gave a sense of security to the people of the village; this is because the Mizo chieftains tended to conquer each other's villages and territories. They also protect the village from attacks by wild animals. At Zawlbuk, young boys were taught by the elders of the society different moral values like bravery, warfare, social duties, and respect for elders. The main moral imposed amongst the young boys was a term called Tlawmngaihna (this word implies a selfless service rendered to those in need).

To this day the Mizos are known to possess this beautiful moral, which has been passed on from generation to generation. Zawlbuk undoubtedly plays an important role in bringing about this value. Many of the Mizo folklore and stories still prevalent today are known to have been passed down by elders in Zawlbuk itself. This contributes to the rich heritage of the Mizo culture. This whole institution was supervised by an elder named 'Val Upa'; he was respected and admired by the young boys, and in times of emergency they would look towards him for guidance.

This type of discipline taught them self-governance as well as strong work ethics. Therefore, we can say that zawlbuk plays an important role in the administration and development of the whole village. When the British missionaries brought in the system of modern education, the traditional way of learning was slowly replaced, leading to the demolition of Zawlbuk. On 1st January 1938, the superintendent, AG McCall, called a conference at Aizawl, Thakthing, to discuss the future of Zawlbuk and to take the people's opinion.

The people spoke of how it was contrary to Christian belief and academic education; hence, the superintendent decided that the Zawlbuk had indeed officially come to an end. (B.Lalthangliana) Even though Zawlbuk has lost its purpose in the contemporary era, it still holds a special place in the hearts of the Mizo people. It is clear that in the olden days, Zawlbuk was one of the closest institutions to a proper educational system that we know of today. It signifies how the Mizos, even though not as advanced as their counterparts of those days, had a proper social structure that bound them together as a society. So, we can say that Zawlbuk was the backbone of the Mizo society.



The Attack on Mizoram By The Indian Air Force

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Maurice Malsawmsanga (23HSPS44)

V.L. Hmingmuanpuia Hnamte (23HSPS40)

On 5 March 1966, the IAF attacked Aizawl with heavy gunfire, and bombs were dropped the subsequent day as the government faced an uprising from insurgents, who had declared the independence of Mizoram from India.

The looming Mizo insurgency was rooted in grievances against the administration of Assam state and the demand for a separate state. At that time, Mizoram was a part of Assam and was known as Lushai Hills District.

The Assam government's decision to impose Assamese and poor management of a famine that had begun raging from 1959 further fueled public anger. Led by Pu Laldenga, who later became the Mizoram chief minister in 1986, a mass movement against the famine had acquired secessionist overtones.

The Mizo National Front (MNF) declared independence from India in the early hours of 1 March, 1966, attacking the treasury at Aizawl and overrunning security outposts in the towns of Lunglei and Champhai. The Assam Rifles came under attack in Aizawl, and five personnel were killed.

Fearing this new insurgency could further destabilize an already devastated northeast by the fighting in Nagaland, Union Home Minister Gulzarilal Nanda raised the alarm. Laldenga's success was derived from the safe havens the MNF had obtained in East Pakistan, with which the Lushai Hills shared a forest-covered border of 318 km. In the five years to 1966, the MNF's armed wing called MNA grew to at least eight battalions.

The MNF's military plan, code-named Operation Jericho, envisaged capturing army and paramilitary bases and holding Aizawl long enough to raise the flag of an independent Mizoram for at least 48 hours. At that time, Pakistan had promised that it would take the issue to the United Nations and grant diplomatic recognition to Mizoram. Faced with the possibility of the Assam Rifles outpost in Aizawl being overrun, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi ordered the use of air power inside the country for the first and only time. Four fighter jets—French-built Dassault Ouragan fighters and British Hunters—were deployed to target the insurgents in Aizawl. The plane used its cannon to fire at the town.

A strafing operation was also assigned to Caribou transport planes based in Silchar in the Cachar plains. The propeller plane had unguided bombs in the back and dropped them randomly over Aizawl.

As the strike continued over the next few days, the MNF was forced to retreat into the jungles of Myanmar and East Pakistan. The use of air power, however, also claimed civilian lives. While markets and public buildings were burnt down, at least 13 civilians were killed back then.

According to media reports, the government and the armed forces denied having used bombs in Mizoram for the longest time. Details, however, emerged only when some of the former insurgents recalled how people in Aizawl had seen planes shoot bullets and drop bombs.



A 9 March 1966 report by the now-defunct Kolkata daily, The Hindustan Standard, quoted Prime Minister Indira Gandhi as saying that the fighter jets had been sent in to airdrop men and supplies, not bombs.

“There were two types of planes that flew over Aizawl — good planes and angry planes. The good planes were those that flew comparatively slowly and did not spit out fire or smoke; the angry planes were those that escaped to a distance before the sound of their coming could be heard and spat out smoke and fire,” a human rights committee noted in its report attributing an eyewitness account.



Tezpur - A City Steeped in Bloodshed

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Trishna Limbu
(23HSPS35)

Have you ever heard the tale of a love transforming a peaceful land into one soaked in sorrow? It's a captivating narrative that explores the profound effects of passion and conflict, and it truly makes you think about the power of love and war.

I hail from Tezpur. It is renowned not only for its rich historical and cultural heritage but also for its striking natural beauty, situated amid the verdant hills of Arunachal Pradesh. Additionally, Tezpur is recognized as the "city of eternal love," a title stemming from a romantic saga that is said to have sparked one of the most renowned celestial conflicts in legend.

Bana, a powerful asura said to possess a thousand arms, once ruled over a vast kingdom. He was a devoted follower of Lord Shiva, who promised to safeguard his realm, granting Bana invincibility. This protection led to Bana's growing arrogance. He had a daughter named Usha. As news of her attractiveness spread, numerous suitors sought her hand in marriage, but Bana refused them all, confining Usha with a few friends in a fire-surrounded fort named Agnigarh.

Usha dreamed of a young man and fell in love, sharing her feelings with her close friend Chitralekha. Chitralekha, an artist with magical abilities, created portraits based on Usha's descriptions and recognized the young man as Aniruddha, the grandson of Lord Krishna. Utilizing her powers, Chitralekha brought Aniruddha to Usha, and they entered into a secret marriage.

As Krishna's forces approached victory, Shiva requested Lord Krishna to spare Banasura's life by a promise he had made to protect him. Krishna consented to this request but reduced Banasura's abilities by leaving him with only four arms. In gratitude, Banasura released Aniruddha and Usha, who then traveled to Lord Krishna's territory, Dwarka.

Tezpur has a lot of significant tourist spots, such as Mahabhairav Temple, Bhairavi Temple, Ouguri Hill, Cole Park or Chitralekha Udyan, Padum Lake, Poki, and the District Museum. Tezpur and its adjoining areas are in themselves a very prominent destination for pilgrimage. It has a host of revered pilgrimage places throughout the district, starting from Mahabhairav Temple to Gupteswar Temple from the medieval period and ancient ruins of Vishwakarma Temples at Singri along with the Naleswar Devalaya, Hinguleswar Devalaya, Ketekeswar Devalaya, Hudupora Than, Bhairabi Temple, Haleswar Than, and many other sacred places.



Verkha Thapa
(24HSPA64)

Darjeeling, often referred to as the "Land of Thunderbolts," boasts a rich tapestry of cultural and political significance. From its early days under the control of Sikkim to the modern-day political challenges, including the ongoing quest for a separate state of Gorkhaland, the history of Darjeeling is deeply intertwined with the diverse ethnic and cultural identities of its residents, especially the Nepali-speaking Gorkhas. The Gorkhaland movement and the persistent political struggle for autonomy and statehood have been a long struggle for the people of Darjeeling.

INTRODUCTION

Nestled in the northeastern part of India, Darjeeling is not just a picturesque hill station; it's a place steeped in historical significance, rich cultural heritage, and unique geopolitical importance. Its location at the crossroads of Nepal, Tibet, and India has made it a melting pot of various cultures. Over the years, Darjeeling has undergone numerous transformations in governance, economy, and society, shaped by both local indigenous communities and foreign influences, particularly the British. Here I trace the historical evolution of Darjeeling, its people, the effects of colonial rule, and the ongoing push for political autonomy and identity through the Gorkhaland movement.

GEOPOLITICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF DARJEELING

Historically, Darjeeling was part of the Kingdom of Sikkim but gained prominence under British colonial rule in the early 19th century. The British first took control of the area in 1835, drawn by its strategic location and pleasant climate, which made it a perfect summer getaway. The region quickly became a popular hill station, and during the British Raj, Darjeeling transformed into a vibrant town with a diverse mix of ethnicities, including Nepali-speaking Gorkhas, Lepchas, Bengalis, and Tibetans. The British influence left a lasting mark on the town's architecture, infrastructure, and social dynamics.

With Darjeeling becoming a hub for British administrative and military power, the local Gorkhas found themselves interacting more closely with British forces, which eventually led to their enlistment in the British Army.



However, the relationship between the British and the Gorkhas wasn't always smooth sailing. Despite their significant contributions, the Gorkhas faced ongoing challenges tied to their ethnic identity and the larger socio-political landscape.

THE GORKHAS AND THEIR CULTURAL IDENTITY

The Gorkhas are an ethnic group primarily from Nepal, but many have also made their home in the nearby Indian regions of Darjeeling, Sikkim, and other parts of the Himalayas. They are celebrated for their unique culture, language, and military skills. Most Gorkhas speak Nepali and have a rich heritage steeped in Hindu and Buddhist traditions, heavily influenced by the cultural practices of Nepal and its neighboring areas. With a long-standing history of military service, Gorkhas are recognized around the globe for their bravery, loyalty, and discipline.

Their military tradition began in the early 19th century when the British first recruited them during the Anglo-Nepalese War (1814–1816). The British were so taken with their combat abilities that they continued to enlist Gorkhas even after India gained independence. The Gorkha regiments in the British Army became some of the most esteemed, with Gorkhas serving in various critical roles. Post-independence, the Gorkhas continued to serve in the Indian Army and the Nepalese Army, becoming an integral part of their respective military forces. Their contributions to defense, arts, literature, and local economies have been substantial, with Gorkhas serving in various fields including education, music, and commerce.

THE GORKHALAND MOVEMENT AND THE STRUGGLE FOR IDENTITY

The push for a separate state of Gorkhaland in India stands out as one of the most important political movements in the region's history. It all started in the early 20th century when Gorkhas in Darjeeling and nearby areas began to seek more autonomy and recognition of their unique cultural identity. Even though the Gorkhas were officially included in West Bengal after India gained independence in 1947, the call for a separate administrative unit never faded. This was driven by the strong belief that their ethnic, cultural, and linguistic identity was different from that of the Bengali-majority population. The push for a separate state of Gorkhaland in India stands out as one of the most important political movements in the region's history. It all started in the early 20th century when Gorkhas in Darjeeling and nearby areas began to seek more autonomy and recognition of their unique cultural identity. Even though the Gorkhas were officially included in West Bengal after India gained independence in 1947, the call for a separate administrative unit for the Gorkha people. Over the years, the movement picked up steam, with various uprisings and political demands being voiced by Gorkha leaders. In the 1980s, the demand for

Gorkhaland took a more aggressive turn under the leadership of Subhash Ghisingh and the Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF). This period of agitation led to significant loss of life and created a tense atmosphere in the Darjeeling region, ultimately resulting in the formation of the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC) in 1988, which granted some level of autonomy to the Darjeeling hills. However, the quest for a separate state remained unresolved.

The movement saw a resurgence in 2007 with the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM), a political party led by Bimal Gurung. The GJM reignited the demand for Gorkhaland, expressing dissatisfaction with the current governance and the ongoing marginalization of Gorkhas in West Bengal. The movement gained even more traction in 2017 when the West Bengal government's decision to make Bengali a mandatory subject in schools sparked widespread protests. Supporters of Gorkhaland see the push for Bengali culture as a threat to their unique Nepali heritage, leading to protests that have turned violent, with strikes and numerous casualties. Even with these ongoing tensions, the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) was set up in 2011 to serve as a semi-autonomous governing body for the Darjeeling hills.

CONCLUSION

Darjeeling's history is a rich and intricate story that mirrors the wider political, social, and cultural changes across the Indian subcontinent. From its colonial days under British rule to its present-day quest for political autonomy, the narrative of Darjeeling is deeply intertwined with the Gorkha community, whose impact on the region's cultural and military heritage is significant. The Gorkhaland movement, which aims to safeguard the Gorkhas' distinct identity, continues to influence the region's future and underscores the ongoing struggle between local self-governance and the broader state of West Bengal. Finding a resolution to the Gorkhaland issue is crucial for Darjeeling's political future, as the Gorkha people persist in their fight for recognition and self-rule.



The Soul of Nation, Etched in Stone and Code

**From timeless streams of sands, India so intricately erects her dreams.
A land of wisdom filled with treasure that's rich in store.
From stones unsurfaced in Harappa to Vedic lore.
Through the domain of time, whispers of peace sing.**

**Mughals infused colors during their reign; temples slowly emerged to
life while tracing contours of sacred light.
In the ancient Ganges, a blend of fierce warriors and mythical saints
tell untold stories.
And in Andama, cultures across the globe shine bright, all stitched
together by trade winds, silk, and spice.**

**Glistening with memories of the past, cities are now a blend of the
future where dreams turn into reality.
In tech hubs, chants of the ancients blend while roots reach extreme
new heights.
India's soul meets time in each street and fort, walking hand in hand
with the past.
Slowly unveiling the beauty where every tale is as vast as it is rich.**

**Jenix Christie Barwa
(24HSPS13)**

Javeriya Khan
(22HSPS10)

It's 12 am in the morning, and I am in Bangalore, the bustling city where I write this article, in the reminiscence of my homeland, Ladakh. Ladakh is not just a cold, beautiful desert for me; it is also one of the most magnificent parts of the Indian territory, and the breathtaking road thrill throbs the heart of almost every travel fanatic. For me, Ladakh is just home.

With its grounded roots and the Tarchoks "prayer flags" billowing, carrying peace and protection throughout the gorgeous landscape, also known to many as the "Little Tibet" or one of my favorites, "the moon land."

Growing up in Ladakh, I never realized what a special place it holds in terms of its magnificent terrain. I grew up eating the local delicacies, which might be very strange to others, like momo, thukpa (various kinds), Paba, Skyu, Chhutagi, Khambir, Kholak, Cha namkeen (butter tea), but at one point, I thought I could not live without them



And after so many years of staying in the cities, I realize how much I miss them.

**"The dry mountains, that blooms my heart,
The land of moon, where the Indus starts
The gompas that lead to home, azure
the land of singhe, the dragon, the pure
My home is now a thousand miles from me.
the breathtaking sunset setting on the mountains, bleak
I sewed this picture of my home tonight
Just hoping I see them all in my sleep."**

As a child, I remember getting ready after school for the evening market cultural shows, where men and women would wear the traditional dresses, kos and sulma, and dance all night to the tunes of the daman (local tabla-like instrument) and khakong (local flute), I myself not being able to stop my feet from tapping at the beat from time to time. On my way back, I would see old aunties with their long grey hair braided beautifully and neatly. You could see the partition from years of making their hair so, selling all the local products like dried apricots, its kernel's oils, dried turnips, and warm socks and caps, which were both hand-made with intricate designs, illuminating even more under the orange street lights.

The Ladakh market is like no other, and walking from one end to the other would make me feel like I would have gone round the world. I remember the scratches I would get from ice-skating in the harsh winters, unaffected by the cold wind brushing against my bruised cheeks, attempting a few more leaps to get that perfect run, or making snowballs and eating them, hiding from the elders at the back of my house with my siblings with some dry milk or some honey over it. My mind is recreating the sweet and slightly cold taste of it on my tongue. I just realized, as I grew up and got far and far away from home, that although it is only a few hours away by flight, I have somewhere left my home, where I left my childhood, my playgrounds, my markets, my streets, and my heart very far away.



CHOLAS: THE FEARLESS WARRIORS

**Where the salty winds of the
The Indian Ocean is blown.
Explores the remarkable history
of Rajendra Chola's throne**

**Where the timeless legacy of
Tanjore periya koyil unfolds,
There, the conquest of the
Malay peninsula concludes**

**Where the blood shed of every
Senapati holds a history,
There, the conquest of new
territory ends as a victory.**

**S Shiva Kumar
(24HSPA31)**

FOLKTALES OF ASSAM : RED RIVER AND THE BLUE HILLS

26

Parishmita Kyashyap
(23HSPS23)

Assam, a land rich in cultural diversity and natural beauty, is also home to a vibrant tapestry of folklore and myths that have evolved over centuries. The mythology and tales of Assam provide a window into the region's cultural psyche, reflecting its historical experiences, social values, and religious beliefs. The folklore and myths from Assam have deep indigenous roots, reflecting the beliefs and practices of the region's early inhabitants. The earliest folklore was shaped by the tribal communities of the land, whose oral traditions and rituals laid the foundation for the rich narrative tradition. From the tribal lands of Assam, the oldest tribal inhabitants, like the Bodos, Karbis, and Mishings, have their unique legends and stories to tell, which have been passed on from one generation to another in the form of oral stories or rituals. These stories are usually about their deities, ancestral heroes, natural phenomena, and spirits. One of the known stories is from the Karbi community, who worships a forest deity called "Jabbar Deuta," and according to the legends, it is a deity that guards the forest. A similar one related to nature is one of the oldest and most famous myths of Assam, about "Umananda," the deity of the infamous river Brahmaputra; it is also believed that he resides on an island in the river and the river's changing moods are told to be a reflection of the deity's emotions.

If we peek into the history of Assam's great warriors, we find tales of Lachit Borphukan, the famous folk hero of Assam. He was the commander in chief under the Ahom kingdom and fought the famous Battle of Saraighat in 1671 against the Mughal forces. He is known for his bravery and great leadership.

According to the legends, it is said that he beheaded his uncle during preparations for the battle as he failed to complete a crucial task on time. There is a famous phrase associated with this story where Lachit Borphukan, after beheading his uncle, said, "Dexot koi mumai dangor nohoi," meaning "My uncle is not greater than my country."

A significant part of Assamese culture is folklore, which is usually told to the children by their grandmother as an evening storytelling or even bedtime stories. Few of these folklore are performed in the local theaters or "Natok" in the local language. Some of these famous stories or folklore are compiled in a famous book by Lakhminath Bezbarua called "Burhi Aair Xudhu," literally meaning "Grandma's tales." There are no written records about the origins of these stories; they are passed on in oral form. Some of them are like the Assamese version of Panchatantra with speaking animals and birds as main characters, and these are mostly based on simple lifestyles.



One of the famous stories is of “Tejimola,” which is found in the book and told by grandparents to their grandchild and is most played in the local theaters also; it is a heartbreaking narrative of a girl named Tejimola, who was killed by her stepmother in a rage, and her father, who was out at work as a traveling trader, had no idea about his daughter’s condition, but the story does have a happy ending. Another well-known story, which is also very similar to the stories found in other parts of north India, is about a monkey and a fox, also known as “bandor aru xiyal” in the local language, about two of them claiming to be friends but constantly fooling each other. At the end of the story, it delivers a strong moral lesson. There are various stories with moral lessons or a strong message to deliver; one of them is related to people suffering from night blindness, also called “Kukurikona” in Assamese, which is also the name of the story.

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When we talk about Assamese myths and legends about spirits and mysteries, we always find our way to the village of magic and witchcraft, Mayong, a small village in Assam. We can find mentions of this place in the Mahabharata; it is believed that Bheema’s son Ghatotkacha took part in the battle of Mahabharata after attaining magical powers from Mayong. One of the most interesting legends still remembered relates to the 13th century, when the Mughal emperor sent an army to invade the Ahom kingdom. It is said that the entire army perished in the forests of Mayong. It is believed and said in the tales from the lands that the Mughals feared the land of Mayong. There are written records of the tales and mantras (manuscripts), which are still found there.



One of the famous stories is of “Tejimola,” which is found in the book and told by grandparents to their grandchild and is most played in the local theaters also; it is a heartbreaking narrative of a girl named Tejimola, who was killed by her stepmother in a rage, and her father, who was out at work as a traveling trader, had no idea about his daughter’s condition, but the story does have a happy ending. Another well-known story, which is also very similar to the stories found in other parts of north India, is about a monkey and a fox, also known as “bandor aru xiyal” in the local language, about two of them claiming to be friends but constantly fooling each other. At the end of the story, it delivers a strong moral lesson. There are various stories with moral lessons or a strong message to deliver; one of them is related to people suffering from night blindness, also called “Kukurikona” in Assamese, which is also the name of the story.



If we talk about mythological folklore, then we have to mention the famous “Bhaona,” or play; it is a traditional form of entertainment created by Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankardev in the 16th century to convey religious messages to the people, and he himself wrote seven dramas called Ankia Naat to perform it; it depicts the life stories of Lord Krishna. It is still performed in parts of upper Assam. The entire drama is performed in the middle open space of a Namghar (prayer house) within a Satra (religious center).



As I was one of the fortunate ones to hear these tales from my grandparents, I have realized how these stories are fading away over time and how precious these are to remind us where we are from. In this cutthroat generation of competition, people have forgotten where their roots belong. People have stopped cherishing the value of these stories of our motherland and our ancestors. These stories have a deep connection with the beliefs of the people and their ritualistic practices.

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The Artistic Haven



India"s cultural heritage



Credits: Gopi N (22HSPS09)
Khusi Singh (22HSPS17)



RANI LAKSHMI BAI

**"I shall not surrender my Jhansi. If
defeated, I will fight on horseback. If
unhorsed, I shall fight on foot. And if I
must, I will fight with my last breath."**



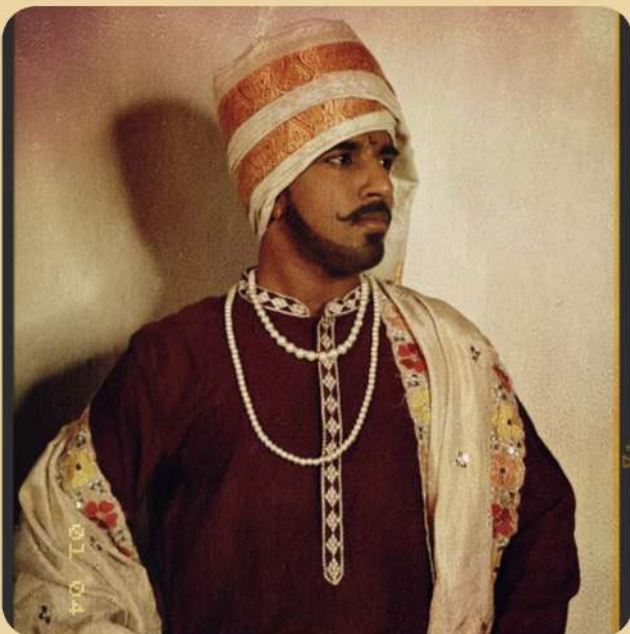
**Credit: Nainika S
24HSPA18**





CHHATRAPATI SHIVAJI

**"Freedom is my birthright,
and I shall carve it out from
the jaws of tyranny with
courage, strategy, and a
sword in hand."**



**Credit: Ganesh R
24HSPA10**





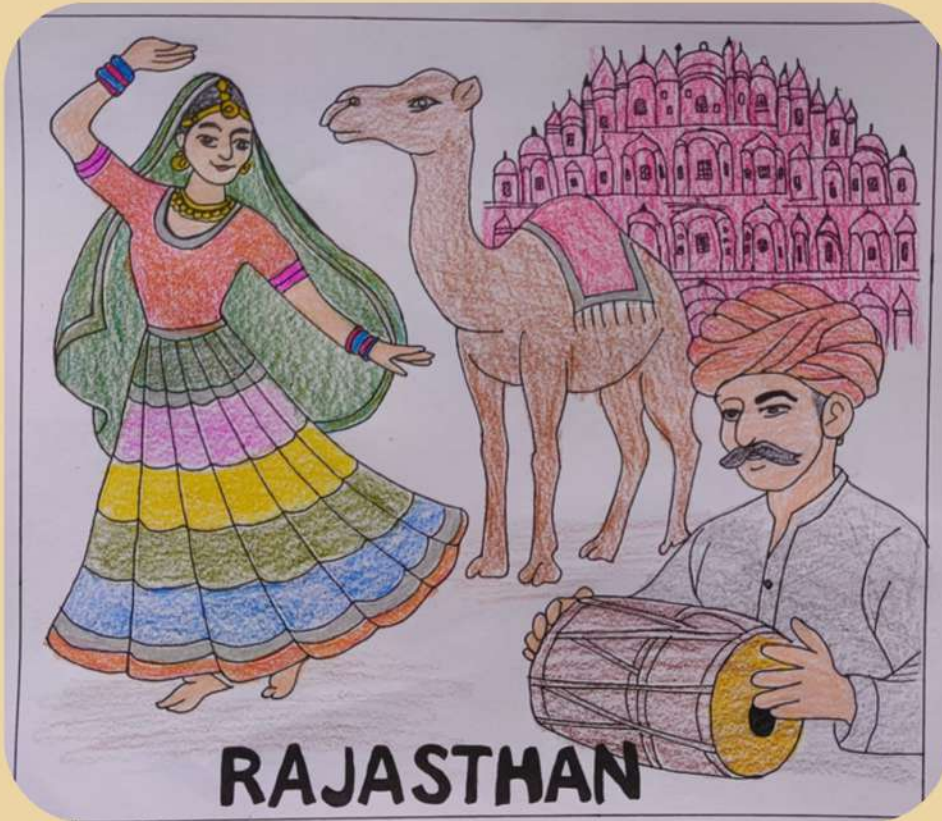
MAHARAJA KRISHNARAJA WOODEYAR

**"Let science and art
walk hand in hand; let
the state serve as the
trustee of people's
welfare, for a ruler's
strength lies not in
power but in the
upliftment of the
poor."**



**Credit: Ravi Thejas G
24HSPA26**



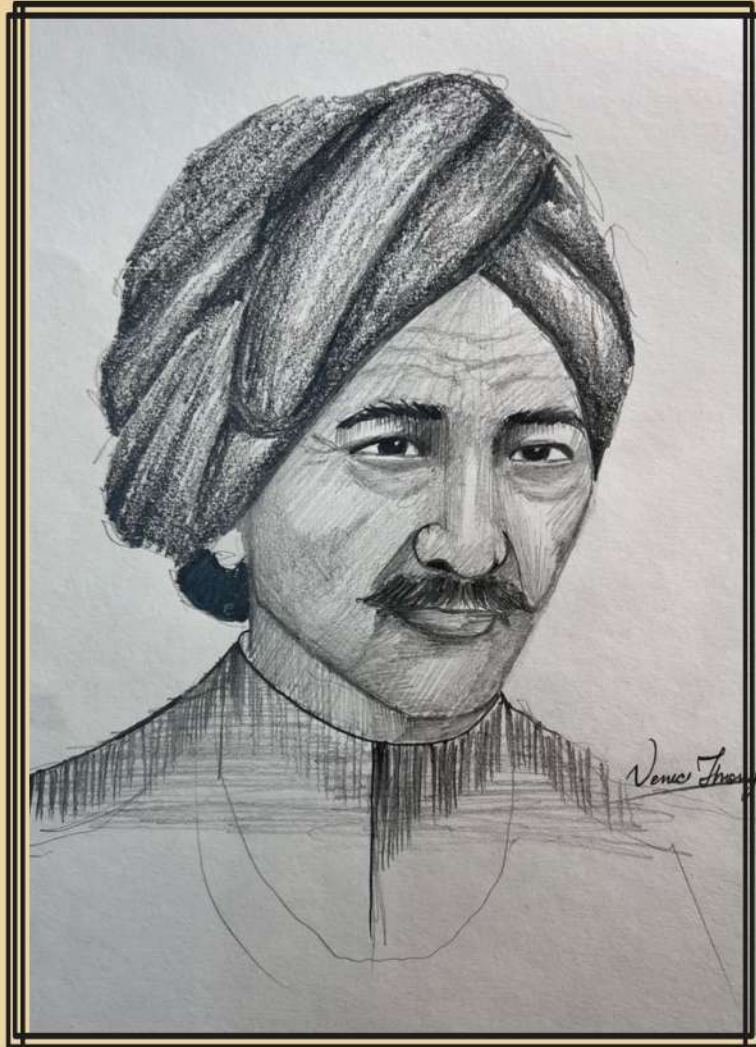


Babitha Barfa
22HSPS43



Vivek Raj
22HSPS35





Venice Thongbam
23HSPS38

Gopi N
22HSPS09





ANNUAL REPORTS

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
& HISTORY CLUB

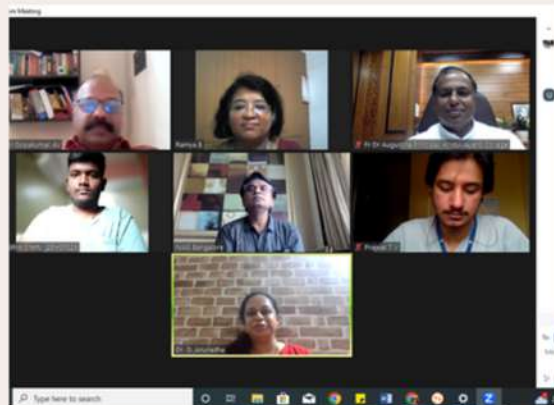
Department & Club Reports

LAUNCH AND RELEASE OF NIAS-KJC MAGAZINE

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

History is not just about the past—it's about the present moment and the future it shapes. On July 5, 2024, the Department of History at Kristu Jayanti College, in proud association with the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), Bengaluru, celebrated the launch of a unique and intellectually charged initiative: the first edition of *This Week in History*, a weekly magazine aimed at unpacking history with critical insights, contemporary relevance, and scholarly depth.

This much-anticipated launch event was more than just the unveiling of a publication—it was a celebration of ideas, collaboration, and the enduring relevance of history in the 21st century.



The event welcomed 56 participants, a mix of undergraduate and postgraduate students, young researchers, and renowned academics from institutions such as St. Joseph's University, Loyola College, Pondicherry University, Nirmala College, Jyoti Nivas College, Bangalore University, and the Indian Maritime University. What united this diverse group was a shared passion for history—not as a static record of the past, but as a dynamic and evolving lens for understanding the world today.

The panel discussion that followed was nothing short of invigorating. Dr. Gopakumar A.V., Dean of Humanities at KJC, spoke passionately about the pedagogical role of the magazine in classroom discussions and curriculum design. Dr. Nanda Kishor from Pondicherry University provided political and global context to the articles featured in the magazine's debut edition. Dr. D. Anuradha, from Loyola College, Chennai, emphasized the importance of including voices from the margins—regional histories, subaltern narratives, and lesser-known global events. Adding even more richness to the conversation were senior academics including Dr. Ushadevi and Dr. Narasingarajan Naidu from Bangalore University, Dr. Nalini Sekaran from Jyoti Nivas College, and Dr. Priya Premalatha from Nirmala College.

Their insights drew attention to the importance of methodology in historical research, the politics of memory, and the intersection of gender, caste, and class in historical writing.

The launch of *This Week in History* was more than a formal event—it was a call to action. It invited students and scholars alike to reclaim history from dusty textbooks and bring it into the realm of lived experience. As one attendee put it, "This magazine doesn't just report on history. It reimagines it."

VALUE ADDED COURSE: THE HISTORIAN TOOLBOX: "ESSENTIAL SKILLS FOR EXPLORING HISTORY"

The Department of History, under the aegis of the Department of Social Science and Languages, successfully conducted a Value Added Course (VAC) titled "The Historian's Toolbox: Essential Skills for Exploring History" from 22nd July to 29th July 2024. Designed specifically for III Semester BA HSPS students, the course was a compelling introduction to the foundational skills and tools needed to engage in historical inquiry.

With a total duration of 30 hours, the course attracted 44 enthusiastic students, of whom 38 completed the program. It was jointly facilitated by Dr. Ashwini Barla and Mr. Karthik Manoharan, both of whom brought their academic expertise and passion for history into the classroom.



The 30-hour course was structured to build a strong foundation in historical thinking and research. It introduced students to the significance of studying history, different types of sources (primary and secondary), and the use of chronology and timelines. From there, it moved into practical skills such as how to find and evaluate sources, navigate libraries and archives, and conduct digital research using online databases. Students also explored the concepts of historical bias, interpretation, and historiography, developing a deeper understanding of how history is written and perceived from different perspectives.



A significant portion of the course was dedicated to the craft of writing history—guiding students on how to construct a thesis statement, structure a historical essay, cite sources correctly, and avoid plagiarism.

To ensure a hands-on, engaging experience, the course incorporated various skill development activities. These included formulating research questions, conducting short historical studies, creating presentations, and showcasing group projects. These exercises allowed students to apply their theoretical learning in a collaborative and creative environment, helping them develop both analytical and communication skills. Feedback from students was overwhelmingly positive.

Many expressed that the course gave them a much-needed orientation into the study of history and helped them develop confidence in using historical tools and methods. They particularly appreciated the opportunity to explore history beyond textbooks and to engage in active learning. Several students also shared that they are looking forward to more such courses that blend academic rigor with practical learning.

Overall, The Historian's Toolbox proved to be a transformative experience for students, offering them a structured yet exploratory introduction into the world of historical research. The Department of History is proud to have successfully launched this initiative and looks forward to offering more such enriching courses in the future.

VALUE ADDED COURSE : ESSENTIALS OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

The Department of Social Science and Languages recently offered a dynamic Value Added Course (VAC) tailored for first-semester BA HPS students. Titled Essentials of Humanities and Social Sciences, the course ran from August 2 to August 8, 2024, drawing an enthusiastic group of 65 registrants, with 59 successfully completing the program. The aim was ambitious yet vital: to introduce students to the foundational principles of the social sciences while fostering an interdisciplinary appreciation for both humanities and global perspectives. Core themes included ethical awareness, global citizenship, and the interconnectedness of human experiences across time and culture.



Guided by a passionate faculty team—Dr. Ashwini Barla, Mr. Karthik Manoharan, Dr. Sameena, Dr. Shikha, Ms. Riddhi, and Dr. Deekshith—students were exposed to diverse academic voices and teaching styles. Each instructor brought unique insights, making the learning experience rich, relatable, and intellectually stimulating.

The feedback spoke volumes. Students expressed genuine enthusiasm for the course, noting how it helped them build a strong academic foundation. Many shared their eagerness for more such engaging, cross-disciplinary offerings in the future.

The course aimed to do more than just inform. It was designed to inspire. Through thought-provoking sessions, students explored the fundamental concepts and methodologies of the social sciences while developing an appreciation for the interconnectedness of humanities disciplines. Ethical awareness, interdisciplinary thinking, and global citizenship were woven into each module, urging students to think beyond the classroom.



PANEL DISCUSSION ON POLAR DIALOGUE & RELEASE OF INDO-ARCTIC

In an era of accelerating climate change and shifting global power dynamics, the Polar Regions have emerged as pivotal frontiers for scientific research, diplomacy, and environmental stewardship. Against this timely backdrop, the Department of History hosted a two-day panel discussion on “Polar Dialogue”, coupled with the release of the publication Indo-Arctic, from August 30 to 31, 2024.

The event, held in collaboration with the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS) and the Ministry of External Affairs, brought together 107 participants, including scholars from NIAS, students from St. Joseph's University, Pondicherry University, Indian Maritime University, and a strong contingent from Kristu Jayanti College's own BA HPS and HSEC programs, along with students from the Life Sciences Department.



The objective was to explore the strategic and environmental importance of the Polar Regions in the context of climate change, geopolitics, and India's growing interests. The inaugural session featured keynotes from officials of the Ministry of External Affairs and Ministry of Earth Sciences, setting the stage for rich discussions. Day two comprised four sessions covering climate science, international frameworks, and India's polar strategy.



The conference was inaugurated at the NIAS Auditorium with an address by Prof. Shailesh Nayak, Director of NIAS, followed by opening remarks from Mr. S. Raghuram, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of External Affairs. Distinguished keynote speakers, including Mr. Tanmaya Lal, Secretary (West), and Dr. M. Ravichandran, Secretary of the Ministry of Earth Sciences, highlighted India's growing interest in polar affairs. They underscored the urgent need for global cooperation in understanding the fragile ecosystems of the Arctic and Antarctic and the geopolitical implications of a changing climate.

The second day deepened the discourse through four focused sessions that explored climate change, science and technology, governance, and India's role in the Polar Regions. Experts such as Rear Admiral (Retd) Monty Khanna, Prof. D. Suba Chandran, and Ambassador Venkatesh Varma led insightful discussions on science diplomacy, international frameworks, and the strategic roadmap ahead for India. The conference culminated in a keynote by Dr. Thamban Meloth, emphasizing the urgent need for sustainable policies, international collaboration, and long-term commitment to polar research.

EXPERT TALK: 50 YEARS OF POKHRAN: HOW INDIA FOUGHT THE TECHNOLOGY SANCTIONS

To commemorate five decades since India's first nuclear test, the Department of History at Kristu Jayanti College (Autonomous), in collaboration with the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), Bengaluru, organized an insightful academic session titled "50 Years of Pokhran" on September 3, 2024. The event aimed to reflect on India's nuclear journey—its scientific evolution, political stance, and global repercussions—while instilling in students a deeper understanding of the significance of self-reliance and innovation in the face of international challenges.



The session began with a warm welcome address by Ms. Ramya, setting the stage for an enlightening series of talks. Professor V.S. Ramamurthy, in his keynote lecture, elaborated on India's nuclear ambitions and the milestones leading up to the first Pokhran test in 1974. He provided historical context by discussing the political and diplomatic deliberations that preceded the nuclear test and emphasized how the imposition of global sanctions in the aftermath, rather than weakening India, served as a catalyst for indigenous scientific growth. His lecture highlighted the spirit of innovation and resilience that defined India's nuclear progress.

To further enrich the experience, a documentary video was screened that featured significant archival footage, expert interviews, and historical insights into the Pokhran explosion. It served as a powerful visual narrative of India's nuclear development and its strategic importance. The lecture and documentary were followed by an engaging question-and-answer session, where students interacted directly with the speakers, exploring themes such as nuclear ethics, global security policies, and technological advancements in defense. The event concluded with a vote of thanks, acknowledging the speakers for their thought-provoking contributions. Overall, the session was a compelling reminder of the strength of vision and commitment that underpinned India's journey to becoming a nuclear power.

The "50 Years of Pokhran" event offered students a profound understanding of India's nuclear journey, not just as a historical milestone, but as a testament to resilience, innovation, and strategic foresight. It emphasized how adversity—such as global sanctions and technological isolation—can fuel self-reliance and scientific advancement. The lectures and discussions allowed students to critically reflect on the ethical, political, and technological dimensions of nuclear development. By revisiting the Pokhran tests through expert insights and real-life challenges faced by pioneering scientists, students were encouraged to appreciate the value of perseverance and national vision. The session instilled a deeper awareness of India's place in global geopolitics.

COLLAGE MAKING COMPETITION

THEME: EVENTS SHAPING THE WORLD

The Department of History organized a thought-provoking Collage Making Competition on 9th September 2024, engaging first-semester students of BA HPSA in a creative exploration of world-shaping events. Each group was assigned a major historical theme, encouraging them to visually represent and explain its significance.



Each group showcased detailed and imaginative collages, using color, symbolism, and layout to narrate key moments in world history. Highlights included visual timelines, layered designs, and insightful explanations tying together the past and its global impact.

Themes included the Partition of India, Mahabharata, Renaissance, Cold War, Berlin Wall, World War II, American Civil Rights Movement, Evolution of Earth, Battle of Talikota, and Hitler's life.

The competition brought history to life, transforming textbooks into vibrant visual stories. Students gained a deeper appreciation of historical events while developing presentation and teamwork skills. Their enthusiasm and originality made the event a memorable success.



COLONIAL IMPRINTS: BENGALURU'S PAST THROUGH HISTORICAL PHOTOGRAPHS

On September 13, 2024, the Department of History at Kristu Jayanti College (Autonomous) organized a captivating photo exhibition titled "Colonial Imprints: Bengaluru's Past through Historical Photographs." The exhibition was open to students across all three years—first, second, and third years of BA HPS and HSPS—and aimed to offer a visual narrative of the city's transformation during the colonial era. The event commenced with a formal session at 9:30 a.m., inaugurated by Reverend Father Dr. Augustine George, Principal of Kristu Jayanti College. The exhibition featured Dr. S. K. Aruni, Regional Director of the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR), South Regional Centre (SRC), Bengaluru, as the guest speaker.



The exhibition showcased rare and striking photographs, along with historical maps from the colonial period, which helped students understand how colonialism has left an imprint on the urban landscape and cultural fabric of present-day Bengaluru. After the inauguration, Dr. Aruni guided Rev. Fr. Augustine George and Mr. Gopa Kumar A V, Dean, Faculty of Humanities, through the curated photo displays, elaborating on the relevance and stories behind each image. Both Dr. Aruni and Fr. Augustine shared insightful reflections on the importance of such historical documentation in connecting the past to the present.



The exhibition remained open until 4:00 p.m. and was attended by faculty and students from multiple departments. Third-year HSPS students played an active role in guiding visitors through the display, offering engaging commentary and answering questions, which added an interactive and educational dimension to the event. Their participation made the exhibition more dynamic, creating an informal learning atmosphere. The photo exhibition was an enlightening and enriching experience that successfully brought history to life for the students. It offered a unique opportunity to explore Bengaluru's colonial past through a creative and engaging lens. By interacting directly with visual historical sources and participating in the dissemination of knowledge, students were able to deepen their understanding of urban history, heritage,

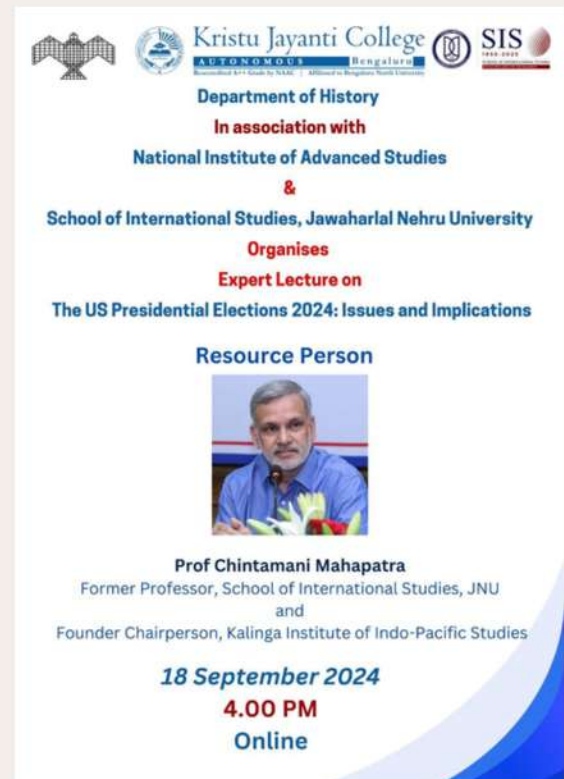
and the long-lasting effects of colonialism. The event not only enhanced historical awareness but also encouraged students to take pride in their local heritage and critically reflect on the evolution of their city. Ultimately, the exhibition bridged the gap between academic learning and historical experience, leaving a lasting impact on both participants and visitors.



GUEST LECTURE: "THE US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS 2024: ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS"

On September 18, 2024, the Department of History at Kristu Jayanti College (Autonomous), in collaboration with the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS) and the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), hosted an insightful online guest lecture titled "The US Presidential Elections 2024: Issues and Implications." The session opened with a welcome address and introduction by Dr. Suba Chandran, Professor and Dean of the School of Conflict and Security Studies at NIAS. This was followed by inaugural remarks from Prof. Shailesh Nayak, Director of NIAS, and Prof. Amitabh Mattoo, Professor and Dean of the School of International Studies, JNU, who both set the tone for the session by underscoring the global significance of the U.S. election.

The guest lecture offered students a comprehensive and intellectually stimulating perspective on the U.S. Presidential Elections of 2024, effectively highlighting the intersection of domestic politics and international relations. By comparing the divergent leadership approaches of Kamala Harris and Donald Trump, the session deepened students' understanding of how U.S. political dynamics could shape the future of global diplomacy, security, and economic cooperation. It also demystified the U.S. electoral process, making it more accessible and relevant to undergraduate students. Overall, the lecture not only enriched academic discourse but also inspired critical thinking and global awareness among the participants.



The poster features logos for Kristu Jayanti College (Autonomous), NIAS, and JNU at the top. The text reads: "Department of History In association with National Institute of Advanced Studies & School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University Organises Expert Lecture on The US Presidential Elections 2024: Issues and Implications Resource Person". Below this is a portrait of Prof. Chintamani Mahapatra. His credentials are listed as "Former Professor, School of International Studies, JNU and Founder Chairperson, Kalinga Institute of Indo-Pacific Studies". The date and time are "18 September 2024 4.00 PM Online".



TRAINING SESSION ON ASHOKAN BRAHMI SCRIPT"

The Department of History at Kristu Jayanti College (Autonomous) organized a fascinating guest lecture and training session on the Ashokan Brahmi script on September 20, 2024. The session was specially curated for the first-semester BA HPS students to deepen their understanding of India's ancient linguistic and epigraphic heritage. The guest speaker, Mr. Gautam Jantakal, a noted numismatist from the Centre for Numismatics Studies, Bengaluru, led the students through an engaging and informative exploration of the Brahmi script. Mr. Jantakal began with an insightful lecture on the origins of Brahmi



The session was not only an introduction to the Ashokan Brahmi script but also a window into the broader historical and linguistic evolution of India. Students walked away with a newfound appreciation for the complexity and richness of ancient Indian scripts, as well as the significance of their preservation and study.

Student Reflections

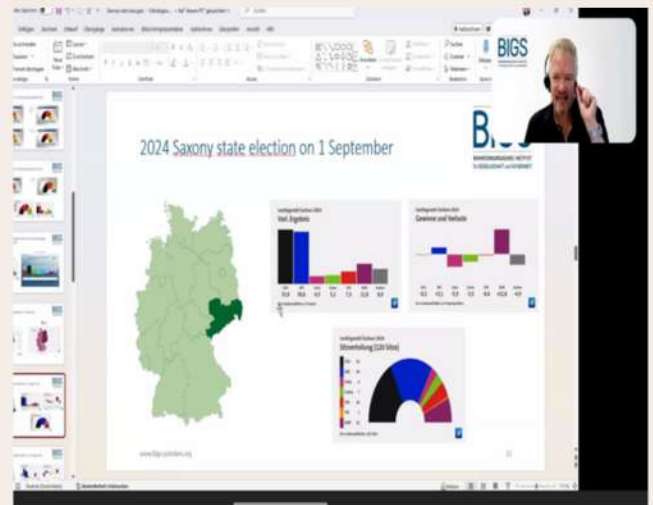
- “The session on the Ashokan Brahmi script was engaging and informative, providing a deep dive into its historical context and significance.”
- “The instructor clearly explained the origins of the Brahmi script and its evolution from earlier writing systems, which helped in understanding its development.”
- “The session was well-organized and provided valuable insights into an important aspect of ancient Indian history.”

A WIDENING GAP: ELECTORAL TRENDS AND POLITICS IN CONTEMPORARY GERMANY

The Department of History at Kristu Jayanti College (Autonomous) organized a thought-provoking guest lecture on “A Widening Gap: Electoral Trends and Politics in Contemporary Germany” on 24th September 2024. Conducted in collaboration with the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), Bengaluru, the session aimed to provide students with an in-depth understanding of Germany’s political structure and recent electoral developments.



The resource person for the session, Dr. Tim Stuchty, an expert in European politics, delivered a comprehensive analysis of Germany’s dynamic political landscape. He introduced students to the multi-party system that defines German democracy, focusing on key parties such as the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), Social Democratic Party (SPD), Alliance 90/The Greens, Free Democratic Party (FDP), The Left (Die Linke), and the Alternative for Germany (AfD). Dr. Stuchty explained how each party reflects a different segment of German society, contributing to a politically diverse and complex governance model.

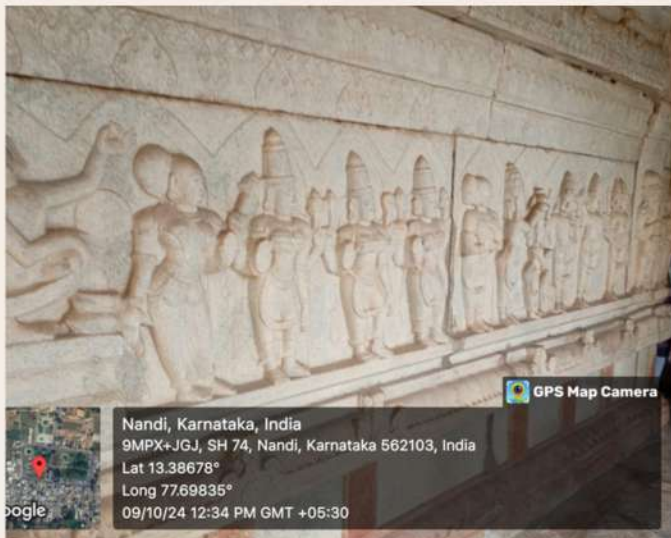


The lecture sparked active engagement among students, with many appreciating the opportunity to connect theoretical knowledge with real-world political developments. The session offered valuable academic enrichment, helping students critically analyze political trends, understand the implications of coalition governance, and examine the challenges posed by populist ideologies. It provided a holistic view of contemporary German politics, fostering curiosity, analytical thinking, and a deeper appreciation of democratic systems worldwide.



EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING VISIT: EXPLORING KARNATAKA'S HERITAGE

On October 9, 2024, the Department of History at Kristu Jayanti College (Autonomous) organized an enriching field visit for the II Semester BA HSPS students as part of the course "History of Karnataka." A total of 43 students, accompanied by faculty members Dr. Ashwini Barla and Mr. Karthik Manoharan, embarked on an experiential journey to four culturally and historically significant sites: Devanahalli Fort, Bhoga Nandeshwara Temple, Sir M. Visvesvaraya Museum, and Sri Siddhachal Stulabhadra Jain Teerth Dham.



This field visit transcended traditional classroom learning by offering immersive, place-based education. Students didn't just study history—they walked through it, read it in stone carvings, interpreted it through architecture, and reflected on its contemporary relevance. They developed skills in site analysis, source interpretation, and historical narration. Importantly, they learned to connect the dots between ancient kingdoms, colonial struggles, and modern nationhood—all within a single day's journey.

The trip served as a dynamic pedagogical tool, reinforcing textbook knowledge with real-world context. It fostered curiosity, critical thinking, and cultural sensitivity among students. As they returned to campus, it was evident that this journey was more than a field visit—it was a deeply engaging and formative academic experience that brought Karnataka's history to life.



TAMING THE BEAST: SERIES ON PROCRASTINATION

On October 15, 2024, the Department of History at Kristu Jayanti College (Autonomous) hosted a soft skills training session titled “Taming the Beast: Series on Procrastination” for the BA HSPS second-year students. The session was led by Dr. Nidhi Raj Gupta, Associate Professor of Professional Accounting and Finance, who delivered an engaging and thought-provoking talk on one of the most universal challenges faced by students—procrastination.

Dr. Gupta approached procrastination as a “beast” that can be tamed with the right tools and mindset. With clarity, humor, and insight, she presented four powerful strategies—or “mantras.”



The Taming the Beast session offered more than just time-management tips—it was a motivational blueprint for intentional living. Dr. Gupta’s blend of neuroscience, behavioral science, and relatable storytelling helped students understand the roots of procrastination and take actionable steps to overcome it. The workshop empowered students to become more self-aware, intentional, and efficient in managing their academic and personal responsibilities. Students found the session highly engaging, practical, and enlightening. The interactive nature of the workshop, combined with real-world examples and self-reflection, made it not only informative but truly transformative. It left participants feeling inspired, equipped, and ready to tame their own procrastination beasts.

FIRST ANNUAL SOUTH KOREA CONCLAVE

The Department of History at Kristu Jayanti College, in collaboration with the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), Bengaluru and the Consulate General of South Korea, Chennai, hosted a three-day South Korean Conclave from October 17 to 19, 2024. This landmark event brought together students and scholars from premier institutions including Pondicherry University, Madras University, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi University, NIAS, and St. Joseph's University, alongside enthusiastic participation from Kristu Jayanti College's own students across its BA HSPS, PSSO, and JOPS programs. The conclave served as a vibrant platform to explore the multidimensional relationship between India and South Korea through academic discourse, cultural performances, and panel discussions.

Overall, the South Korean Conclave 2024 proved to be a successful convergence of minds, culture, and international understanding. It not only deepened the academic engagement with South Korea's geopolitical, cultural, and economic landscape but also celebrated the growing synergy between India and South Korea. The conclave stood as a testimony to the importance of global academic cooperation and cultural exchange in today's interconnected world.



HUMANTRA :TIMELINE TAPESTRY-WEAVING THE THREADS OF HISTORY

In a unique attempt to make history come alive, the Department of History hosted a vibrant and intellectually stimulating event titled Timeline Tapestry on 23 October 2024. Open to all Social Sciences students, the event aimed to enhance participants' understanding of the interconnectedness of historical events while encouraging analytical thinking and a sharper sense of chronology.



Held at the M4 auditorium from 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM, the competition saw six enthusiastic teams of two participants each compete across three rounds designed to test their knowledge, perception, and ability to connect historical dots. The first round challenged teams with chronological arrangement tasks—five sets of events had to be placed in their correct historical sequence. It served as a warm-up, yet demanded a strong grasp of historical timelines. The second round shifted gears with an image identification challenge. Participants were shown historical images and asked to identify the event, era, or personality associated with each. This round added a visual dimension, pushing students to recall contextual details and associate visual cues with historical narratives.



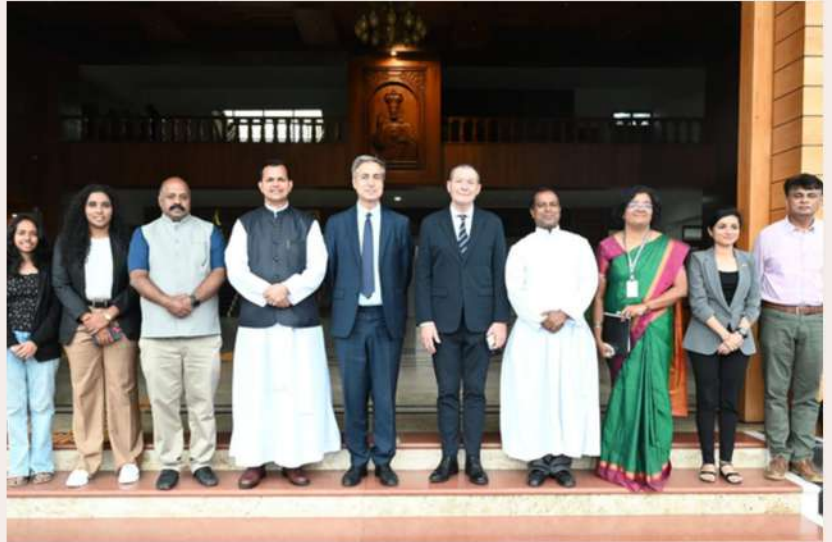
The final round, undoubtedly the most demanding, required teams to not only match years with corresponding events but also to arrange them chronologically. Each team was asked four comprehensive questions, and this round brought out the depth of their historical insight. With every correct answer earning 10 points, the scoring remained tight and competitive throughout.

In the end, the teams that demonstrated a clear command of chronology and analytical reasoning emerged victorious, with the top three teams receiving recognition for their performance.

Timeline Tapestry was more than just a quiz—it was an opportunity for students to engage with history in a dynamic and interactive way. By connecting events across timelines and visualizing historical cause and effect, participants deepened their understanding of the subject. Events like these are a testament to the department's commitment to making history an evolving narrative rather than a static record.

NIAS-KJC EUROPE LECTURE SERIES #25: "FRANCE'S POSITION IN THE INDO-PACIFIC REGION"

On November 29, 2024, the Department of History and Kristu Jayanti College of Law, in collaboration with the Science, Technology and International Relations Programme at the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), Bengaluru, hosted the 25th edition of the NIAS-KJC Europe Lecture Series. The lecture, titled "France's Position in the Indo-Pacific Region", featured a distinguished guest—His Excellency Marc Abensour, Ambassador of France for the Indo-Pacific. The session was attended by students of law from Kristu Jayanti College, who gained valuable insights into the evolving geopolitical dynamics of the Indo-Pacific region.



Ambassador Abensour, a seasoned diplomat appointed as France's Ambassador for the Indo-Pacific on October 24, 2022, shared his deep expertise on strategic developments and diplomatic challenges in the region. He emphasized the growing strategic importance of the Indo-Pacific as a focal point in global politics, particularly in the context of shifting power dynamics and the increasing tension between the United States and China. He outlined how France, with its overseas territories and economic interests in the region, maintains a significant stake in promoting peace, security, and stability.

A key highlight of the session was France's commitment to maritime security and environmental protection. The Ambassador spoke about the need to safeguard vital sea lanes and address climate-related issues that threaten regional sustainability.

Additionally, he shed light on France's active role in building regional partnerships with countries such as India, Australia, and Japan, emphasizing collaborative efforts to uphold the rules-based international order and counterbalance emerging threats.

The conference was not only informative but also highly interactive. It concluded with a lively Q&A session where students engaged with Ambassador Abensour on topics ranging from defense cooperation to climate diplomacy.

This lecture exemplified the core objective of the series—to foster interdisciplinary research and dialogue between historians, scholars, and students across disciplines. It offered a unique platform to explore the intersections of history, international relations, and contemporary diplomacy. The session was lauded by attendees for being informative, intellectually stimulating, and a catalyst for future academic conversations on geopolitics and global cooperation.



KJC- NIAS NEIGHBOURHOOD LECTURE SERIES

- CONTEMPORARY MIDDLE EAST AND ITS CHALLENGES

The Guest lecture began with a short prayer at 9 am, followed by the welcome speech by Ms. Ramya B, who welcomed the resource person of the day Ambassador Prashant Pise. The lecture of Ambassador Pise focused on the ongoing issues in the Middle East, and their current point. He also touched up on the causes briefly, and primarily focused on the position of India in the midst of the current state Middle East, discussing energy needs, Human resource, economic intake, religious tourism, Supply chain issues, Connectivity issues, and the possible alternative projects, etc.

He then briefed about the foreign policy of India, and then moved onto the various challenges faced in the Middle East that further threaten its stability. He then moved on to some of the possible solutions to better the situation before concluding his lecture. This was followed by the question and answer session. The lecture wrapped up with the vote of thanks by Dr. Subramanyan, Head department of Economics.

Young History and Political Science students were able to discuss about possible solutions – state led solutions and people oriented solutions- and alternative projects that could improve the situation in the Middle East, encouraging critical thinking about international relations.



SKILL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY: MOVIE SCREENING AND REVIEW

Students viewed the movie *Hey Ram* (2000), directed by Kamal Haasan. This historical drama tackle's themes of communal violence, religious intolerance, and the quest for redemption during India's Partition and the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi. The story follows Saket Ram (Kamal Haasan), an archaeologist whose wife, Aparna (Rani Mukerji), is killed in the 1947 Calcutta riots. Heartbroken and seeking revenge, Saket joins a group planning to kill Gandhi, blaming him for favoring Muslims. However, as he meets different people and reflects on his actions, he starts to question his hatred and violence. The film portrays his journey of change and redemption. The film explores India's social and political issues during a turbulent time. Despite being controversial, it remains a thought-provoking story about humanity, forgiveness, and peace.

During the movie review activity, students engaged in both individual and group discussions, analyzing the film's historical context, character development, and themes. They were asked to reflect on how the film depicted the complex socio-political landscape of India during the Partition era. Critical thinking was encouraged through questions about the characters' motivations, the impact of communal violence, and the process of personal redemption.



DECODE HISTORY (PRELIMINARY ROUND)

The Department of History and History Club of Kristu Jayanti College (Autonomous) organized an event titled "Decode History" (Preliminary Round) on February 6, 2025. The beneficiaries of this event were BA HPS 1st year and BA HSPS 2nd year students and to accommodate the participants, the event was conducted in two sessions: the first session took place from 9:00 am to 11:00 am for 1st year students at the Mini Auditorium (M2) in the Main Block, while the second session was held from 1:40 pm to 3:00 pm for 2nd year students at the H1 Auditorium in the Humanities Block.



The primary objective of this event was to foster a sense of unity among students while promoting an engaging and interactive learning experience in the field of history.

Three games were conducted and each game had 3 rounds:

WHO AM I? : Here the students had to identify the historical figure or event

FACTS AND MYTHS: Here a series of statements were given where the students had to identify whether it's a Myth Or a Fact.

HISTORICAL BINGO: In this game, a bingo card with different historical events was given to each team and the game master would read out the clues and students have to mark the correct answers on the card. This served as the final game, determining the competing teams that would advance to the final session.



THE RISE OF CHINA: REGIONAL AND GLOBAL IMPLICATIONS

The event began with a welcome speech by Deepika Seervi, followed by Dr. Chen introducing the guest speaker and his work. The lecture focused on China and its relations with the world, starting with the guest's own journey in International Relations and his experiences in China. The speaker detailed China's background, including the communist transformation campaigns of the late 1940s, 50s, and 60s, Mao Zedong's radical political movement from 1966-76, and the shift towards normalcy and reforms from 1976 onwards.



He emphasized China's economic growth and potential stagnation, focusing on the reform era, including rural and agricultural reforms (Wave 1), urban reforms (Wave 2) in 1985, the 1989 protests, and the reopening of the economy, culminating in WTO membership in 2001 and the Belt and Road Initiative in 2013-14.



The speaker then discussed development theories, citing Rostow's five stages of modernization and contrasting it with the "Asian model" of development, where economic reforms are often preceded by political pressure. He used Taiwan and Korea as examples.

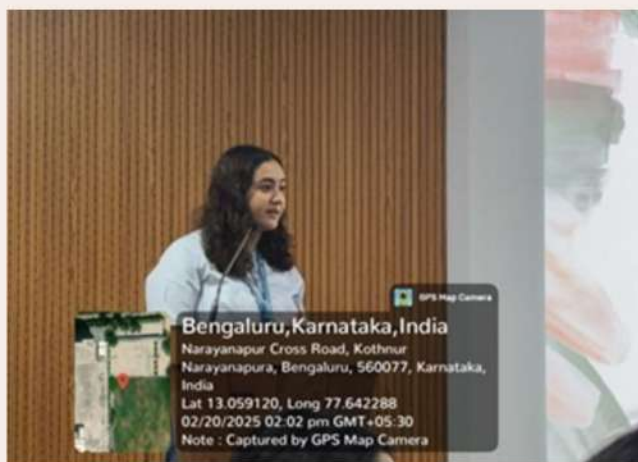
He further explored why China's economic reforms haven't been accompanied by political liberalization, comparing the communist development paths of China and Vietnam. He then discussed the evolution of Chinese leadership from Mao Zedong to Xi Jinping, highlighting Deng Xiaoping's contributions and reforms, and how Xi Jinping consolidated power by amending the constitution.

The lecture then shifted to perspectives on China, covering its status as an economic giant, its role as a development model, its challenge to global norms and order, and its belligerent behavior.

The speaker also discussed the contrasting views of China – as an aggressive power versus a nation facing internal crises and slowing growth. He concluded by touching upon disputes in East Asia and the potential for future conflict. A Q&A session followed the lecture. A student of Dr. Mu Min Chen then presented a video about Taiwan and the IMPACS university program.

INTERNSHIP INSIGHTS: STUDENT'S EXPERIENCES

The Department of History of Kristu Jayanti College (Autonomous) organized a session on internships, catering specifically to the needs of BA IV semester HSPS students. The event proved to be highly beneficial, as it comprehensively covered essential aspects to consider before embarking on an internship and the steps to follow after its completion.

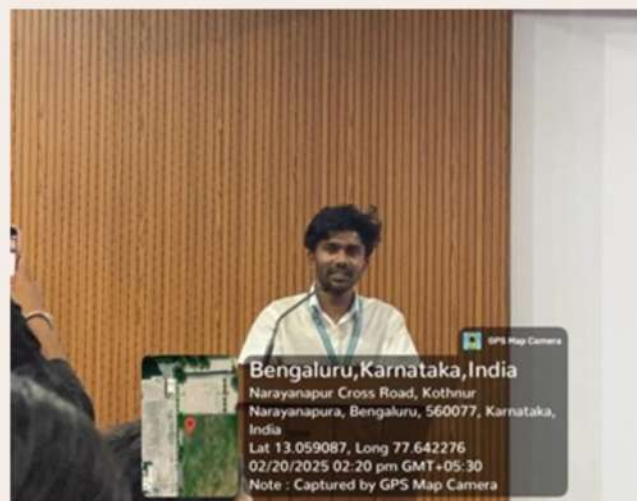


The third-year students also candidly shared the challenges they faced during their internships, offering valuable insights and advice on navigating potential obstacles. Their experiences spanned diverse fields and organizations, including museums, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Gram Panchayats, schools, and more.

The objective of this session was to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the internship process and its importance in academic and professional growth. The session concluded with a deeper understanding of the internship process and its significance in enhancing academic and professional growth. The Department of History aim to continue providing such informative and engaging sessions to support students in their academic pursuits.



Third-year students, who had recently completed their internships, shared their invaluable experiences and the lessons they learned along the way. They provided guidance on crafting a well-structured internship report, which typically consists of: Cover page, Preface and acknowledgement, Declaration, Internship completion certificate, Content page, Organizational profile, Work log, Learning outcome, Conclusion and Appendix



THREE YEARS OF UKRAINE WAR- ACTORS, ENDGAMES, STRATEGIES AND ISSUE

Marking the third anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the inaugural address and subsequent overview by Dr. Suba highlighted the protracted conflict's catastrophic human and geopolitical consequences, emphasizing systematic documentation of war crimes by Padmashri's team over these three years. Characterized as one of the most intense modern conflicts, the discussion traced the war's evolution from initial Western miscalculations about Russia's military capabilities in early 2022 to the current stalemate, analyzing six key geopolitical actors (US, China, North Korea, Russia, Europe, and India) through six critical lenses: major developments, shifting endgames, strategic adaptations, current battlefield dynamics, future projections, and Ukraine's sovereignty claims. Padmashri outlined Ukraine's trajectory from early territorial losses (100,000+ sq km occupied) to failed 2023 counter offensives exacerbated by Western arms delays, noting Russia's 2024 momentum through North Korean/Iranian military support despite Ukraine's diplomatic mobilization via Zelensky's global engagements and social media-driven arms campaigns.



Dr. Shalini contextualized Russia's strategic calculus through escalating tensions since 2015, ICC arrest warrants, and domestic political consolidation ahead of elections, while Ramya critiqued Europe's contradictory responses - unprecedented but ineffective sanctions, NATO expansion debates, and energy realignments contrasting Eastern Europe's hawkish stance with Southern members' caution. The analysis noted China's calibrated neutrality balancing strategic partnerships with Russia against Western economic ties, contrasted with North Korea's overt military collaboration, while Nand Kishore addressed India's UN-mediated balancing act. Despite multiple negotiation attempts, panelists concurred on the conflict's frozen nature, with Russia maintaining occupied territories and Ukraine clinging to sovereignty claims, leaving Europe grappling with defense autonomy challenges amid uncertain US commitment and Russia's unyielding posture, as captured in the concluding Q&A and vote of thanks.

GERMANY'S FEDERAL ELECTION: IMPACT ON EUROPE AND THE WORLD

The lecture was on Germany's Federal Election: Impact on Europe and the World the talk was led by Dr Tim Stuchtey, Executive Director, Brandenburg Institute for Society and Security (BIGS), Potsdam, Germany. Sir talked about the German Elections and the significance of every parties specially the dominating party. The speaker talked about the outcome of the recent elections in Germany.

He explained in detail the political parties that contested in election, their ideology, which side they lean on the political spectrum and which party had more popular support. He explained the German elections from a perspective with the wars in Europe and also in view to Indian elections. The speaker also answered questions posed by various students from NIAS, Kristu Jayanti College, MCC and Stella Maris. The session was very enlightening for the students to know more on the German elections.



Kristu Jayanti College
AUTONOMOUS Bengaluru
Accredited A++ Grade by NAAC Affiliated to Bangalore North University NIAS

Department of History and Electoral Literacy Club
In association with
Science, Technology and International Relations Programme
National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru
Organises
NIAS - KJC Europe Lecture Series #28

**Germany's Federal Election:
Impact on Europe and the World**

Resource Person



Dr Tim Stuchtey
Executive Director
Brandenburg Institute for Society and Security,
(BIGS),
Potsdam, Germany

28 February 2025
07.30 PM - 09.00 PM



WALKING FOR FREEDOM

On 13th March 2025, Department of History and History Club at Kristu Jayanti College organized a memorable event titled "Walking for Freedom" to recreate and commemorate Mahatma Gandhi's iconic Dandi March. The event aimed to honor the legacy of the Salt Satyagraha while instilling Gandhian values of nonviolence and self-reliance among students.

The march began at the college quadrangle, where a large group of enthusiastic students gathered, carrying banners and placards with messages inspired by Gandhi's principles. The participants walked in unison towards Chavara Square, symbolizing solidarity and commitment to the ideals of freedom and justice.



KRISTU JAYANTI COLLEGE

The event concluded with an inspiring speech by Rev. Fr. Augustine George, Principal of Kristu Jayanti College. Fr. George expressed his gratitude to the Department of History and the students for their active participation in this meaningful initiative. He emphasized the importance of remembering historical struggles like the Dandi March and how they continue to inspire generations to uphold values such as truth, unity, and perseverance.



The event successfully highlighted the historical significance of Gandhi's Salt Satyagraha while engaging students in a meaningful and experiential activity. The choice of route from the Quadrangle to Chavara Square provided a symbolic and accessible setting for the march.



CONTEMPORARY EUROPE & THE FUTURE OF WORLD ORDER

On 19th march 2025, the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS) and Kristu Jayanti College jointly organized an interaction session with Ms. Baiba Barze, the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Latvia, at NIAS, Bangalore . The event aimed to foster diplomatic and academic dialogue between Latvia and India, particularly in areas of international relations, defense, and technology.



The students of Kristu Jayanti College departed from the college at 9:30 AM and arrived at the venue by 10:30 AM. Upon arrival, a student representative from NIAS gave a comprehensive introduction to the attendees. The introduction focused on various academic areas at NIAS, including details about internships, courses, and area studies.



The session formally commenced with the welcome of Ms. Baiba Barze and the Latvian Ambassador, Mr. Juris Bone. Ambassador Bone began by offering a brief remark on the India-Latvia relationship, emphasizing the importance of strengthening diplomatic and economic ties between the two nations.

Ms. Baiba Barze then took the stage and began the session by providing an insightful overview of Latvia, touching upon its history, heritage, and language. She elaborated on the nation's experience under Soviet and German occupation, followed by its independence and eventual membership in NATO. She highlighted how NATO membership had transformed Latvia's military capabilities, ensuring protection against potential threats.

The session concluded with an exchange of thoughts and reflections between the students and the foreign minister. Overall, the event provided valuable insights into Latvia's geopolitical positioning, its defense strategies, and its efforts to maintain strong international relations despite regional challenges.

This interaction proved to be a fruitful learning experience for all participants, fostering a deeper understanding of Latvia's foreign policy and its role within the EU and NATO, as well as its relationship with India.

CAMPUS HUNT: A MINI TREASURE HUNT COMPETITION

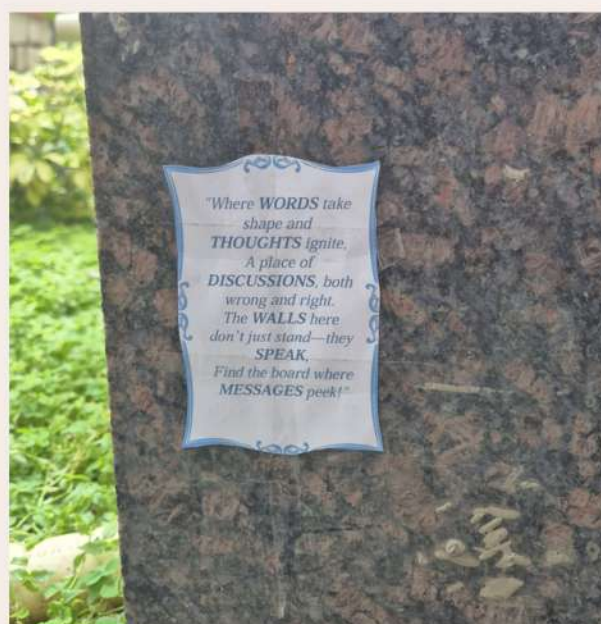


On 1st April 2025 the treasure hunt competition was held by the department of History for the 1st year HSPA and the 2nd year HSPS and it was conducted by the finale year students of HSPS. This was a mini treasure hunt held in the Campus of Kristu jayanti college, Autonomous.



So the competition began with the hiding of the clues in the different parts of the campus which included total of 9 clues, which included Chapel, Chavara square, humanities block lobby, main block cafeteria, admin block cafeteria, green park, Maggie point, turf and Incinerator. Then the event began with the students gathering in front of the chapel, where the Club coordinators explained the participants the rules.

There were 4 teams in total each team were assigned with a volunteer from the final year and then began the treasure hunt at 12.50 where the first clue was posted in the official group made by the club coordinator and the participants began searching for second clue which lead them to the humanities block lobby, after which they ran towards the lobby to find their next clue. That lead them to the maggie point where they searched for their next clue. After they found the clue they began searching for the next clue which they found near the Admin block cafeteria, and after a few challenges they found the next clue which lead them to he turf, after finding the clue in the turf they began searching for their next clue near the chapel. Which then lead them to the Incinerator, and from here the search for the last and the final clue began which was in the green park it was challenging but exciting at the same time for the participants.



EXPERT TALK: REINTERPRETATION OF HISTORIOGRAPHY

Dr. B. Narasingaraja Naidu's lecture emphasized the necessity of reinterpreting historiography through skepticism, interdisciplinary methods, and the inclusion of marginalized narratives. He addressed themes ranging from classical Indian history to modern colonial encounters, stressing the importance of challenging orthodox interpretations. Key topics included Pieter Geyl's critiques, psychoanalytical readings of the Kalinga War, and regional identity debates like Madras' Telugu heritage.

Theory of Skepticism: Sir Narasingaraja Naidu advocated for a skeptical approach to historiography, urging scholars to question biases in primary sources and colonial-era narratives. This aligns with Pieter Geyl's methodology in *Debates with Historians*, which critiques historians like Arnold Toynbee for selectively using evidence to fit preconceived theses. Geyl's work exemplifies rigorous revisionism, particularly his critique of Toynbee's *A Study of History*. Geyl argued that Toynbee's civilizational cycles lacked empirical rigor and ignored contradictory evidence, labeling them "a blasphemy against Western civilization"

The lecture reframed Gandhi's death as a culmination of ideological fractures in post-independence India, rather than an isolated act by Nathuram Godse.



Sir Narasingaraja Naidu's lecture underscored historiography as a dynamic discipline, where skepticism and reinterpretation foster inclusive narratives. By bridging global theories (e.g., Geyl's critiques) with regional case studies (e.g., Madras), he illustrated how historiography transcends temporal and geographical boundaries.

The lecture successfully challenged participants to rethink historiography as a dynamic, inclusive discipline. By foregrounding marginalized voices and fostering skepticism, it provided a robust framework for decolonizing historical narratives. Future sessions could build on this foundation by exploring underdiscussed regions or hosting debates on contentious reinterpretations (e.g., negationism vs. revisionism).



Thanksgiving Note

The Department of History and the History Club would like to express our sincere thanks to all the volunteers who have shown devotion, professionalism, and teamwork when helping run every academic and co-curricular event that took place over the year.

We would also like to give thanks to the following people who worked in the various such teams and did so with commitment and excellence.

Technical Support Team

01. Sai Devakinanden, 22HSPS44
02. Teju N, 22HSPS30
03. Praveen J, 22HSPS21
04. Ganesh, 22HSPS08
05. .AM Sachin, 22HSPS01
06. Balaji VS, 23HSPS07

Logistics and Operations Team

01. Sathwik Reddy, 22HSPS41
02. Katta Jayanth, 22HSPS42
03. Kanish Das, 22HSPS15
04. Babitha H, 22HSPS43
05. Rithik Shetty, 23HSPS26
06. Surala Karthikeya, 23HSPS31

Discipline and Hospitality Team

01. Surala Harshavardhan, 22HSPS29
02. Javeriya Khan, 22HSPS10
03. Vivek Raj, 22HSPS35

Creative and Decoration Team

01. Elija Chetri, 22HSPS37
02. Srijana Thapa, 22HSPS28
03. Khushi Sigh, 22HSPS17
04. Joanna Hepzibah, 22HSPS12
05. Deepika Seervi P, 22HSPS06

Content and Documentation Team

01. Manoja Yadavilli, 22HSPS20
02. Anandita Das, 23HSPS03
03. Henna Benny, 23HSPS13

All of these men and women evidenced a responsible approach, a willingness to lead, and a commitment to excellence. The individual coordination on the ground and their behind-the-scenes experience have contributed to the enthusiastic atmosphere and overall successes of all department activities.

We are very proud to have such dedicated members of our academic community.

With our sincere appreciation,
The Department of History,
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