

**LANGUAGE, RELIGION AND THE IDEA OF NATION: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF
THE WORKS OF RAMCHANDRA SHUKLA AND HAZARI PRASAD DWIVEDI**

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Introduction

“और सच बात तो यह है कि राष्ट्रीयता की भावना अपेक्षाकृत बहुत थोड़े दिनों से संसार में उत्पन्न हुई है और इसे उत्पन्न हुए लगभग दो सौ वर्ष से अधिक नहीं हुए। भारतवर्ष में राष्ट्रीयता का आरम्भ अंग्रेजी राज्य की स्थापना के साथ-साथ हुआ था। और उसी की दृढ़ता के साथ साथ इसकी भी वृद्धि हो रही है” (Premchand 1945)।

In 1934, Premchand wrote the above lines in the beginning of his essay, ‘Urdu, Hindi aur Hindustani’. Before he delved into the question of defining each of the three linguistic distinctions stated in the title of his essay, Premchand confessed that even though the idea of Indian nation is traced to ancient past, which might be a possibility, in truth, the sentiment of nationalism is of relatively recent origin. In the light of the new notion of nationalism that prevails now all over the world, it becomes contingent to discuss the aspects that are necessitated by it (ibid.). One of those aspects is the need for a national language. It is crucial to understand here that among the thinkers and leaders of the nationalist movement as well as before, in the closing decades of the nineteenth century, there was a growing realization that the political entity of the nation and the associated sentiment of nationalism were the dominant frameworks in the world. It is according to the newly advanced structure of the nation that the diverse regions, cultural diversities and people were to be sculpted.

In the anticolonial movement, it became one of the most debated subjects where the position of different cultural, social and regional identities were weighed differently in the diversity of ideas about the nation. The vantage points in each of these imaginations of the nation were marred by high political stakes of distribution of power in the aftermath of independence from colonial rule. There was no uniform idea of nation and

nationalism in India. Even though there was an emergence of a kind of nationalism at the time of independence, the other ideas of the nation did not disband; rather, they continued to hold on to the margins, consolidate over a period of time and eventually, become dominant. So, in a way the debate never settled. The question continues to be prevalent in India in the contemporary period. In this context, the question of nation and nationalism in India becomes a particularly important one. Again, to reiterate, the stakes are high as each idea of the nation attempts at defining the identity of the country, hierarchizing or arranging the diverse religious, social and cultural identities and also, impacting the nature and aspirations of the people as part of the national community.

An important aspect of the ideas about the nation in India is that the debates and discussions around the question were not limited to one particular sphere. Apart from the political sphere in the early twentieth century characterized by anticolonial protests, political organizations such as Congress, Muslim League etc., there were other spheres where the ideas about the nation were being originated, debated and popularized. The literary sphere was one such public space. Often the discussion about the ideas of the nation is limited to the key figures who were active in the political sphere¹ (Singh & Roy 2011; Pantham & Deutsch 1986; Chatterjee 1993). In this thesis, the focus is on the conceptions of the Indian nation in the Hindi literary sphere. While there were many social, cultural and religious indicators such as language, religion, region and caste that were employed in formulating the ideas of the nation, in this thesis, the emphasis is on the language and especially, Hindi language.

The link between language and nation in India, in the early twentieth century, came out prominently in the debate over the status of national language. In North India, while there were many languages that struggled for the position of national language, three languages particularly stood out in their expansive campaign across the country. These were Hindi, Urdu and Hindustani languages. It is important to note that each of these languages, in their effort to identify the nation, produced holistic imaginations of the nation; they did

¹ It is important to note that there are exceptions, with literary figures such as Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and Rabindranath Tagore, who feature prominently in discussion about ideas on nation in Indian context.

not lose sight of other indicators such as religion, caste or region. Rather, each rendition of the nation contained their own specific set of various indicators. It is the argument of this thesis that each of these languages had their own heterogeneity of ideas about the nation within them. So, the struggle was not just with other languages but also among the diverse ideas within a particular language. The main objective of this thesis is to bring out to the forefront the diversity of ideas about Hindi language and the imaginations of the nation produced within the Hindi literary sphere. This is not to ignore or understate the importance of other languages. Rather, it is to investigate the plurality within a language and its literary sphere.

Within the Hindi literary sphere, the thesis analyzes the works of two thinkers, Ramchandra Shukla (1884-1941) and Hazari Prasad Dwivedi (1907- 1979), and their linkages with the debates among the political leaders. Each of the two literary critics create their own ideas about Hindi language and the history of its literature. In their discussions of the medieval Bhakti poets, each of the writers produce their own renditions of which linguistic and religious traditions are to be prioritized. Further, their analysis of the exclusions from the canon of Hindi literature highlight the literary and religious others who are not constituted in the identity of the nation.

The thesis argues that each of the attempts at the creation of Hindi language is a project of constructing a linguistic, religious and caste-based community. Each of these communities is created with its own sense of a history, its exclusions from the community and the specific identity of those who are included. This idea of a larger entity that the self is a part of and has an understanding of the other is an imagination of a political community with a vision for their future. Further, the inclusion of other kinds of indicators that become part of the identity of its members, such as religion and caste, characterize the process of imagining the nation. The process of creating this majority community from the vantage point of language was one of the ways in which a majority community and a national community was being imagined in the Hindi literary sphere.

The thinkers, Shukla and Dwivedi, create two different ideas about the Hindi language, a majority community around that and a political imagination of the nation. The two thinkers are selected to explore the two kinds of majoritarian communities based in linguistic and religious imaginations of Hindi and Hindu but in different ways. The resonances of these ideas are also reflected in the political sphere in the arguments of some key political leaders who were talking about these ideas of Hindi and the nation.

II

One of the key objectives of this thesis is to decode and elaborate the important categories that feature in the ideas of the nation. As stated, there is an attempt at creating the idea of Hindi language in the works of each thinker. The thesis investigates the nature of the Hindi language that is argued in the works of the two thinkers and in the arguments of different political leaders who supported Hindi language, in order to go beyond, the superficial common nomenclature, to understand the specificity of the Hindi language that was being envisaged. Similarly, in their attempt at prioritizing the Hindu religion in the ideas about the nation, the focus of the thesis is to study in detail, the specific connotations of the Hindu religion that is put forward. Such a probe requires deeper analysis about the religious and folk traditions that are highlighted in the works and the reasons for the support of one over the others. It also aims to understand the position of those who are seen as others in the imagination. The identity and the status of the other is crucial to the imagination of the self and their community. The religious and linguistic minorities that feature in these different majoritarian notions of community help concretize the ideas about the nation.

By highlighting the specific set of perimeters and themes that become dominant in the ideas of the nation, the thesis explores the differences in the nature and aspirations of the national community. What shall emerge through the course of the thesis is different ways of majoritarian imaginations of the nation within the Hindi literary sphere. It prevents

from collating the diversity within Hindi language into a homogeneous or uniform argument. Through the discussion of the two thinkers and the key political leaders, the thesis presents the heterogeneity that was manifested in their ideas regarding Hindi and the Indian nation.

There is an important scholarly work that inspired the thesis for this approach. In her paper, 'Community to Nation', Gurpreet Mahajan (2006) argues that the idea of community (cultural, religious or regional) became the focal point under colonial rule in India as a sense of embeddedness in a larger entity than oneself provided resources for critiquing the colonial rule. The location of the subject in a specific community structured their representation of the self and the others. It also contributed to the emergence of various forms of cultural nationalisms which involved strategic or selective invocation of culture and history. Conceptions of the self, the other and the nation that emerged under colonial rule can be understood from the position of the colonized subject. The majority and minority denoted the vantage points from which a subject articulated their concerns and their relations to the nation. Under the nationalist discourse, majoritarianism often gets equated with nationalism where the culture of the dominant community defines the norms and values in the public domain. Yet, not all forms of majoritarianism can be found to be defining the self and the other in the same way.

Mahajan distinguished between two kinds of majoritarianism that could be found in the Indian context. The 'benevolent majoritarianism', ideas of which can be found in the writings of Mahatma Gandhi, Aurobindo, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Vivekananda, has the common aspects where there is a focus on the shared truth that is eternal to all religions and therefore is accommodative of all religions even though it draws its own resources from Hinduism. It does not seek to negate the other and rather, identifies the latter as crucial to the will of the nation. Finally, the self and the other are subjected to critical scrutiny under benevolent majoritarianism. This form of majoritarian imagination of the nation is contrasted with 'exclusionary majoritarianism'. Under the latter, the 'other' features as a 'hostile' enemy; it is defined as a religious, cultural as well a territorial outsider. The notion of territory becomes sacrosanct in defining the nation where the

culture and history of the people are invoked selectively to denote the ownership of the country. The ideas of V. D. Savarkar reflected a kind of exclusionary majoritarian imagination of the nation. Similar differences can be found in ideas of minoritarianism as well.

What is significant in the above discussion is that even though both forms of majoritarianism in the Indian context draw from Hinduism or Hindi language as the common pool of resources, their imaginations are very different. The notions of the self, the perception of the other and the aspiration for the nation differ from each other. Further, what becomes clear from such an analysis is the specific connotation or meaning of something as large a category as 'Hindu'. In the context of the Hindi literary sphere in the early twentieth century, such an analysis becomes particularly useful. In the period where Hindi language is under creation through standardization of script, popularization of a common dialect (Khari boli as against Braj Bhasha) and uniform usage of syntax and grammar, it becomes helpful to decode the contestations and differences about the ideas of 'Hindi' language. Moreover, if each idea of the Hindi language offered its own understanding of history and nature of the community, the other attributes such as 'Hindu' become less ambivalent with an emphasis on analyzing the specific notion of the religious identity that is highlighted. Cumulatively, such an analysis is useful in preventing homogeneous, broad and general arguments, 'Hindi-Hindu' by providing more clarity and substance to the specific notions of Hindi and Hindu put forth.

III

In order to discuss the diversity of ideas about Hindi and the nation, the two thinkers who are selected are Ramchandra Shukla and Hazari Prasad Dwivedi. Both of the thinkers were prominent literary critics in Hindi language. Shukla's contribution to the Hindi language and literature has been significant in defining the boundaries and perimeters of

the linguistic community; the latter continue to influence the discipline even in the contemporary period. His association with Hindi language can be mapped in three phases of his life. He began with writing for Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi's 'Saraswati' in 1904. His discussion and debates about the ideas of the notions of poetry and literary prose featured in the form of essays in this phase. The second phase can be seen in Shukla's association with Nagari Pracharini Sabha, in 1907, where he wrote extensively in support of Hindi language as the national language. He wrote critical commentaries denouncing the arguments that were put forward in support of Urdu language. He began writing his 'History of Hindi literature' in 1919 in the form of essays that were completed in 1927. In the third phase, Shukla joined the newly opened Hindi department at the Banaras Hindu University under the aegis of Madan Mohan Malaviya. He was among the first appointed lecturers in Hindi language along with Shyam Sunder Das. Shukla continued to write commentaries about various aspects of Hindi literature, especially focussing on the medieval period, and textbooks for primary schools until his death in 1941.

Shukla's long association with the Hindi language in different capacities had earned him a formidable reputation in the Hindi literary sphere. He has been credited for founding the consciousness of Hindi language (Kumar 2015). Even when other prominent literary figures did not agree with his ideas, there was no doubt among them about Shukla's credible contribution to the field of literary criticism in Hindi language (Orsini 2002, 365). There have been a plethora of thesis and scholarly papers written on the literary aspects of Shukla's ideas both in English and Hindi languages academia (Sharma 2003; Wakankar 2002; Pandey 2003; Tripathi 2018). But there has been very little attempt at discussing the socio-political thought underlying Shukla's ideas of Hindi language, its nature and history².

Similarly, Dwivedi's contribution and association with the Hindi language runs into decades. There are two major phases of Dwivedi's scholarly life that can be identified. The first phase is for Dwivedi to join Shantiniketan as the faculty for Hindi language

² Krishna Kumar (2015) briefly looks at the social and political ideas that underscore Shukla's notion of language and its history. Yet, it cannot replace the kind of thorough research that is required about the latter.

under the influence of Tagore and Kshitimohan Sen. The second phase for Dwivedi began with his teaching career in different universities in North India. Dwivedi's reinterpretation and redefinition of the history, nature and aspiration of the Hindi language can be seen in the light of these phases. Namwar Singh has emphasized in his acclaimed work, 'Dusri Parampara ki Khoj' (1989) that Dwivedi founded an alternative tradition against the dominance established by Shukla's ideas. Again, as much with Shukla, while there has been a significant corpus of writing on the importance of Dwivedi's contribution in founding an alternative to Shukla's perimeters of literary criticism in Hindi language (Tiwari 2003; Hawley 2015; Singh 1989), there is less energy devoted to the social and political implications of such an intervention. Let me discuss two kinds of scholarly works in English academia that discuss the contribution of Shukla and Dwivedi to understand the different approach that this thesis adopts.

Within the English academia, Shukla's role has been seen as foundational in the creation of canon in Hindi literature in a recent work. Mrityunjay Tripathi's translated work 'The Hindi Canon: Intellectuals, Processes, Criticism' discusses the process of canon formation in the Hindi literary historiography in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Shukla's canon in 'Hindi Sahitya ka Itihaas' features in the anticolonial nationalist discourse that carried the influence from colonial ideas about Hindi literature. Tripathi touches upon the questions of caste, class and communalism that are reflected in Shukla's work. He highlights the brahmanical vantage point from which Shukla presents his understanding of the history of Hindi literature. Tripathi argues that even though the anticolonial nationalist discourse was faced towards a progressive understanding of Hindi literature, the underlying principles of 'propriety' and 'social preservation' were defined in Hindu feudal terms drawing from resources of 'ancient village society'.

Tripathi also highlights Dwivedi's canon and its difference with Shukla's history of Hindi literature. In his reading, Dwivedi's emphasis on the miscegenation of culture has to be seen in the context of rising divide between Hindus and Muslims and notions of cultural purity in the 1940s. There is an elaboration of the category of culture, in Dwivedi, to include various kinds of cultural thoughts and practices as well as their differences.

Tripathi argues that employing a ‘thick historical sense’ in interpreting the categories of caste and culture, Dwivedi was able to bring hitherto marginalized communities to the effect of a ‘rediscovery of India’.

Another scholarly work that looks at the difference between Shukla and Dwivedi is Milind Wakankar’s ‘Subalternity and Religion: The Prehistory of Dalit Empowerment in South Asia’ (2010). Wakankar looks at the ineradicable role of medieval religion and especially that of Kabir in the story of secular vision of the nation-state and in the canon of Hindi literature. He presents the differences of positions with regard to the discussion around Kabir in the works of Shukla and Dwivedi. He argues that in Shukla, the ‘modernity’ of bhakti in the narrative of nation was based not in radical upheaval but in its connection to tradition. Tradition emerged as the touchstone to filter what was worth preserving in literature as well as religion. In this claim to tradition, Kabir posed a specific anomaly for Shukla as against his choice of Tulsidas and Surdas. Against the latter two Bhakti poets who closely identified with the upper caste North Indian traditions of literary technique, religious aspiration and language, Kabir came to represent the cosmopolitan era of fifteenth century bearing traces of sufi and Islamic influences as well as of a mix of dialects that could not be identified straightforwardly as Braj Bhasha or Awadhi or Rajasthani but as Hindawi. The triple stigma of subalternity of caste, esoteric and foreign associated with Kabir did not secure the latter a fair position in Shukla’s canon of Hindi literature.

Wakankar contrasts this with Dwivedi’s reinterpretation of Kabir as the representative of the subaltern tradition of resistance, protest and radical dissent in Indian society. By establishing Kabir away from an assimilationist force of Hindu-Muslim harmony, Wakankar argues that Dwivedi highlighted Kabir’s radical autonomy and rejection of dominant traditions. Dwivedi emphasized Kabir’s personality and the power of his verse to pitch Kabir not as a Vaishnava poet like Tulsidas or Surdas but as a guru in his own right. By relating Kabir’s personality to the historical project of Hindi, Wakankar argues that Dwivedi’s quest represents an interpretative and historical agenda. It marks an interpretative agenda in that it is through the ‘interruption of the inexhaustible

personality' of Kabir that a new rendition of the 'popular' is made possible by Dwivedi. Further, according to Wakankar, Dwivedi relied on his romantic account of Kabir to argue the notion of popular as based in a carefree uninhibited individuality. Such an interpretation was nationalist in the sense that it allowed for a single homogeneous 'Hindu' tradition.

The discussion in the two works mentioned above highlights the different nationalist interpretations in the two versions of literary history of Hindi language by Shukla and Dwivedi. The treatment of Kabir in the discussion of Bhakti period in both the versions of history of Hindi literature is the point of debate between Shukla and Dwivedi. In my reading of the texts by the two thinkers, one of the important contributions apart from their literary history is their construction of the idea of Hindi language and the linguistic community that is imagined as the majority community. Surely, their discussion of the various linguistic and religious traditions as part of the literary history of Hindi language is an important part of their idea of the nation, but a crucial aspect that is often obliterated from the discussion is their creation of the category of Hindi language. The emphasis on reading Shukla and Dwivedi as literary critics who were involved in literary historiography of the Hindi language evades the importance they attach to the redefinition of Hindi language according to their diverse understanding of the idea of Indian nation.

This thesis seeks to bring back the vantage point of Hindi language as understood respectively by each thinker in their imagination of the nation. The period of the early twentieth century was marked by debates and discussions around defining what was meant by 'Hindi' language in both the literary and the political sphere. The category of Hindi language was being devised, moulded and criticized by different political actors according to their version of the nation. While in some conceptions, the Hindi language so envisaged formed the central touchstone to construct the nation; in others it featured as one of the important components. Such ideas also highlight the interlinkages between the literary and political spheres. Shukla and Dwivedi surpassed their acknowledged roles as literary critics by engaging with these socio-political questions of the period. By treating

their ideas as part of the larger nationalist political discourse, it is possible to grasp the entirety and significance of their projects that had implications beyond the literary sphere.

To give a brief overview, by dissecting the construct of Hindi language, its underlying assumptions, the history of its literature, the inclusions and exclusions from its tradition and the nature of the linguistic community so formed, in the works of Shukla and Dwivedi, what emerges in the conclusion is the understanding of the two thinkers as system builders. Through the entirety of their works, it becomes possible to understand the common themes and notions that underlie the majority of their constructs- whether it is that of the history of Hindi literature or of Hindi language and the identity of the community formulated. From the vantage point of Hindi language, each of the two thinkers envisage different imaginations of Indian civilization and the majority community that is to carry its legacy. Such an analysis highlights holistic and comprehensive ideas about various indicators such as religion, region and caste that are key components of the nationalist thought.

Further, another important component of this thesis is to discuss the circulation of these ideas about the Hindi literary and the political spheres. As argued before, the question of Hindi language as the national language was a major political issue that was debated across the country. Among the supporters of Hindi language, especially at the regional level of the Hindi speaking belt, it is often suggested that there was a shared cultural understanding of the nation despite their cultural differences (Orsini 2002; Gould, 2004). The politics around Hindi language is seen as homogeneous and a monolithic whole. This thesis disturbs this notion to argue that just as there were differences in the ideas about Hindi language within the literary sphere, the political leaders who supported Hindi language for the national status came to emphasize very different notions of Hindi language. Such diversity of notions were also reflected in their diverging ideas about the nation. It is through the treatment of the debates within the literary sphere, outside the boxes of cultural-literary to the social and political systemic thought, that the diversity of the political imaginations is brought to the forefront.

To understand the importance of such a project, it is important to reiterate, what was only briefly hinted at before, the lack of thinkers from the literary sphere into political thought. Even a cursory glance at the study of nation in modern Indian political thought shall reveal that there is a standard canon of thinkers who eclipse the field. Some of the key Indian political leaders and thinkers, whose ideas are majorly discussed, are Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Rabindranath Tagore and Balgangadhar Tilak. In order to differentiate the Hindu nationalist ideas about India, V.D. Savarkar is included. Other recent inclusion has been that of B.R. Ambedkar, highlighting the caste biases in existing ideas. All these thinkers and leaders played an influential role at the national level in defining the country. Their writings were translated and circulated widely across different parts of the country. However, the English language dominated academia lacks the diversity of thinkers who were important at the regional level and whose writings are not translated in English language. Even though some efforts have been taken by Sudipto Kaviraj (1998), Dalmia (1997) and Mody (2018) etc., there remains a wide gap between the disciplines of language and literature and political thought. This thesis is to be seen as a small attempt in the direction of diversifying the field by including thinkers in native languages and their communication with political leaders in the study of nationalist ideas in political thought.

IV

The broad objective of the thesis is to trace heterogeneous constructions of the Indian nation in the Hindi literary sphere and their articulation among the political leaders. It also looks at the specific linguistic and religious configuration within diverse imaginations of the nation to highlight the plurality of majoritarian ideas of the nation. The thesis is divided into five chapters, besides the introduction and the conclusion.

In the first chapter of the thesis, titled as '**Linking Language and the Nation: Review of Literature**', there is a discussion of a wide range of scholarly works that have focussed

on the links between language, religion and the nation. Since the focus of the thesis is to highlight the ideas about nation from the vantage point of language, the first section discusses those theoretical texts that employ language in the political analysis of the nation. It highlights that even though the category of language has been seen as foundational in the imagination of the nation, there is little known about how language influences the key characteristics and features of the nation. The second section discusses the linkages drawn between Indian nation and languages other than Hindi such as Telugu, Tamil, Punjabi and others. The third section reviews the vast amount of literature that takes up the question of Hindi language, its interactions with the category of religion and the idea of the nation. It highlights that there is an argument, among the majority of works, of a homogeneous idea of the nation that is reflected from the Hindi language in its struggle for national status.

In the second chapter of the thesis, which is titled as '**Identifying the Nation: The Political Discourse around Language and Religious Diversity in India**', the focus is on tracing the socio-political and intellectual context in the end of nineteenth and early twentieth century India. The idea behind this chapter is to discuss the socio-political questions and the variety of ideas that were prevalent in the discourse then. The discussion of such ideas is helpful in locating the context of the two thinkers and the political leaders who supported their notions of Hindi language, as well as to understand the importance of their ideas in responding to their immediate context. The first section of this chapter deals with the colonial interventions in creating a discourse around questions of nation and language. The second section discusses the diversity of native responses to the colonial interpretations by highlighting the ideas of Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore and V. D. Savarkar. The three leaders and their views about language, religion and nation were widely circulated in the first few decades of the twentieth century. In the later chapters, it is attempted to find their resonances with the ideas expressed by Shukla and Dwivedi. The third section of this chapter focuses specifically on the ideas that were being established within the Hindi literary sphere. The attempt is to trace the intellectual predecessors to Shukla and Dwivedi to understand the thread of ideas from where the latter two picked on. Briefly, Shukla and Dwivedi

responded to the needs to re-imagination of Hindi language that were initiated by Bharatendu Harishchandra and sharpened by Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi.

The third chapter of the thesis, '**The Construction of Language, Religion and the Nation in the Works of Ramchandra Shukla**', analyzes the imagination of Hindi language, specific notion of religion and nation in Shukla's texts. In the first section of the chapter, there is a brief biographical account of Shukla that highlights his upbringing and environment and some of his key writings. In the second section, there is a discussion of the definition of Hindi language that he builds from the fundamentals of language. The third section highlights the idea of Indian civilization that emerges through his history of Hindi literature. The fourth section analyzes the specific configuration of linguistic and religious identity that emerges in Shukla's notion of the community. The fifth section discusses the idea of nation based on his works.

The fourth chapter of the thesis, '**The Alternative Conception of Language, Religion and the Nation in the works of Hazari Prasad Dwivedi**' discusses the contrast to Shukla as it emerges in Dwivedi's works. The first section of this chapter traces a brief biographical sketch of Hazari Prasad Dwivedi. The second section discusses the differences from the dominant history of Hindi literature that are highlighted in Dwivedi's works. The third section analyzes the idea of Indian civilization and its implications in the alternative tradition established by him. The fourth section seeks to dissect the specific linguistic and religious indicators that become prominent in Dwivedi's construction of the majoritarian community. The fifth section highlights the idea of nation that emerges in this construct of Hindi language and the history of its literature.

The fifth and the final chapter of the thesis, titled as '**Heterogeneous Ideas of Hindi Language and Nation in the Political Sphere**' discusses the diversity of the notions of Hindi language and the ideas about nation among the political leaders of the first half of the twentieth century. The first section of this chapter discusses the expansive campaign of Hindi language as it was supported by a variety of socio-political organizations. It also

discusses the linkages between the literary figures and political leaders who were active with some of the organizations as well as movements. The second section goes into discussing the ideas about Hindi language, religious diversity and Indian nation among five political leaders- Madan Mohan Malaviya (1861-1946), Rajendra Prasad (1884-1963), Purushottamdas Tandon (1882-1962), Rammanohar Lohia (1910-1967) and Deen Dayal Upadhyay (1916-1968). It explores their speeches and writings where they discussed their ideas about Hindi language as they endorsed it for national status and their views about the position of religious minorities in the country. The third section of the chapter analyzes the linkages of views about Hindi language with the ideas about the Indian nation. The chapter argues that even though all the leaders supported Hindi language for national status, their imaginations of Hindi differed from each other. The difference was also reflected in their ideas about the nation as well. The chapter attempts at finding the resonances of the debate between Shukla and Dwivedi among the political leaders.

In the method I have attempted to write this thesis, I have attempted to closely read the variety of texts by the two thinkers and the speeches and writings of the five political leaders. From the texts, I have tried to cull out ideas that form the construct of various categories. With regard to the creation of Hindi language, I have drawn from different and scattered texts of each thinker and political leader to render the understanding they built of the language. I have provided citations wherever necessary. From the close reading and a critical analysis, I have tried to explore the socio-political assumptions, implications and ideals that underlie the works of the two thinkers. Further, I have relied on the context of the first half of the twentieth century and the then socio-political discourse (discussed in chapter two) to derive their contribution and participation in the questions of the period. I have not engaged with the veracity of their arguments about literary aspects because the focus of the work is to highlight the socio-political motivations underlying their constructions. However, wherever possible I have attempted to highlight contrasting positions.

While reading the texts which were in Hindi language, one of the main problems that emerged for me were to do with translating some of the key conceptual categories. The majority of texts, although involved complex sentences and coining of new terms, were manageable to be translated and understood when communicating in English in the thesis. Some of the phrases and words, however, posed a problem. I have decided to keep such concepts in Hindi words in italics transliterated in Roman wherever possible. This has helped in keeping the original meaning intact and give a sense of the intention of the thinker. Another important caveat is that the majority of the texts written by the two thinkers were non-fictional accounts of language, literature, literary criticism and political commentaries. While I have made an attempt to include their fictional works as well, but the emphasis in the thesis is on their non-fictional writings most of the time. Finally, even though I sourced most of my material (volumes of anthologies and other books) before the covid-19 restrictions were placed, I was dependent on the archival sources available from the internet in e-book formats. This has led to most of the references in the thesis being sourced to older editions, rather than new or latest ones. Finally, the translations, if any, in the thesis are my own unless specified.

Chapter 1

Linking Language and the Nation: Review of Literature

The category of language has been linked to the category of nation in many significant ways. There is a plethora of literature that explores the relation between the two. The theoretical models that discuss nation and nationalism have often taken a note of language and its importance to the process. Whether it is the study of the process of nation-building, the theories of nationalism or the ideas about the nation, language has been an important, almost inevitable, part of the discussion. Another important way, in which language is looked at in the works around nation and nationalism, has been in its linkage with religion. Several works that look at the importance of religion to the nation often accept the inescapable presence of language to the ideas. The discussion of some of these works is the subject of this chapter. Before diving into the ideas of the nation that this thesis aims to bring out, it is helpful to discuss different research works that explore the links between language and the nation to understand the diversity of questions that have been addressed in them and to probe the new questions that continue to emerge.

In the first part of the chapter, the focus is on discussing the various established theoretical models of linking language and the nation. It looks at the theories of historians and marxist scholars who attach a functional role to language in the process of nation building. As we shall see, language is seen as a part of cultural superstructure while the economic base guides the emergence of the nation-state. The centrality of language to the imagination of the nation was brought out in the work of historian and political scientist, Benedict Anderson. This section of the chapter critically analyzes Anderson's ideas to highlight the lacuna and questions that emerge from it.

The second section of the chapter concerns the discussion of language and nation in the Indian context. The massive heterogeneity of languages in India as well as the colonial experience that impacted both the categories of language and the nation, contribute to the study of Indian context as a particularly fertile one. While some works focus on the colonial interventions in the language via creation of grammar, dictionaries, histories and translations, other works look at the languages that were relatively un-impacted from the colonial interference. Each work emphasizes on the participation of the language as poetry, history of literature, metaphors for nation and identity of people in the nationalistic goals and ideals. As the thesis focuses on Hindi language, this section explores the works that deal with other Indian languages and their relationship to the nation. It is helpful in understanding the mutual correlation, similarities and uniquenesses that the study in each language offers. It is also helpful in looking at the different interpretations and arguments that emerge in the variety of methods adopted for each research work in their study.

The third section of the chapter arrives at the diversity of research conducted in the field of Hindi language and the Indian nation. It also looks at the works that draw the linkages between language and religion and their contribution or impact to the ideas of the nation. Within the specific themes of language and nationalism, this section primarily looks at works that go beyond tracing the chronological events of Hindi-Urdu debate of the nineteenth century to look at the ideas that grounded the notions of Indian nation and Hindi language. Since the focus of this thesis is to probe at the heterogeneity within the Hindi language, this section also explores the works that attribute the importance accorded to Hindi language to the ideas of key literary figures. Finally, in the discussion of works that look at language and religion in Indian politics, the section attempts to highlight the specific ways in which a certain homogeneous notion of Hindi language dominates the arguments about nation in those works. Broadly, this chapter prepares a fertile and necessary ground for understanding the path that this thesis shall proceed on to probe the questions of linkages between language and nation.

1.1 Language in the Process of Nation Building: Theoretical Discussion

What is the relation between language and the idea of the nation? Several theorists have expounded their views on this question. In his classic speech, 'What is a Nation?', the French historian of the nineteenth century, Ernest Renan urges the listeners to divert away from language, religion and race as they are inadequate to form a nation that assures 'the guarantee of liberty' (Eley & Suny 1996). And yet, we know that modern liberal nations have not let go of the language as the prime identity that embeds the nationalist consciousness. Hans Kohn, prominent historian of nationalism, emphasises the link between language and nationalist consciousness. He argues that while sentiments towards one's spoken language always existed, the politics around nationalism transformed language towards elevated cultural importance. Through the spread of education and the printing press, language in the form of spoken dialects acquired uniformity pushing the latter into the background (Kohn 1939, 1005). According to Kohn, even though attributes such as language and religion are often used to define a nationality; they are not essential to its existence. Close to Renan, he also recognized an active will as the most important ingredient in the formation of a nation (*ibid.*). In these early works on nationalism, nation was seen as the result of the 'man's desire to belong' in the modern society unlike in pre-modern societies where men associated with each other on the basis of linguistic, religious and kinship ties. Thus, the nation as a modern entity was not seen as reflecting the traditional ties of language, religion and kinship.

The idea of volition and agentic behavior of man in the founding of the nation was soon questioned by Marxist historians who emphasized the role of economic structure that underlined the emergence of the nation as a political unit. In such analysis, the role of language was brought into the sphere of culture which characterized the superstructure in the forming of a nation. Ernest Gellner, a prominent historian, noted nationalism as the organization of large human groups into centrally educated and culturally homogeneous

units (Gellner 1983). Language assumes an important place in Gellner's reading of nationalism for according to him, in the movement from agrarian society to an industrial society under modernity, culture undergoes distinct changes. In the industrial society, the changes in cultural requirements are met by nationalism, which include primarily the need for a culturally interchangeable, mobile and literate working class population (ibid.,). This cultural homogeneity is disseminated to the population through a modern 'national' educational system and a standardized and written national language. In Gellner's account, nationalism and therefore, the national language are seen as functions of modernity. This functional understanding of nationalism and language has come under critique from various scholars (Anderson 1984; Smith 1987). Yet, Gellner's emphasis on the social and historical forces in studying the rise of nationalism has been influential in guiding major Marxist studies on nationalism (Balibar & Wallerstein 1988; Nairn 1981). Balibar elaborates the role of language in constituting the 'fictive ethnicity' that foregrounds the nation from imaginary to 'natural' and 'immanent' for the subject population. The national standard of language produced by schools, state, economic exchange and family are crucial to root historical populations into a fact of 'nature'. 'A people' are able to recognize the 'ideal nation' through a common language that becomes the fundamental element of their lives (Eley & Suny 1996, 138-42). Balibar also notices a paradox in the importance accorded to language in the sense that the linguistic community is always open and unreliable; one can acquire new languages. Acknowledging a 'strange plasticity' to the linguistic community, he comments that it can quickly 'naturalize new acquisitions' (ibid.,).

In both these accounts that focus on the socio-historical forces, one does not come across an engagement with the politics from the position of the language that shall be helpful in understanding the kind of nationalism that takes shape. The assumption in the above theories is with the lack of differentiation in the types of nationalism produced in various parts of the world. While it is rendered clear that language played a crucial role in the rise of nationalism, the contestations around the development of national language are submerged into a smooth or homogeneous process. The conflict of the ideas around language in the very production of this 'fictive ethnicity' or 'homogenised culture' opens

the paradigm of heterogeneity. Similarly, an instrumental understanding of the role of language as cultural symbols available to be manipulated by the capitalist elites into producing the participation of masses in the favour of nationalism also suffers from limitations to capture the concreteness and specificity of signifiers that language offers to people in identifying a nation. This point shall be discussed in more detail in the third part of this chapter.

One of the dominant theories of nationalism that emphasizes the role of language in the process of the creation and penetration of nation and 'nation-ness' is offered by political scientist and historian, Benedict Anderson. Against the insistence of scholars to analyse nationalism as an ideology (Jaffrelot 2003), Anderson urges that nationalism has to be understood by keeping it in sync with the large cultural systems that preceded it, from which as well as against which it has emerged. He identifies two such cultural systems-religious community and the dynastic realm. In both of these systems, Anderson emphasizes that language played a distinct role which provided the kind of attachment and stability they inhabited in the past. In this approach to study language and nationalism, it becomes clear that the attempt is to understand the profound appeal of the nation to the people so much so that they are motivated to lay their lives in its favour and at the same time to uncover the socio-historical forces that undergirded its emergence and spread (Anderson 1983).

Anderson argues that print capitalism and the emergence of an idea of 'homogeneous empty' time where simultaneity is marked by temporal coincidence vis-a-vis the novel and the newspaper have laid the possibility of the imagination of the nation as a community. The 'mass ceremony' of consumption of newspapers has produced an omniscient reader who is aware of simultaneous existence and continuation of countries and fellow people of society who she may never visit but remain firm of their linkages. He writes, 'The idea of a sociological organism moving calendrically through homogeneous empty time is a precise analogue of the idea of the nation' (ibid., 50). While these ideas have been contextualized by subsequent scholars, let us study in detail

Anderson's expositions on language in different cultural systems as well as in the rise of nationalism.

According to Anderson, a sacred language and a written script were the mediums through which a religious community was imagined. The supraterritorial religious communities were perceived to be cosmically central and supreme through the unlimited stretch of ancient texts written in Latin, Arabic and Pali. For the believers, the religious pilgrimage brought together the dispersed members of the religious community who could not communicate to each other but were connected through the truth language of their religious text (Qoran, Bible) (ibid., 12-18). Language also guarded the membership accorded to these communities. For Anderson, the connection between sacred language and the religious community is so tenacious that the demotion of the truth language through the vernacularization process contributed to the decline of the religious community itself. Thus, the idea of an 'unsubstitutable', 'non-arbitrary' truth language was crucial to the imagination of a grand religious community.

In the other kind of cultural system that Anderson recognizes, the dynastic realm, language is placed centrally again in the project of establishing a unified apparatus of power. Anderson argues that absolutism demanded loyalty and concentrated power in the hands of the ruler against the decentralized feudal nobility. One of the main mediums to ensure a unified stable structure was to ensure the interchangeability of the men and documents across the territory. The use of an administrative language perpetuated through absolutist functionaries who had no real power of their own and could serve as extension of their masters' was crucial to the project. Here comes the second kind of pilgrimage that was undertaken by these functionaries who travelled for work across positions and places solely on the basis of their merit. Lacking a home that held any intrinsic value, these functionaries represented the emergence of substitutability of humans that was made possible through the use of a common administrative language. It is interesting to note that while Gellner notes cultural homogenization as a feature of modern industrial society, for Anderson, it dates further backwards in history.

Nevertheless, both the scholars recognize that control over language was deemed necessary to ensure stability of the political power.

Moving on, Anderson notes that the excavations by humanists in the sixteenth century and the planetary expansion by European travellers to other civilizations in Japan, China, Indian subcontinent and SouthEast Asia contributed to the knowledge of pluralism of human experiences. In Europe, such ‘discoveries’ contributed to the development of the ideas about language. Another scholar elaborates on the ideas explored by the humanists in Europe on reviving the greater role for language in politics (Patten 2006). In the later part of the eighteenth century, a revolution in the systematic study of non-European languages conducted by the East India Company officials and Christian missionaries paved the way for further intensification in the space that language came to occupy. The emergence of philology as a field, with studies on comparative grammar, genealogies of languages, classification of languages into family trees and construction of ‘proto languages’, markedly distinguished this revolution (Anderson 1983, 69).

He notes that the notion of unsubstitutable truth language that linked a divine outside power with the human speaker has evolved into the idea of language as an internal field created by the human speakers themselves. The ancient languages now appeared on the similar equalizing footing of the vernacular languages, interchangeable and translatable. This change in the idea of the language was crucial to the formation of the nation.

In the nineteenth century, the new kind of journey was brought by the railways and steamships that were taken by much larger and variegated crowds. The large scale recruitment of bilingual clerks, school teachers and policemen spread the use of systematic language to the masses. The spread of modern style education to the masses in the colonies ensured that the western ideas of nation, models of nationalism and nation-state were taken to the native intelligentsia (*ibid.*, 115). Elsewhere, it is remarked that the attention paid to language by the orientalist scholars (company officials and missionaries) in the colonies brought a conscious engagement from the native scholars as well who were now studying their own languages in a new light (Trautmann 2006).

Anderson stresses that the conception of nation is always based in language. The 'primordialness' associated with language adds to the nations an aura of fatality. The nations that are known to be modern, conceived through language, gain a sense of fatality embedded in history around their formation. Further, the community that is formed through language denotes a contemporaneous community signified through the popularity of poetry, songs etc.

There are two crucial arguments that Anderson asserts for scholars of nationalism and language to note that are worth mentioning here. First, he argues that one must not treat languages as the nationalist ideologies do which is as symbols of nation-ness much like flags, costumes and folk-dance etc. Rather, languages should be understood in their capacity to lead to the imagination of the national community and effecting solidarities (Anderson 1983, 133). Second, he notes that it is possible that later generations may not speak the official language (hailed as mother tongue). But such a generation is no longer essential for national solidarity. Through the mediums of speeded up mass communication such as radio and television, the language has already been tied to the political consciousness of the nation making them inseparable (ibid., 134-35).

In this detailed discussion of Anderson's study of the origin and spread of nationalism, several important points emerge regarding the language and its link to nation. The broad argument here is that an idea of language has always been important to the origin of the consciousness of community in a cultural system. With the change in the idea of the language due to various social and economic factors, the change in the imagination of the community is resulted. In the eighteenth century, the rise of nationalism has been accorded to the emergence of the notion of language as an object of enquiry, alteration, creation and mass consumption. This idea fed along the development of print capitalism (newspapers and novels) produced the imagination of the community that is the nation. The collective use of language in the form of unison poetry, songs has affected emotional bonds and solidarity for the patriots. It is noteworthy that for Anderson, language is of utmost importance in its contribution to the imagination of the community. He has been emphatic about the immutable role of learning the language even in research in

comparative study and area studies (Anderson 2016). Some scholars argue to take the obviousness of the latter idea with a pinch of salt (Trautmann 2006).

Despite the strength and compatibility of his theory in various contexts, it faces an important limitation that this work seeks to address. Partially identified by Anderson himself in another writing (Anderson 2016), the trajectory of the rise and spread of nationalism vis-a-vis language omits crucial questions about the nature and characteristics of the nation/s so emerged. From the Indian example, it is known that there were multiple kinds of ideas that floated during the nationalist struggle about the shape of the upcoming nation. These competing ideas discussed in meticulous detail the characteristics and features that the new nation must acquire. Just to mention a few of them, these had to do with the questions of inter-community relations (religious, linguistic, caste), intra-community relations (minority within communities), state and its people (rights, duties etc), social and economic disparities etc. The positions on these multiple questions varied the idea of the nation that so formed. While some saw the dawn of the day and succeeded in gaining mainstream support, others failed to find momentum yet continued at the margins.

Even though Anderson focuses on texts (novels and poetry), he does not highlight the qualitative indicators that nuanced the imagination of the nation within them. If by his own admission, language is much more than just a symbolic means of representation of the nation, then the components and constituents of the ‘imagined community’ do not emerge from his work. What we do know is that it leads to an ‘imagined community’ called nation but we do not know what are the values and nature of this nation. This ‘imagined community’ in Anderson’s work is hollow and empty of attributes that are so essential for gauging the specificity and uniqueness of the nation that a respective language adds to it.

It is the contention of this work that to arrive at the details of these composing features, one has to deal in detail with the contest of ideas that underwent the imagination of the nation vis-a-vis the idea of language. In this trajectory from language to nation, the

constituting features and the various accompaniments are debated; some of which are discarded while some are adopted. It is the discussion and decision around it that informs the particular nature of the nation. The crucial part is that this trajectory is not singular, homogenous or uniform. Rather, the road from language to nation is marred by diversity. The diversity emerges from multiple languages that contest to stake a claim to the national or standard language and also from the multiple constructions within a language that seeks to define a nation. The heterogeneity in the ideas about what constitutes a particular language contributes to the heterogeneity in the ideas about the nation. Thus, we have competing constructions of the ideas of nation followed via language. It is these contending ideas that clear the air around politics of the language and nation.

As mentioned previously, the aim of this work is to study the heterogeneity in the politics of language and nation within Hindi language. It does so by looking at the ideas that underwent the linkage of the language and nation primarily in the works of the two eminent literary critics and political thinkers, Ramchandra Shukla and Hazari Prasad Dwivedi; and in the speeches and writings of some prominent political leaders of the Hindi-speaking belt. While the thesis focuses only on the debate within the Hindi language, the link between language and nation has been explicated in other languages in India as well. The next section discusses the connections and their respective features in some major languages in India. It shall be helpful in pluralizing the knowledge around language and nation within the grand nationalist discourse in India.

1.2 Indian Languages and the Nation

As the British Empire expanded in the nineteenth century, the orientalist engagement with languages across India increased. For administrative purposes and also as part of knowledge acquisition about new found cultures, the languages were seen as a great source of entry point into the history, society and culture of a particular territory. Thomas

R. Trautmann, in his notable work, 'Languages and Nations: The Dravidian Proof in Colonial Madras' discussed the languages and nations project that was developed by Orientalist scholars such as William Jones in colonial India. Trautmann highlighted that with regard to the Orientalist project in India, the scholarship that was developed particularly relied its authority on the knowledge of the Indian languages. Especially in the works of the early orientalist scholars before the arrival of James Mill's *History of British India*, the mastery over the languages of the colonized people was believed to give access to the minds, intentions and nature of the people. Consequently, Trautmann argued that orientalism, as it was in British India, was a product of the 'languages and nations project' based on the presumption that the language and nation were related to each other where one gave access to the other.

As the second chapter shall discuss the ideas of some major orientalist scholars, Trautmann's work provides important insights into the formulation of those ideas. It argues that the eighteenth century European thought was dominated by the idea that the languages and nations were parallel to each other, in the sense that they were understood as genealogically related to each other. The tracing of genealogical history of a language could serve to trace the historical memory of the nation. Further, a language was not seen as a self-contained entity, rather its genealogical core was to be found out in its relation with other near kindred languages. Trautmann asserted that the idea of close relation between languages and nations had roots in Mosaic ethnology of the Bible and was not based solely in science as was assumed and claimed to be. In the context of the newly colonized societies and their languages in the eighteenth century, a method was developed and pursued enthusiastically, by orientalist scholar such as William Jones, that in the lack of a historical memory, a scholar could discern language relations and therefore the history of nations via the word list. The comparative vocabulary or the word list sought to find out a core or the root of the word and the grammar that, for Jones, presented the genealogical core of the language. Similarities between these core words were seen as proof of common genealogical descent of languages, here Indo-European, from a common ancestral language. Trautmann argued that the explosion of the writing of

grammar, lexicon and etymology of languages that characterized the eighteenth century was to be seen in this context.

An important argument that is asserted in Trautmann's work is to do with the support found in the Indian linguistic tradition by the orientalist scholars looking to trace genealogical lineages of the languages. Trautmann has argued that the Indian linguistic analysis treated the three sets of vocabulary *tatsama* (same as Sanskrit), *tadbhav* (similar to Sanskrit) and *desya* words in structural terms, which is to mean as three registers of language with relative prestige or separate usages. However, such structural orientation was ignored in the orientalist analysis who perceived the three registers of vocabulary historically; *tatsama* as the core and the others as historical mutations of the language helpful in generating the history of the language and the nation. This exercise necessitated sorting out and withdrawing the other words and discovering a historical version of language that was 'pure' or formed the core; in its affinity with the nation. It also came to represent an indigeneous idea of the nation found in the past, now forgotten. As we shall see in the later chapters, the various exercises related to the genealogical development of languages in India, for example the debate about whether Sanskrit followed Prakrit or vice-versa, the affinity between Sanskrit and the Hindi, Bengali and other regional languages, and the sorting out of Persian- Arabic words for tracing a direct descendant of Sanskrit in the Hindi language, derive their inspiration from the early orientalist languages and nations project.

Another important work that looks at the relation between language and the nation form as characterized by violence is Asha Sarangi's paper "The Topography of Linguistic Nationalism". In her paper she draws out three different but mutually related and overlapping conceptual understandings of language (Sarangi 2015, 186). In each of the three conceptual categories, she attempts to carve out the overlap of language with religion and their 'subsequent encompassment into the territorial boundaries of specific nation states'. In her first conceptual category, she focuses on language as discourse which primarily looks at the ideological and political modes of representation that were used by the colonial and nationalist discourses to define language. She differentiates the

treatment of language by the colonial states that followed the ideology of the language as culture. She argues that under colonial discourse linguistic differences were seen as cultural differences which were then played out in the specific roles assigned to different groups of people and languages. For example, while some languages were prioritized by the colonial states in India as suitable for administrative work, other languages were ignored resulting in a contest for seats of power and politics of inclusion and exclusion. On the other hand, the nationalists focused on employing language as an ideology where the political and cultural form of the nation could be embedded in it. The idea of language as collectivity that shared an organic bond and intimacy with the nation was widely shared in the nationalist discourse.

According to Sarangi, the nationalist discourse could be tracked at three levels: in its response to the English language, in the representation of various languages and their communities within the nation and in the making of the national language. She argues that the process of 'discursive and institutional formation of the nation is also a process of linguistically consolidating the state'. The realization of a particular language and the community of its speakers as equal to the nation for the nationalist discourse becomes an important political project. Both the colonial and nationalist discourses questioned the various forms of linguistic practices that produced specific social identities and communities.

This brings to the second conception of language which is language as practice. Under this, the emphasis is to look at the various forms of social constitution, production of subject and object, structure and agency. The linguistic practices reformulate the nature and form of language, its identity and community. Sarangi notes three major types of linguistic practices : enumerative, print and pedagogical exercises. The enumerated practices are linked to the processes of social mobilization and consolidation of linguistic identities and further impact the narratives about social, cultural, geographical and philological aspects of languages. The print practices navigate the construction of literary public sphere where language communities contest for recognition and identity. Sarangi differentiates from Benedict Anderson's treatment of print capitalism in the making of the

nation. She argues that Anderson “does not account for the violent structures and practices which enable print capitalism to shrink this linguistic diversity and allow the development of an exclusive and limited reading public to grow into an imagined community” (ibid.,193). For Sarangi, the print capitalism in the larger processes of homogenization and vernacularization are embedded in the politics of exclusivity and discrimination. Without highlighting the violence that is a part of selecting, excluding and including language through the print practices, a nation form is not imagined. The pedagogical practices of compiling text-books, writing grammars, creating literary canons and dictionaries are the third set of practices that produced particular forms of linguistic consciousness, mobilized, and institutionalized linguistic identities.

The third conceptual category is that of language as identity. The previous two conceptions of language as discourse and practices are intimately related to the conception of language as identity. Sarangi argues that the question of linguistic identity is often seen in overlap with various other social, cultural, and political identities of race, region, religion, history, caste, territory, gender, and culture. In the various forms of violent exclusivity and ethno-genocidal activity, the narratives and dialogues employ language as a political object and resource to create linguistic-social differentiation. By analysing the interaction between language as discourse, practice and identity, the category of language can be considered as social collectivity and is marred with violence and hostility found in death of languages, minority groups, violent nationalisms and genocidal wars.

The above discussed work becomes relevant to this thesis as the three different conceptions of the language: discourse, practice and identity, are employed in mutually compatible ways in the works of the two literary thinkers: Ramchandra Shukla and Hazari Prasad Dwivedi. As we shall see in chapters three and four particularly, the conceptual differentiations of language drawn out by Sarangi in her paper were not neatly divided and separated in the works of the literary thinkers. Not only were they located in distinct sites of colonial state and nationalist thinkers, literary sphere and that of the political arena but also each conception and the site fed into each other. The idea of

language as a cultural marker impacted the pedagogical practices of dictionary, grammar and more importantly, canon-construction, which was deeply embedded in their ideological notions of the nation. Thus, while the differentiation of three conceptions of language is noteworthy, it is possible to see their mixture and interrelatedness with blurred boundaries in a common site of production.

Lisa Mitchell in her work, 'Language, Emotion, and Politics in South India: The Making of a Mother Tongue' looks into the process that led to the mobilization of language in the twentieth century as 'primary and natural foundation' for a wide range of practices. These include 'reorganization of knowledge, everyday practices, literary production', history writing, political organization and representation of socio-cultural identities (Mitchell 2009). In her work, one is able to witness in detail the long drawn changes that language as a field underwent in the nineteenth and the twentieth century, especially in Telugu language. Parallels can be drawn with other languages including Hindi to a significant degree.

Mitchell argues that prior to the colonial period, languages in India were not known as independent markers of identity. The rise of vernacular languages in the early part of the second millennium saw the production of texts in Telugu such as the composition of the epic Mahabharata by Nannaya. She contests the argument that this vernacularization should be seen as the emergence of vernacular cultures, 'Telugu culture' against the Brahmanical Sanskritic culture. Rather, vernacular language, here Telugu, was only one of the mediums in which contests over cultural supremacy took place. Language usage did not prevent admission or membership to a community (ibid., 48). The choice of language was not considered as the necessary identifier of a particular community. An argument confirmed by another eminent scholar Sheldon Pollock (2006).

In the nineteenth century, language emerged as an independent signifier of the identity of a people. From *des bhasalu* (language of the land), it was transformed to *matr bhasalu* (language of the mother), a personal attribute of individuals (Mitchell 2009, 52). In the 1881 census, the usage of language as a category was substitutable with nationality. It has

emerged as a force of collective imagination. By the twentieth century, the Telugu language, like many other languages, was now imagined and experienced as a personified object of adoration, pride and devotion. It now surfaced as an idea and object independent of its speakers. Mitchell lays out the five distinct stages that led to the production and cementing of the new discourse around language as witnessed in Telugu language.

The first of these is the shift in the patronage and technology of production with the advent of the British and decline of royal courts and local lords. This had an impact on the new attempts to represent poets to define and appeal to larger audiences. Second was the change in the literary styles and techniques to represent human subjects through narrative. The story from life to death of the protagonist, along with the model behaviour or conduct formed the content of the text. The human subject also diversified and replaced with poets themselves, inanimate objects like language, territory and linguistically defined communities (ibid, 80). Thirdly, the collections of the biographical and literary details of the poets were arranged chronologically symbolizing a linear movement in history. The fourth stage which is linked to the third is that of the presentation of the collection of multiple poets as the history of language itself. The biographies of poets were sorted according to the language (Marathi, Telugu, Bengali and Sanskrit) ignoring the fact that some poets wrote in more than one language. These histories of poets in one language were transformed as the history of the language itself. The poets and writers are seen as not representing themselves and their literary character but in relation to the development of the language and in service of it, as Telugu poets. Finally, language emerges as the protagonist of a full scale biography in its name signifying a life independent of its speakers and as an entity in itself (ibid., 82).

Through the careful elaboration of these stages, Mitchell elaborates the arrival of the new idea of language. In the twentieth century, as it emerged in the politics around Telugu language and culture, the category of language has surpassed its value as a medium of communication. It has acquired a new magnified significance where the life of Telugu language is independent of its speakers. It has grounded itself as an idea, personified in the form of Telugu *Talli*, and as a cultural identity available for creating social and

political consciousness. It does not matter whether one can speak the language or not, what matters is they belong to the idea of Telugu language and culture (ibid., 99).

The module of chronological ordering of poets in one language represented as the history of language is adopted in Hindi language also, most prominently by Ramchandra Shukla. Shukla's '*Hindi Sahitya ka Itihaas*' continues to dominate the study of Hindi language across the country and world. In the text, Hindi language emerges as a carrier of the values of Indian civilization running as a perennial stream from a long time. It is crucial to highlight that even though the attention is posited at language as a category, it does not dismiss religion. The idea of the language that is formed is constitutive of other categories such as religion, region, caste etc. This composite idea then provides the necessary content for political imagination in the twentieth century, in various languages and regions. The purpose of this work is to assess the texts to uncover the constitutive ingredients that form this idea. It thus moves beyond Mitchell's work to focus on the idea of language, interactions with other identities and the associated imagination of the nation. It also looks at the heterogeneity of such imaginations as found in the diversity of thinkers.

Another text that looks at the heterogeneity in the ways that the language and the nation are imagined is Sumathi Ramaswamy's '*Passions of the Tongue: Language Devotion in Tamil India. 1891-1970*'. She counters the construction of languages as identities in a homogeneous, stable and singular fashion. She argues that even though language may be referred to by a singular name, its 'proper' name, it comes to translate into a diversity of meanings and sentiments for the speakers (Ramaswamy 1997, 22). Highlighting such multiplicity of imagination of Tamil identity and the conflicting politics following from them, she presents a rich history of ideas and politics that were manifested in the creation of Tamil language and culture from the nineteenth century onwards.

Ramaswamy categorizes the diversity of imaginations into four main heads- 'religious', 'the classicist', 'the Indianist' and the 'Dravidianist'. A brief discussion of these four regimes of imagination shall be helpful in unveiling the layers of politics that language

and nation linkage beholds. The closing decades of the nineteenth century saw the assertion of Tamil identity based on the notion of Tamil as a divine language; 'favored by the gods themselves'. Such an assertion was accompanied by a wave of religious revivalism in the Madras Presidency around neo-Shaivism. It sought to counter the brahmanical attempt to overwhelm Tamil identity, the colonial convulsion of Dravidian beliefs and the neo-Hindi formulations in North India. In this formulation of Tamil identity, the idea was to recover a 'pure Tamil' language devoid of Sanskritic terms. A Tamilian religious identity was imagined away from influences of 'Brahmanism, Aryanism, Sanskrit and Hinduism' (ibid., 33). Another way the Tamil identity was refashioned was through what Ramaswamy refers to as 'the classical' way. Under this, the stress was laid on the value of Tamil as a classical language, 'the language of first humans to flourish on earth'. It was believed that the classical Tamil opened the gateway to a great civilization that stood next to ancient Greek civilization. While the 'compensatory' strategy of classicism offered a belief in the harmonious co-mingling of Tamil and Sanskrit scriptures, the 'contestatory' classicism asserted the supremacy of Tamil over Sanskrit in the continuity of the former against the 'dead' nature of the latter.

Removed from the imagination of Tamil as the language of religion and civilization, the 'Indianist' and the 'Dravidianist' were concerned with Tamil as the language of politics. The 'Indianist' formulation affirmed a Tamil identity that stood in the defence of the Indian nationalist movement against British imperialism. It espoused faith in the Indian nation as committed to promoting Tamil identity at the regional level and Hindi as the official language at the national level. The idea of Tamil as *taymoli*- the 'mother tongue' comes central to this imagination that is seen as foundational to the formation of community and the nation. Ramawamy argues that the metaphor of mother helped this linkage at several levels. It familiarized and familialized the Tamil identity by masking it in terms of everyday lives. It de-historized, depoliticized and naturalized the identity for the speakers generating loyalty from them (ibid., 125).

The fourth kind of imagination that gains momentum and dominates till 1960s is that of Dravidianism. The Dravidianist regime was focussed on the central entity of Tamil with a

vision of an autonomous community- racial and political. The prime agenda of this formulation was to establish the dominance of Tamil in all spheres of life and being (ibid., 65). It sought to dissociate Tamil from religious or civilizational formations as attempted by other imaginations. Ramaswamy argues that while it denounced all other religions, Dravidianism ended up sacralising Tamil and contributed to its divinization. The shift was from mother-like status of Tamil to the insistence that Tamil is the mother. The power of this imagination can be gauged from the success it enjoyed in the anti-Hindi protests in 1968 and the demand for a separate Tamil nation by some outfits.

This recasting of Tamil language places it on a platform where it is no more unique or exceptional; it is as 'divine' as Sanskrit, classical as Greek or Latin, 'mother tongue' as the languages of Europe. Further, Tamil identity is to stand in opposition to Hindi. This curating of Tamil identity means, as in Telugu and Hindi, that the language as a medium of communication among the speakers is no longer a necessity. Tamil identity demands devotion from a Tamilian subject whose very being is ontologically suffused with the former. It has come to form the life force that 'animates him from within' (ibid., 255). Ramaswamy's meticulous account of the creation of a heterogeneous Tamil identity which infuses language and religion, discloses the diversity of ways in which language and nation could be imagined. The possibility of multiple ways of politics around 'an identity' opens the platform for heterogeneous and plural trajectories. For the Hindi language, this study provides an important bearing to keep in mind. Given the dominance that Hindi language and its associated imagination of the nation enjoys in the political discourse, unpacking and unveiling the diversity of this connection reveals the gateway to more democratic possibilities.

It is important to pause here and note that not all languages in the Indian subcontinent underwent the similar process during the colonial period. As we now move to another dominant language, Punjabi, which is a language to witness partition of its speakers in 1947, we arrive at a different recasting of language and the politics of collective imagination around it. Farina Mir's account in 'The Social Space of Language: Vernacular Culture in British Colonial Punjab' offers a necessary caveat from the

generalized linkages being drawn between language and nation. A brief discussion of the Punjabi language during the colonial period helps us in understanding the specificity that Telugu, Tamil, Hindi and Urdu in their capacity to fashion an imagination of the nation, occupy.

Mir argues that Punjabi language enjoyed relative independence from the colonial state and did not witness the kind of interventions that other languages did. The orientalist scholars in Punjab identified Punjabi language in Gurumukhi script as the way to understand Sikh religion and culture. The colonial officials shied away from promoting Punjabi language as the vernacular of the province lest an uprising, from yet to be disarmed Sikh military, cause instability of the British rule. Urdu language was recognized as the language of official use arguing that it was language of the elites in the province. It also helped the company officials to unite the province with other parts by employing a cadre of trained administrative personnel from United Provinces and Bengal. Thus, Punjabi language did not receive the kind of attention in standardization, printing primers and texts and excavations in classic texts that other languages did. Even though colonial officials were later required to achieve some degree of fluency in speaking Punjabi, it nevertheless was not treated as important for official patronage and promotion (Mir 2010, 46).

Mir has shown that this lack of influence and intervention from colonial officials allowed the Punjabi literary culture to flourish unabated. It managed to retain continuities from the pre-colonial period unlike most other languages of the period. The Punjabi literary texts that were printed and circulated depended largely on the market demand. The unhindered demand for the Punjabi literature- popular Qissa tradition signifies the continued social and cultural relations and practices among the people. The analysis of some of these texts by Mir reveals that socio-cultural relations among the people were guided by a shared Punjabi ethos and not by religious or linguistic ties. The notion of '*zat*' that featured prominently in these texts reveal that away from caste, religious and kinship structures, the Punjabi speaking communities shared the concept of '*zat*' as an 'essence, substance or nature'. It was perceived as an innate quality that was common to

all members of this community irrespective of their religion (ibid., 133). Similarly, unlike a broad landscape that was opened in most other languages through writing of travelogues, comparative studies etc, Punjabi language and literature remained immune to such interventions. The spatial categories continued to be locally bound and held no social affinity with an idea or image of the nation. The characters identified themselves with their local geographies and related with local group solidarities. The sense of a larger delimited space of the nation was not crucial to their sensibilities.

Further, in the colonial period that saw increasing communalization and sharpening of divide between religions, Punjabi literary texts offer an alternate view. Mir argues that in the analysis of the texts, the notions of piety that are central to the lessons imbibed in the Qissa tradition reveal that they were influenced by the notion of piety that could be followed or agreed by adherents of all religious faith. It did not try to assert the strict piety of a particular religion (Islam or Sikhism), neither did it subscribe to syncretism of religions. It points towards a social and religious life that was shared by a larger Punjabi ethos as it survived and flourished in the Punjabi literary formation (ibid., 151).

This analysis of Punjabi language unpacks for us the particular nature of the linkage between language and nation. As discussed above, Punjabi language, despite a flourishing print and market demand, did not witness the rise of sensibility that imagines itself as a community at national level. Rather, the religious, cultural and ethical concerns are spatially limited. The membership to this community was bound not with religion or language but by the shared ethos. There is a lack of affinity with other communities that otherwise together may imagine themselves to be national. Mir argues that it is not so much the print, as expounded by Anderson that is crucial to the rise of the necessary connection between language and nation. Rather, the active ingredient is the state intervention through policies, promotion and patronage that changes the dynamics of language and its relation with the people. Punjabi language and society remained aloof from ideas of nation, religion and linguistic categories as boundaries that were developed and found in other languages (Hindi, Urdu, Tamil etc) primarily because of the ignorance that it enjoyed from the colonial rule.

Punjabi language, in Pakistan, however has taken a different route. Even though in both the countries, Punjabi language has offered an example of persistence in the face of adverse language policy of the state, yet in Pakistan, it took a more assertive posture. Alyssa Ayers in her account of the language and nationalism in Pakistan has looked at the unique case of Punjabi and several other languages as they strive to lay their claim to nationhood against the official imposition of Urdu (Ayers 2009). The official language of Pakistan, Urdu, had sought to achieve a unity of the nation in the belief that it closely identified with Islam. This understanding came under serious competition from languages like Bengali (East Pakistan), Punjabi, Seraiki, Sindhi and Balochi. In the Punjab province of Pakistan especially, the economically, socially and politically dominant elite has continued to seek affinity with Punjabi language. Ayers argues that the case of Punjabi language in Pakistan defeats the instrumental understanding of language in a nation where language movements are seen as the manipulation of symbols by elites to capture economic and political interests.

The Punjabi speaking elite, also fluent in Urdu and English, dominates the politics, symbolizes elite class and industry in Pakistan with a rich reservoir of resources (ibid., 71). Yet, they have continued to demand Punjabi language's 'rightful inheritance as one of the great world languages'. They have related to the lower hierarchy of Punjabi language in the national discourse with a sense of 'loss' of Punjabi self. Despite the relative affluence of Punjab region, the literary activities in Punjabi depict cries of marginalization from English and Urdu (ibid., 80). Interestingly, the demand for a higher status for Punjabi does not easily translate into anti-nation or imagination of separate nation for Punjabi. The Punjabi speaking province has sought to fashion a cultural supremacy within the boundaries of the nation.

Both the accounts of Punjabi language, as it fared in India and Pakistan, reveal a crucial theoretical input with regard to the link between language and nation. Ayers has pointed that while attention has been paid to the forging of a national identity through standardization, official support, emotional rhetoric of mother tongue and widespread dissemination, the case of Punjabi language depicts a serious limitation of the project

(ibid., 101). The cultural memory of one's language has continued to linger at the margins and preserve itself in the face of an adverse imposition. Punjabi language in colonial India and post-independent Pakistan managed to strive and sustain with the help of market demand driven print culture and a prosperous elite in the respective cases. While Ayers argues that there is a value attached to culture in its symbolic role as an end in itself, it can also be understood as the open democratic nature of the possibilities that language and nation offer. The trope of the mother tongue is a relative one that can lead into a critical road different from the one led by the national or official language. The survival of spoken language keeps the possibility of alternate fashioning of the nation as an ongoing project.

Keeping the diversity of trajectories taken by languages and their linkages with nation in mind, it is now important to retreat to the path taken by Hindi language as discussed by a variety of works. The study of Hindi language and Indian nation has been an important arena of debate and discussion. The dominance of Hindi language and Hindi speaking belt in Indian politics and the intertwined history of Hindi with Urdu language have made the field of Hindi language and politics an interesting sphere of research. The next section shall discuss the politics of Hindi language and the imagination of the nation along with the study of Hindi language and religion in different works.

1.3 Hindi Language and the Nation

One of the major works that looks into the question of Hindi language and nationalism is Alok Rai's monograph titled *Hindi Nationalism* (2000). The period discussed is the latter half of the nineteenth century when the movement for admission of Nagari script in the Northwestern Provinces gained momentum. The book ends with the McDonnell order of 1900. Rai, primarily looks with meticulous detail, the emergence of Hindi and Urdu, from a common linguistic register, into two separate languages. He charts out the politics

through which Nagari script was standardised and corrected to argue for its compatibility in official and public use. One of the big questions that *Hindi Nationalism* takes up is with the overlap of the linguistic and religious identities in the nineteenth century as Hindi was associated with Hindu and Urdu with Muslims.

The work presents several important arguments, some of which are worth discussing here. Beginning from the eighteenth century, Rai identifies several key moments that brick by brick contributed to the understanding that Hindi and Urdu were two different languages and had to be treated as such. The Fort William College project hired maulvis and pundits for putting together a corpus of works to train the colonial administrative staff into the languages, customs and practices of the people. The institutional requirement compelled the translators and interlocutors to produce two variants of the same language, one that leaned towards Sanskrit and other towards Persian-Arabic sources. Further, the Christian missionaries in their zeal to engage with the two religious communities- the Muslims and Hindus- identified the language of the religious texts as the linguistic register of the common adherents (*ibid.*, 24). The massive diversity of dialects and religious beliefs was simplified in two religious and linguistic variants.

A heightened push to the rising separation between Hindi and Urdu was met in the movement in the North West provinces to admit the use of Nagari script for administrative purposes. The movement arose in response to the stark reality of incongruence on ground where education was imparted in two separate streams- Perso-Arabic script and Sanskrit in Nagari script. The latter drew students from Hindu upper caste who failed to fetch employment in administration due to official constraints of language efficiency. The arguments for the admission of the Nagari script began with the claims of the inability of large number of people who had no knowledge of Persian-Arabic script to communicate the vernacular language of the common people and the superiority of the Nagari script for primary education (*ibid.*, 41-44). This proposal was met with opposition from elites of Muslim gentry who perceived it as a threat to their stable employment. The tempo of the movement was shifted to the identification of Urdu in Persian-Arabic script as the language of Muslims and vice-versa. For the protagonists

of Urdu, the opposition was a desperate attempt to preserve the last remnants of Muslim feudal rule that it enjoyed prior to the coming of the British. Rai argues that it is in the misplaced sense of victimhood arising from the humiliation of the defeat of 1857 revolt that Muslims located in the British rule and Hindus in the even older Muslim invasions of 12th century (ibid., 35). The tussle of the script then gets attached with a religious trauma and struggle to reclaim the lost pride.

The complicated threads of script and language controversy charted out in this monograph and their intertwining with religion offers a strong beginning point for this work. Moving ahead, it is in the first decade of the twentieth century that the movement breaks out from the script mould to claiming the national status for the language. The two prime organisations such as Hindi Sahitya Sammelan and Dakshin Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha were founded in the first two decades of the twentieth century. The Nagari Pracharini Sabha which was founded in 1893 started its journal Nagari Pracharini Patrika in 1896. Another journal 'Saraswati' was started in 1900. In Uttar Pradesh, the total number of books produced in Hindi increased from 2,793 in 1881-1890 to 5,063 in 1901-1910. From the distribution of 8,002 newspapers in 1891 in Hindi language, the number swelled to 77,731 in 1911 (Trivedi 2003). It is evident that even though the admission of script gave an initial stimulus, there was a major churning moment in the twentieth century that enlarged the vision that Hindi language and its enthusiasts aimed at. The accentuated sphere of nationalist politics in the twentieth century opens up an arena of important research that explains the conscious connections of language with nation and language with religion at a much wider scale.

The period of the nineteenth century has been identified as the period that marked the initial churning of the ideas of nation by other scholars as well. Sudhir Chandra, in his book, 'The Oppressive Present: Literature and Social Consciousness in Colonial India' (2014) delves into the influential writers and their works across languages in India such as Bengali, Gujarati and emphasising on Hindi, to trace the initial shape formed of the ideas about nation. In a particularly important chapter, 'Defining the Nation', he looks at the ideas about religion and language as key to understanding the notions about nation.

When it came to religion, Chandra focuses on the diversity of positions that were propagated in various texts in the nineteenth century with regard to the Hindu-Muslim relations. He delves into an analysis of the terms and meanings implied when referring to the Muslim community in the discussions on history, the issues that marred the then India and the anticipations for the future of the country. Chandra highlighted that it was possible for the same writer, such as Bharatendu Harishchandra and Pratap Narayan Mishra, to use the term 'Hindu' while referring to fellow countrymen as well as to the specific religious community of Hindus, i.e. non-Muslims (Chandra 2014, 133-139). While in the context of the rising united voice against political subjection, the texts emphasized the importance of the unity of Hindus and Muslims or Hindus as everyone who inhabited in the land of Hindustan, in the context of Hindu-Muslim riots in 1883-1885, there was greater exclusion and animosity reflected against the Muslims.

Chandra, in his study of the prominent works of the nineteenth century in Hindi, also looked at the penetration and propagation of communal rhetoric against Muslims. He pointed out novels, plays and essays of historical nature that mentioned the brutalities and oppression faced by Hindus during the reign of Islamic rulers. The discussion is nuanced by the diversity of positions taken by different writers or different positions by the same writer such as Harishchandra. Chandra argued that even though most of the texts reflected the social and political context of antagonism between the two religious communities in the regions of respective writers, yet, the texts strengthened the narrative of an oppressive Muslim ruling population and Hindu humiliation in the literary sphere. Chandra further argued that several customs and practices of Hindus that came under criticism in the nineteenth century such as child marriage, *sati* and *purdah* etc were accrued in the texts to the brutalities and threat from the Muslims in medieval period. Even though there were many thinkers who emphasized the need to differentiate the then Muslim masses from the Muslim rulers who invaded India, the distinction was feeble in contrast to the loud attack on the Muslim intimidation against the Hindus. The focus on Chandra's book is to locate the discourse around the Hindu-Muslim relations. It does not look into the specific understanding of Hinduism that was brought forth by the various writers. For example, while some of the writers recognized the strife among various

religious sects of Hinduism, in the broad category of Hindus viewed vis-a-vis the Muslims, the distinctions within Hindus are not highlighted in Chandra's work.

Interestingly, in his analysis of the rise of the consciousness among regional languages, Chandra entered into a new section to discuss the rise of regional nationalisms in three different regional languages- Assamese, Gujarati and Oriya. While Oriya and Assamese languages were associated with the regional identities in response to the domination and hegemony of Bengali language, Gujarati language moved from a Gujarati consciousness to a Gujarati national identity. It is important to note that the writers and their literary texts formed the prime arena where these ideas were being discussed and highlighted in the nineteenth century. In the case of Assamese language, the sense of the threat was faced from the Bengali language which was identified as the vernacular to be used in administrative work. The Assamese language failed to establish an independent existence of its own to be recognized by the British officials. The inferior status of Assamese language was often confirmed by Bengali writers who dismissed the stature of Assamese language. Chandra stated the instance of Lakshminath Bezbaruwa and his relation with the family of Rabindranath Tagore about the derision or dismissal of Assamese as against Bengali language (ibid., 164). The pamphlets, texts and essays brought out in support of Assamese language relied on elaborating an independent existence of Assamese and in the process cultivated an independent Assamese identity. It focussed on emphasising the particular culture and history of Assamese people. Several writers in the nineteenth century who wrote on the themes of bringing glory back to the Assamese language were involved in developing an Assamese regional identity that sought differentiation from other regional languages. Similar differentiation was sought by Oriya language and writers who established their particularity using the history and culture of Oriya-Jagannath Temple and the medieval Orissan empire (ibid., 169).

In the case of Gujarati language, Chandra argued that while it was not against any rival language that triggered the rise of social consciousness of an independent of Gujarati language, the writings of nineteenth century writer, Narmad, were foremost in establishing an independent Gujarati identity. Through poems and pamphlets, a secular

Gujarati identity was erected by Narmad. Later, this mission was taken up by other prominent writers in Gujarati language. Through their writings and literary organization for Gujarati language, a Gujarati identity was carved out as the space of a regional cultural giant. Later on, with the help of K.M Munshi, Gujarati identity was portrayed as a national identity. However, it was not in antagonism to the pan-India national identity (ibid., 171).

Another notable work that looks into the question of standardization of language and nationalization of religious tradition in the nineteenth century is Vasudha Dalmia's 'The Nationalization of Hindu Traditions: Bharatendu Harishchandra and Nineteenth century Benares' (1997). In this monograph, Dalmia works with a nuanced notion of the word 'Hindu' as it came to be used in the nineteenth century in its tripartite version, as anything/anyone that resided in Indian subcontinent, as the religious denomination for those who were not Muslims and as a nationalist rendition of those who were the members of the national/Indian community. She traces the authority of the city Benares as it was represented in the orientalist discourse because of its revered status in Indian mythology and the particularly of the nineteenth century literary giant, Bharatendu Harishchandra. The latter was a resident of the city, the merchant prince who through his literary genius hugely influenced the nineteenth century political discourse.

Dalmia argues that as an important actor in the Nagari movement, Harishchandra, who began with a notion of singular vernacular as Hindi or Urdu, ended up supporting the distinctiveness of Hindi and Urdu as two separate languages. Harishchandra was the foremost authority who through his writings in various journals popularized the use of the Khari Boli variant of Hindi for literary purposes. This standardized the nature of Hindi language to a particular variant of it that was seen as appropriate for literary and official usage. Dalmia briefly touches upon Harishchandra's notable poem *Nij Bhasha ahe Sab Unnati ka Mool* and the focus on *nij* i.e. self to argue that even though Hindi was projected as the language that was the language of the 'homes', the reality was far from true. The languages in homes were local vernaculars which were distinct from the standardized Hindi that was put forward by the movement.

There is no way one can underestimate the importance of the notion of 'language of self/one's own' that was so emphatically presented by Bharatendu Harishchandra. The idea found its way into moulded or improvised renditions to other authorities who worked for Hindi language such as Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi and Ramchandra Shukla. It remains to be seen as to how the language of the 'homes' and the official language were later reconciled. It is not sufficient to argue that literary works that aimed at standardization of the language brought forth the change because the larger issue with the language aiming at national status is to relate the boundaries of the homes to that of the national boundaries. Colloquial and vernacular languages across regions of the country were to be brought together to argue for a singular language for national status. Clearly, there was more than standardization that took place. This work aims to pick from these threads to look at how the idea of the language of one's own was changed, evolved and put to use to enlarge the ambit of Hindi language.

Further, Dalmia proceeds to argue that Harishchandra, in lieu of the orientalist arguments about monotheistic Christianity as the uniform religion in the west being a marker of an improved civilization, propagated through his works, the Vaishnava tradition of Hindu religion as the only religion of the Hindus. From active support received from orientalist scholars like Grierson and native scholars like Rajendra Mitra, Harshchandra tried to argue that the Vaisnava tradition was the *prakrt mat*, the natural religion of the people, which has continued historically in an unbroken spontaneous form. The multiple faiths that have emerged in the current times were transgressions from the *mul sutra*, the root portion. Dalmia argues that apart from homogenizing the multiple branches into a single dominant Vaishnava tradition, Harishchandra also nationalizes it as the true religion of the nation. Thus, the authority of Harishchandra as a prolific writer and literary genius combined to standardize the Hindi language and Vaisnava tradition of Bhakti as Hindu religion.

In the twentieth century, as against the attempts in nineteenth century from literary giants like Harishchandra in North Western provinces and Bankim Chandra Chatterjee in Bengal to popularize and nationalize variations of Krishna Bhakti as the mainstream

Hindu religion, the emphasis shifts to Ram Bhakti variant of Hindu religion. As the movement for Hindi language as the national language gains mileage, there are simultaneous attempts to propagate Ram bhakti as the homogeneous religion of Hindus. Shukla perceives Ram bhakti as the guiding light of most Hindu households in their everyday affairs. This work tries to understand this conundrum as to how the shift to Ram bhakti which expanded to more aggressive and expansive levels in the later twentieth century could be gauged from the changed nature and definition of Hindi language.

Another important literary figure who was influential in carving the shape of the modern Hindi language was Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi. Sujata Mody's work, 'The Making of Modern Hindi: Literary Authority in Colonial North India', discusses the role of Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi as the editor of 'Saraswati' journal in creating modern Hindi (2018). The book argues that Dwivedi played a pivotal role in popularizing the usage of Khari Boli variant of Hindi for a variety of genres. Dwivedi's critical role in standardizing and cementing the form of Hindi language in the literary sphere had a lasting influence on a number of poets and writers. Mody argues that Dwivedi's authority as the editor of Saraswati varied in its response towards the challenges it faced (Mody 2018, 7). While at some moments, Dwivedi required an absolute adherence to his dictates, there were other times when his authority exhibited cautious flexibility and a willingness to compromise. The concern for Dwivedi was that if Hindi was to represent India as its national language and literature then it must possess an original corpus of writings that shall surpass other languages in its refinement (ibid., 29). The literature of Marathi, Bengali and Gujarati were identified as sources of motivation as well as potential competitors for a less advanced Hindi.

Mody asserts that Dwivedi's position was neither cohesive nor consistent throughout his editorship on various social issues. For example, on the question of Urdu, Dwivedi vacillated between the claims that the latter was not to be seen as a separate language from Hindi and that it was distinct from and yet a branch of Hindi. Further, on the question of the the lexicography and linguistic register of Hindi language, Dwivedi propounded that while Hindi language was to reflect its natural contact with multiple

regional and vernacular languages; the 'bolchal ki bhasha' is to be the preferred mode of language for literary expression; he also maintained that for reaching the maximum number of people, it was important for Hindi language to derive from simple Sanskrit than Persian language.

Mody further highlighted that Dwivedi employed a number of visual strategies to expand and popularize the usage of Khari boli variant of Hindi language as the pan-India national language. For example, the pairing of image-poem drew on resources from multiple regions that connected poetry from the Hindi belt to paintings and art from modern day Kerala and to the technology of high quality image production that came from Bengal (ibid., 160). Such pairings reinforced Dwivedi's imagined boundaries of Hindi literature and Indian nation. However, an important idea of Mody's book is to evaluate the variety of challenges and alternatives that Dwivedi's project faced even while it dominated the Hindi literary sphere. A major opposition to the Dwivedi's ideas specifically with regard to the notion of Sahitya came from Ramchandra Shukla. While Dwivedi had taken an expansive definition of Sahitya, that included poetry, biographies, stories, novels, plays, criticism, travelogues, histories, science and books on technology (ibid., 91-92); Shukla differed from this notion and disputed that Sahitya was not inclusive of everything in print. He asserted that Sahitya was distinct from science, that while Sahitya was related to personal and subjective rooted in imagination and thought, science had to do with universal, objective and factual. Further, with regard to the vocabulary in Hindi language, Mody cites two short stories that employed vocabulary from regional as well as vernacular languages that were geographically limited. The short stories represented an argument for the preservation of regionalism and vulgarity in modern Hindi literary expression (ibid., 248).

Francesca Orsini's 'The Hindi Public Sphere 1920-1940' (2002) is another important work that takes us into the vast domain of the functioning of the modern Hindi literary sphere during the nationalist struggle. This seminal work covers a vast expanse of works, ideas and practices in the Hindi public sphere that saw a phenomenal rise in contact with the anti-colonial politics. Her work is crucial in establishing the integrated spheres of

literature and politics where while actors who were important leaders in the movement were also writers, publishers or editors and vice-versa. The writers in the movement conversed directly with the movement and perceived themselves to be active participants in politics.

She argues that the beginning of ‘the nationalist discourse of language’ to the authority of Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi, who in the first decade of the twentieth century constructed the ideological link from *nij bhasha* (one’s own language) to the *rashtra bhasha* (language of the nation). She suggested that the metaphor of the ‘mother’ employed by Dwivedi for Hindi language helped in identification between mother tongue and motherland. This metaphor of ‘mother tongue’ was then the basis of arguing that, “Hindi was the real language of the province; that despite regional variants, it was one language, i.e. the mother tongue of all Hindus who lived in the United and Central Provinces, Bihar, Rajputana, Punjab, and the various states in central India..; and finally, that Urdu’s position as court language was not ‘natural’” (Orsini 2002, 128). Orsini argues that it was the nationalist rhetoric combined with Dwivedi’s style of presenting opinions as acknowledged facts that contended Hindi as the national language³.

In my Mphil dissertation, “*Hindi Language and the Imagination of the Nation: An analysis of Ramchandra Shukla’s Construction of Indian Civilization*”, I argued that one can answer the question of nationalist discourse around Hindi language from Shukla’s arguments. Shukla proposes that different dialects (Brij Bhasha, Bhojpuri, Awadhi, Khari Boli etc) and languages (Gujarati, Bengali and Marathi) can be subsumed under the dominant language of Hindi because all these share the words and meanings with Hindi. Since, the source of all these dialects and languages is common, they have a shared vocabulary where they often use the same words with different pronunciations for an object or expression. Secondly, because they originated in the territory of India, the meanings and cultural symbolism they invoke is also shared amongst all these languages. The common physical environment (birds, rivers, trees) provides meanings to words that

³ Orsini writes, “Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi’s stance shows how a normative approach sought to ‘solve’ the issue by mere strength of argument in the enclosed public sphere of journals... The arguments Dwivedi used were to be heard again and again from Hindi campaigners until 1950” (Orsini 2002).

can be felt or experienced by somebody who also inhabits that land. At one point, Shukla even says that it is alright to refer to this language which is to be the national language as Gujarati or Bengali because what is important is the idea of Hindi. It is because of this understanding that Hindi is claimed as one language across the length and breadth of the country. Further, because a language originated in a particular physical environment enriches the experiences of the people of that land through meanings and symbols familiar to them, Hindi claims to be the national language.

Shukla offers that the community of the speakers of this language/es form the national community because members can relate to each other through commonly lived experiences expressed in the language. It is these nuanced arguments that lie underneath the claims for the language of the self to become the language of the nation. The metaphor of mother is important in building the emotional rhetoric but doesn't help in providing objectivity to the opinions of Hindi enthusiasts including Dwivedi. It is in Shukla's arguments that one can trace an attempt to construct for Hindi a legacy bound with ancient Indian civilization and formation of national community. However, there is still more to be explored such as if there are heterogeneous constructions of Hindi language and if they project heterogeneous imaginations of the nation. Further, if one could see the reflections of that heterogeneity being played out in the political sphere where as argued by many scholars, the question of Hindi brought leaders from diverse political motivations together on the common cultural ground.

Paul R. Brass in his 1974's book *Language, Religion and Politics in North India* has emphasized on the role of the leaders and the elites in a movement to employ identities and symbols to construct a mass consciousness. With respect to the two categories of language and religion, Brass argues that in North India, religion has overpowered language to acquire a primary identity. The idea is that while in rest of the country, language has been a potent symbol for movements and demands in the new nation, in the North, 'the political strategy of the opposing groups has been to strive to make language and all other differences congruent with the religious cleavage' (Brass 1974). Illustrating through the example of Mithila movement in Bihar, Brass further argues that apart from

other deficiencies, one of the major factors where Mithila movement failed to gather momentum in asserting its independence from Hindi was because of lack of a distinct religious and cultural identity to supplement the claim. Unlike the Urdu and Punjabi language movements, Mithila did not have ‘the association between language and religion and intense inter-ethnic antagonism’. Brass writes, ‘Nationalism is the striving to achieve multi-symbol congruence among a group of people initially defined in terms of a single criterion’ (ibid., 410).

In the context of the movement for Hindi language, he asserts that the elites in the Hindu majority group identified Hinduism with Hindi in the Devanagari script and the Sanskrit culture and attempted to absorb other minority groups in the ambit of the majority. But this argument is difficult to sustain because from the literature discussed above, it emerges clearly that the initiation of the demand for Devanagari script began as a democratic demand to bring the linguistic use at the administration in line with the language taught and spoken by the majority of the people. There was a fair number of Hindus who learnt Persian script and were employed in administration. There was no congruent homogeneous imagination of Hindi-Hinduism that guided this demand in the first place. Clearly, the idea that language is secondary to religious identity in North India is suspect. In the case of Hindi language, amidst the controversies within, there are evidence of rich debates on the inclusion-exclusion and the shifting positions of religious and cultural traditions in associating with Hindi language. The process of the coming together of Hindi language and the Hindu religion is a complex one that needs further exploration.

Another crucial way of linking religion and language has been to treat language as a metaphor in the study of ‘political language’ whereby mass mobilization or consciousness was sought by political leaders. William Gould in his ‘Hindu Nationalism and the Language of Politics in the late Colonial India’ (2004) traces the language of politics as it was articulated by dominant political leaders in the late colonial period. It looks at the consequences and implications of particular linguistic metaphors in the way they were perceived or processed by the recipients. There was a shared language of

politics that brought the otherwise secular Congress and the Hindu nationalists together on the same cultural grounds. The question of Hindi language, cloth boycott and even rejection of caste based separate electorates projected an image which distanced the Muslim communities, as Congress appeared to share the conviction of Hindu nationalists for the consolidation of Hindu community against the interests of minorities. He argues that the 'idiom of Hindu religion' was employed even by the socialist leaders that blurred the secular image of Congress. Leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru, Pushottam Das Tandon, Mahavir Tyagi, Sampurnanand and Algu Rai Shastri could easily slide in participating in the religious associations and ceremonies (Gould 2004, 186).

Gould's work presents the nationalist ideology of P.D. Tandon as, explicitly, a cultural imagination of Hindi language and Hindu religion (ibid., 188). He argues that Tandon supported the use of religious rhetoric in a manner that could harness the imagination of the masses so as to broaden the base for the civil disobedience movement. Tandon urged to boycott the use of foreign cloth and the English language for it was seen as 'sapping at the very foundations of Indian thought and culture'. Gould also highlights the increasing interest in militarizing people in protecting the country from the 1940s. This was accompanied with an aggravated campaign for Hindi language as well. The language of militarization and physical culture along with relying on the religious sources of Bhagavad Gita and metaphors like 'Ram Raj' contributed to the ideas of consolidation of Hindu community.

He, further, cites the authority of the Congress leader Sampurnanand to argue that the socialist leanings of the organization failed to attract the Muslims because of the religious rhetoric that marked them as Hindus first. Sampurnanand, Gould argues, represented the curious mix of Marxism and Hindu revivalism. In his writings, the ideas combined Nehruvian Fabianism and the Hindu reformism of Swami Vivekananda and Arya Samaj. He highlights the influence of Hindu religious texts such as Ramayana, Tulsidas' Srimad Bhagwata, Sukha Sagar and Devi Bhagwata on him. He sought to arrive at an 'Indian Socialism' whereby he could combine 'the primacy of individual realization with *dharmic* social duty'. His ideas of socialism were derived as much from Marx as from

Vedanta. Gould recognizes the popularity of Sampurnanand's socialist credentials where he, alongside Narendra Dev, was able to bring together non-Congress extremists as he reorganized Congress Socialist Party. Sapurnanand's lasting impact on Uttar Pradesh politics, according to Gould, was in his days as education minister where he championed Sanskritized Hindi and Wardha scheme of education.

Gould's objection to Sampurnanand supporting Hindi language and Wardha scheme do not stem from a qualitative disagreement with his ideas but from his positioning himself as a champion of Hindi for national status along with P D Tandon as it brought him closer to the Hindu extremists. He writes, 'He [Sampurnanand] was also openly critical of Urdu, claiming it to be 'unacceptable' and certainly 'not... suitable for adoption as a national language'....He emphasized the necessity of keeping a good quota of Sanskritised Hindi in any national language, for the sake of 'the people of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Bengal and Madras' (Gould 2004, 175). What emerges here is a coloring of political leaders with a broad brush ranging from socialist to Hindu revivalist to extremist. Surely, a major concern for the enthusiasts of national language was it to be broad based. Even Urdu protagonists claimed national status on the basis that it was spoken across the country under multiple names. Gould argues that the 'pro-Hindi bias' was capitalized by Muslim League to further their communal agenda among the Muslims. He also emphasizes that Sampurnanand was 'relatively unaware of the communal consciousness of his political ideas' (ibid., 175). This reduced understanding of the political discourse in Uttar Pradesh on the questions of socialism and language question leads nowhere except that leaders and masses both misleadingly believed and fell into a communal agenda or were taken advantage of by other communal organizations. In chapter five of this thesis, we shall contest some of the key ideas of Gould's work to look at the nuanced positions on the Hindi language that are often blurred out. The differences in the support for Hindi and the related difference in the cultural imaginations of the nation highlight that it was not as easy to submerge the leaders who used and supported Hindi into a homogenous communal consciousness.

If one looks at Gyanesh Kudaisya's 'Region, nation, "heartland": Uttar Pradesh in India's body-politic' (2006), there is a strong argument in which one could see that the state of Uttar Pradesh particularly imbibed and shaped around the politics of Hindi language. In the attempts to adopt a new name for United Provinces and to adopt the official state language, the arguments raised by the political figures in the province indicate the deeply entrenched idea of representing a voice that overlaps that of the nation. In their imagination, they are the heirs of the ancient Indian civilization, with Hindi as their mother tongue, who form the national community. Any articulation of dissent, to break away from this cultural construction of the region-nation by proposing Urdu or disintegration of the geographic territory, was shot down as anti-national. People were to stay united in the cause of preserving the bubble of this cultural build up that equaled the region as the nation. Kudaisya argues that the vision of UP as 'heartland' was manifested in its claim for being the 'cultural homeland' of Hindi.

In both Kudaisya and Gould, Hindi language emerged as a melting point where leaders of diverse political brandings could be brought together as they came to give their consent for its national status. The politics of Hindi language is perceived as a coherent whole that brought the North Indian Hindi speaking states and especially Uttar Pradesh on a common footing. However, as chapter five shall argue there were diverse constructions of Hindi language that went well after the dawn of independence that contested with each other. While one construction argued for a more exclusivist and homogenizing nature of Hindi language, another hung upon emphasizing the diversity of minority traditions and their linkages. These nuances could be found in the positions available in the political sphere of the period.

To recall from the discussion above, broadly on the idea of linking language, religion and nation, the focus is not as much on dissecting the unique characteristics of the nation that each of these variables accord. The discussion within the Hindi language highlights many questions that become important. For example, while it has been noted that modern Hindi was created from many possibilities, there is less exposition of ideas that it builds on its journey to the demand for national status. Further, there is less about the particular nature

of the Indian nation that gets prominence by a certain notion of Hindi language. Also, as this thesis shall highlight in the next few chapters, the discourse around the Hindi language need not be homogeneous and uniform in its way to identifying the nation. To explore these questions, it is important to unearth the ideological manoeuvring that guided the march of Hindi language for national status. The works of literary thinkers, Ramchandra Shukla and Hazari Prasad Dwivedi, are of utmost importance in figuring out the ideas of the nation in Hindi language.

Before moving to the discussion of the ideas of the two thinkers, it is important to get hold of the political and intellectual climate in which the two scholars wrote. The discourse around the question of language, religion and nation, broadly constructing the idea of nation, was constituted by a diversity of views that were interlocked in a communication with the colonial rulers and the fellow country men. The twentieth century, especially, witnessed a massive debate and discussion around the questions of social and political importance. The Hindi literary sphere was not immune to the discussions in the political sphere. Rather, it was an active participant in the discourse. To comprehend the meanings and importance of the questions of language and nation, it is helpful to get a sense of the gravity of the whole discourse. This takes us to the next chapter of this thesis. In the second chapter, we shall discuss in detail the discourse around the social and political questions of language, religion and nation and the heterogeneity within it.

Chapter 2

Identifying the Nation: The Political Discourse around Language and Religious Diversity in India

The ideas about the close link between the language and the nation emerged from a larger intellectual discourse that was set forth with the colonial encounter in India. At the heart of this discourse is a deeper philosophical inquiry into fundamental questions of identity that began to emerge dominant with the colonial interventions. The ideas around the questions of- what is the nature of colonized people in India, the nature of their religion, their language, their rules and regulations and the nature of their collective were the basic points of discussion, that with time, evolved into questions of linking language and religion, the different types of communities possible and the linking of language and nation. These questions of making sense of the colony were reversed by the native thinkers who formulated the questions and responses addressed to the colonial rule as well as to their fellow countrymen. To understand closely, it is important to grasp some detailed ideas about the intellectual and political discourse where these interactions and ideas took place. For example, to understand why certain categories such as civilization became crucial to the discussion of nation and language in the twentieth century, it is crucial to trace some political and intellectual context to these ideas.

This chapter attempts to draw a picture of the broader and the specific intellectual context that foregrounded the ideas around language and nation in India, in general, and Hindi language, in particular. It is divided into three sections. In the first part, I discuss the beginning of the colonial search into the colonized Indian society through the means of its texts and scriptures, literary works, architecture and information from *pandits*, *maulvis*

and other native people. The access to the texts was through the learning of languages by the colonial administrators, orientalist scholars and Christian missionaries. This section highlights the changing nature of the colonial perception of native subjects over the course of the period from the late eighteenth century to the nineteenth century. The second section then goes on to discuss the diversity of responses of native intelligentsia in the form of key categories that became dominant ways to conceptualize Indian society. These key categories- civilization, language, religion and nation brought out the diversity of ideas and imaginations that populated the Indian intellectual and political context. These debates and discussions were reverberated across the country in the twentieth century as part of the national movement and outside it.

Some key leaders highlight the diverging ways in which they imagined the nation and were able to impact a large number of people, generation of writers, leaders and students from their ideas. Three political figures and their ideas- Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi a.k.a Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore and Veer Damodar Savarkar generated multitude of inspirations and criticisms among the leaders and intellectuals of the period. This section discusses the trajectory and diversity of discourse among Indian intellectuals around the questions of Indian civilization, language, religion and Indian nation.

The third section of the chapter deals with the ideas around language, religion and the nation within the intellectual climate of the Hindi language and literature. The purpose of this section is to bring out the ideas of the intellectual predecessors to the two thinkers, Ramchandra Shukla and Hazari Prasad Dwivedi, the analysis of whose works shall form the majority of the rest of the thesis. The two major intellectual forerunners who are known for cementing the field of the Hindi language and contributed to its modern form and usage for literary, academic and administrative purposes are Bharatendu Harishchandra and Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi. Their ideas are crucial to understand the immediate context available to Shukla and Dwivedi with regard to the ideas of the Hindi language, religion and the Indian nation. This section argues that while a notion of one's own language and its link to the sustenance of the community of speakers had taken root, it was still distant from imagining a national role and future for the Hindi language.

Broadly, this chapter prepares the intellectual and political context available to the two thinkers in which they articulated their own ideas about language, religion and the nation.

2.1 The Colonial Encounter: Making Sense of India

The colonial discourse in India, that began to take roots in the last decades of the eighteenth century, could broadly be seen in the form of interventions made primarily by three interlinked routes- scholarly exercise of translations and interpretations by colonial scholars and administrators, evangelical efforts at translations and religious propagation by Christian missionaries and the administrative interventions through laws and decrees. Cumulatively, these endeavors prioritized certain categories as crucial to make sense of the newly acquired colony. The beginning of these efforts is characterized by a keen curiosity about the hitherto unrevealed world of South Asia. This is not to deny the governmental aspect of these efforts of collecting information which aimed at allowing the colonial administration to govern the Indian subjects in a smooth manner⁴. However, in the earlier period of the oriental discourse, there is a sense of attraction and appreciation regarding the orient as discovered through its ancient scriptures and languages among the colonial personnel. It comes out starkly in the career and writings of William Jones (1746-94), who was the judge at the Supreme Court in Bengal until his death.

Upon arriving in Calcutta in 1783, Jones was mesmerised by the possibilities that the new culture and society of orient offered⁵. In his political career, Jones went on to learn

⁴ According to Bernard S. Cohn, in the eighteenth century, the first step to know the strange and unknown space of colonized India was by establishing correspondence in languages. By learning the local languages, from classical Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic to the vernacular languages, the British officers aimed to control and administer the territory. The languages were important to issue commands, to maintain law and order and collect taxes. The languages of the locals also enabled the ruling British to define and create knowledge about the people they were ruling (Cohn 1996, 4).

⁵ Commenting about this experience he speaks at the founding of the Asiatic Society in 1784, he says "It gave me inexpressible pleasure to find myself in the midst of so noble an amphitheatre, almost encircled

Sanskrit and Hindustani languages along with acquiring proficiency at Persian and Arabic⁶. Once he was appointed as the judge at the court, it was found important to keep records and legal digests of the Hindu laws and the Mohammedan laws without relying on the inconsistent expertise of *pandits* and *maulvis*⁷. Over time, he translated several Persian and Sanskrit texts such as the famous Persian poem *Laila Majnu*, the Sanskrit drama by Kalidas- *Shakuntala*, *Git Govinda* by the poet Jayadeva and *Manusmriti* under the title ‘Institutes of Hindi law or the ordinances of Menu’. He was instrumental in the founding of Asiatic Society in 1784, an institution dedicated to the study of civilizations of South Asia.

His works and interpretations were read widely throughout Europe. He was seen as the bridge between the East and the West as several Western philosophers, such as Goethe, Schopenhauer and Hegel, referred to his work with great respect. Jones’ work was cited with reverence even among a generation of scholars and leaders in India⁸. He was central to founding an imagination of the Indian nation which was hugely influential upon the debates in the nineteenth and the twentieth century. Through his works, Jones established and communicated several key ideas regarding the Indian culture, languages, society, flora and fauna, to the colonial administrators within India as well as the people in the West. On the second anniversary of the Asiatic Society in 1785, Jones declared that

by the vast regions of Asia, which has ever been esteemed the nurse of sciences, the inventreous of delightful and useful arts, the Scene of glorious actions, fertile in the productions of human genius, abounding in natural wonders, and infinitely diversified in the forms of religion and government, in the laws, manners, customs, and languages, as well as in the features and complexions, of men. I could not help remarking, how important and extensive a field was yet unexplored, and how many solid advantages unimproved...” (Jones 1824, 1-2).

⁶ Jones was a linguistic prodigy from his childhood as at an early age he learned many languages such as Greek, Latin, Persian, Arabic, Hebrew, and the basics of Chinese, apart from his native languages English and Welsh.

⁷ In his speech at the second anniversary of Asiatic Society, Jones stated, “The Jurisprudence of Hindus and Musalmans will produce more immediate advantage; and if some standard law tracts were translated from the Sanskrit and Arabic, we might hope in time to see to complete a digest of Indian laws, the all disputes among the natives might be decided without uncertainty...” (ibid., 17).

⁸ The first Prime Minister of independent India, Jawaharlal Nehru, cites extensively from Jones’s works in his ‘Discovery of India’ and credits him for ‘rediscovering the past literature of India’ (Nehru 1985, 317).

Europeans arrived in India with a superiority complex when there was really much that the latter could teach to Europe and the world (Jones 1984, 10). He did not dismiss the upper hand of Europe but urged that knowledge in various fields from India could help in the prosperity of the West⁹.

From the vast scholarship produced by Jones, two of the most important interventions by him were with regard to the specific nature of the 'Indian nation' and the common ancestry of Indian-European languages. In his third discourse in 1786 at the annual event of the Asiatic Society in Bengal, Jones argued that the whole of Asia along with the many islands was divided into five 'nations'. These were the Indians, the Chinese, the Tartars, the Arabs and the Persians (ibid., 21). He went on to discuss two different understandings of the territorial boundaries of the Indian nation. The first, which he rediscovers from his research, is the 'space almost as large as Europe' and occupies the territorial space extending from Sri Lanka to Kashmir in South to North and Afghanistan on the west to the boundaries of present day Vietnam on the east (ibid., 23). Jones asserted that by the 'Indian nation', he meant the land that was prevailed by the religion and languages of the 'Hindus' with an approximate ancient purity and where the Nagari letters were used with 'more and less deviation from their original form'. After presenting the geographical, linguistic and the religious nature of the 'Indian nation', Jones stated that there was another idea of the Indian nation which was believed by the Hindu themselves. The latter is the idea of *Jambudweep* which is also referred to as *Madhyema* with Himalayas to the North and mountain range of Vindhya to the west. This notion is reiterated by several political thinkers, notably by Savarkar. In fact, both these ideas of the 'Indian nation' were central to the arguments about an expansive and formidable history of the country prior to the medieval period that featured in the works of several leaders. Jones is assertive in his lecture that no matter how degenerative a situation the native population may appear to be in, they were once 'splendid in arts and arms, happy in government, wise in legislation and eminent in various knowledge' (ibid., 25).

⁹ Jones said, "... although we must be conscious of our superior advancement in all kinds of useful knowledge, yet we ought not to contemn the people of *Asia*, from whole researches into nature, works of art, and inventions of fancy, many valuable hints may be derived for our own improvement and advantage" (ibid., 11).

Jones, in the course of his discourses, argued strong linkages between the ancient Indian nation and its culture with other nations and civilizations of the world. With regard to the Vedanta philosophy, he asserts that it is possible to see its influence on the works of the Greek philosophers, Plato and Pythagoras¹⁰. The importance of this assertion can be gauged from the fact that the ancient Greek philosophy is seen as the root of all Western philosophy, even in the present times. Jones also found close affinity between the architecture of ancient India and Africa and Egypt. He believed that the Indian mythology and their gods corresponded to the Pagan gods in ancient Greece and Italy. Overall, Jones believed he had strong reasons to argue that the ‘Hindus’ had ‘an immemorial affinity with the old Persians, Ethiopians, and Egyptians, the Phenicians, Greeks, and Tuscans, the Scythians or Goths, and Celts, the Chinese, Japanese, and Peruvians’ without any attempt at colonization from either of these¹¹.

Another important idea developed by Jones, for which he is known widely, is the common origin of several languages spoken around the world, together referred to as Indo-European languages and their affinity with the nations of the world. He famously argued, “*The Sanscrit language, whatever be its antiquity, is of a wonderful structure; more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin, and more exquisitely refined than either; yet bearing to both of them a stronger affinity, both in the roots of verbs and in the forms of grammar, than could possibly have been produced by accident; so strong indeed, that no philologer could examine them all three, without believing them to have sprung from some common source, which, perhaps, no longer exists...*” (ibid., 28). He goes on to add Gothic, Celtic and the Persian languages to the same family and as deriving from the same common source. He also ascribed common source of origin to the

¹⁰ Jones argues, “The six philosophical schools, whose principles are explained in the *Dersana Sàstra*, comprise all the metaphysics of the old *Academy*, the *Stoa*, the *Lyceum*; nor is it possible to read the *Védánta*, or the many fine compositions in illustration of it, without believing, that Pythagoras and Plato derived their sublime theories from the same fountain with the sages of India” (ibid., 30).

¹¹ Pheroze Vasunia argues that the linking of Indian and Ethiopian nations, based in racial, linguistic and scriptural basis, allowed the European scholars and administrators to view non-European cultures of South Asia and North East Africa. These assumptions were common in the late eighteenth century and anchored in the sovereign gaze of biblical, Greco-Roman or European location (Vasunia 2016, 68-69).

scripts of Nagari, Phoenician, from which Greek and Roman alphabets are derived, and Chaldeac characters, from which Hebrew is derived (ibid., 29).

Jones was joined in his efforts by other oriental and native scholars, who over a period of time, contributed to the research in the literature, languages, religious texts and architecture of India¹². Together, these research led to an idea of the colony as the ‘cradle of an ancient civilization’ which might hold answers to the mysteries of life and world. In Jones works’ particularly, it is possible to discern initial arguments about the ancient glory of the Indian nation and the distinct achievements of its inhabitants in various fields of knowledge¹³. It is also easy to discern that certain categories emerge in Jones’ works that establish the character and nature or contribute to the identifying of the orient. These were languages, religion, philosophy and geography that foregrounded the construction of the Indian nation.

The study of the languages in India and the religious attitudes was also undertaken by another group of orientalisks, the Christian missionaries. The Christian Catholic missionaries who operated from the Danish colony of Serampore in the end of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century were particularly influential in producing texts where they discussed the grammar, vocabulary and structure of various languages present in India. The idea behind various such compilations was to aid the translation of Christian scriptures in the native languages so as to propagate the teachings of the Christ among the

¹² H. T. Colbrooke (1765-1837) was another influential figure who was employed as the assistant collector with the East India Company. He joined the Asiatic Society in Bengal and was known for his massive contribution in translating the *Mitakshara* of Vijnaneshwara. He famously wrote the dictionary of Sanskrit language and grammar, completed the *Digest of Hindu laws* which was started by William Jones, *On the Religion and Philosophy of the Hindus* etc. He also founded the Royal Asiatic Society in 1823 in Britain to continue the research of the orient.

¹³ Thomas R. Trautmann stated in his work that the particular nature of the study of the colonized subject was conducted through the knowledge of the languages of the people. The idea that the languages brought a closer and more reliable view of the colonized people as against mere sight or traveller’s insights, brought an empathetic understanding of the orient. No doubt this empathy was laced with hierarchy and inequality where the colonized society represented the inferior, yet it was distinct in its note of a humanist portrayal of the colonized society (Trautmann 2006, 216). The tone becomes clearer once it is shifted to the tone of derision and contempt in the works of James Mill and G.W.F. Hegel who relied on translations and notes of travellers rather than equipping with the languages of the society they were writing about.

native masses. With the reason to convert to Christianity, these missionaries have been acknowledged to promote the research in the native languages as well as accelerate education and learning in them.

William Carey (1761-1834), along with William Ward (1769-1823) and Joshua Marshman (1768-1837), is known for his efforts at codifying the languages. Upon their arrival in Calcutta in 1800, the trio of English Christian missionaries worked in association with Fort William College in translating the texts and teaching the language to the newly brought in civil servants for running the company administration in India. The Serampore mission founded the Serampore press in 1801 and later founded the Serampore College in 1818¹⁴. William Carey published his grammar of 'Mahratta language' in 1804, followed by Sanskrit grammar in 1806, 'Mahratta' dictionary in 1810, a 'Punjabee' grammar in 1812, a 'Telinga' grammar in 1814 and a 'Bengalee' grammar in 1818. He also translated the Hindu epic, *Ramayana*, in English along with other classics. He translated the Christian scriptures in Bengali, Oriya, Marathi, Sanskrit, Assamese and Telugu. He was appointed as the professor of Bengali, Marathi and Sanskrit at the Fort William College. William Ward wrote and published *Account of the Writings, Religion, and Manners of the Hindoos* in 1811 which went into eight editions until 1822¹⁵.

The missionaries and their works were also central in the discussions around Hindu religion that took place in the debate for the abolition of *sati*, the ritual of widow-burning. Ward recounted the details of horror with which they witnessed the practice of widow burning. Carey and Marshman participated with Rammohan Roy in seeking the abolition

¹⁴ According to the three missionaries, the founding of the Serampore College broadly aimed at two goals. One, the college was to promote the teaching of Bible from an early age among the natives in their own language. It allowed them to 'free themselves' from the Brahmanic superstitions of their religion. Two, the college aided the promotion of greater interaction between the 'Asiatic Christian' scholars who could access the western science and arts as well as produce their own literature into 'refined' translations for the west to access (Carey 1892).

¹⁵ The missionaries worked with the local *pandits* and Brahmins in order to produce translations and treatises on grammar and dictionaries as evident from their journals. It has been argued by many scholars that their accounts codified and standardized the language and the notions of the religion relying on the scriptures and the Brahmin experts. The religious texts became the source of understanding the religion which was not always in sync with the actual religious practices of the people (Mani 1998).

of the practice. Ward's detailing of the practice of Sati and his treatise about the religion of the Hindus was a popular source of information about the colony in Britain (Mani 1998, 140-43). Further, with the questions and criticisms raised by the missionaries about the practices of the religions in India, it initiated and cemented a debate around the idea of religion in India among the native intelligentsia. Some native thinkers in the eighteenth century attempted to resolve the attacks on the polytheism, idol-worship, myths and superstitious nature of the dominant Hindu religion by merging the Christian tenets and the Hindu faith. They re-interpreted religious scriptures to prove monotheism in their own religion, established historicity of their mythological accounts, rejected idol-worship and at times, dismissed the Christian observations. Later, religion emerged as the major plank to assert the distinctiveness of Indian nation and civilization in the accounts of native thinkers.

Another important venture, hitherto unattempted, by the colonial administration was the founding of Fort William College in 1800 in Calcutta, an institution for training the newly recruited staff arriving from Britain in the languages, culture and history of the colonized people¹⁶. A variety of languages, Persian, Hindustani, Arabic, Sanskrit and 'Vernaculars' such as Bengali were to be taught to the newly recruited colonial personnel. The civil servants were also to be trained in the Hindu legal digests, Mohammedan law and the English Jurisprudence. Apart from the oriental scholars such as H.T. Colebrooke who headed the Sanskrit language department, John Gilchrist who headed the 'Hindustanee' language department and William Carey who headed the vernacular languages department, the College also hired a number of native *munshis* and *pandits* who aided the codification of grammar, vocabulary of various languages and translated the texts from native languages. This process of codification and standardization for printing initiated the initial shaping of the languages into fixed subjects of study and differentiated it from the flexible and relative nature of the spoken language¹⁷. A similar

¹⁶ The college was established by the then Governor General Richard Wellsley who was closely associated with William Jones' works in Asiatic Society.

¹⁷ Sudipto Kaviraj has argued that this attempt at codifying languages and later identifying people with their language of speech straightjacketed the speakers into fixed communities from an otherwise fuzzy boundaries of languages and their speakers (Kaviraj 2010).

impact is found on the nature of religious communities as well with the codification of legal digest for each religion, there was an attempt at separating and distinctly marking out one from the other.

The texts and definitions produced by the associates at Fort William College with regard to the 'Hindustanee' language were particularly referred to by scholars and politicians in the nineteenth century to debate the nature of the Hindi, Urdu and Hindustani languages. Gilchrist, along with the native informants, sought to construct a dictionary of Hindustani words which he devised as distinct from Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian¹⁸. The aim was to find a unified language that was used across the country. Gilchrist differentiated in the various registers of this language depending on the increased number of loan words from Sanskrit or Arabic. From the texts (over sixty) produced by the writers under his supervision, later scholars have attempted to prove and justify their claims of identifying the mass language that Gilchrist stated as Hindi or Urdu. The notions and structures of Indian languages developed at the Fort William College had a lasting impact on the debates over the nature of languages among the native intelligentsia in the twentieth century.

The decisive shift in the oriental discourse took place with the publication of James Mill's authoritative volumes on the history of India and its civilization in 1817. It emerged as one of the most influential texts on Indian history, philosophy and civilization in the nineteenth century and had a lasting impact on the generations of colonial administrators who studied it as a part of their training and on the native thinkers who actively struggled against its propaganda in their writings. Mill's history of India allegedly sought to bring out a critical history and philosophy of India which he perceived had been ignored by the oriental scholars such as William Jones. He was severely critical of their exalting notions about ancient Indian culture and history. It is interesting to note that for Mill, with his lack of the knowledge of the languages and any interaction with the people and the

¹⁸ "my learned associates, were some of them with their mind's eye roaming for far - fetched expressions on the deserts of Arabia , others were beating each bush and scampering over every mountain of Persia, while the rest were groping to the dark intricate mines and caverns of Sunskrit lexicography" (cited in Lelyveld 1993, 671).

country, he was better placed to present a 'theoretical' history of the colony as against the oriental scholars¹⁹.

Mill divided his account of history of India into three periods- Hindu, Muslims and the British. Such a periodization became a popular mode of understanding the Indian civilization as the focus was on the breaks and disjunctions that each period marked from the other. The idea to brush entire periods by the religious category produced an imagination of the dominance of one religious community over the other in a distant past. However, for Mill, the continuity was seen in the continued debasement of the people in India. According to him, the glorious accounts of the Hindus in ancient India are questionable. He condemned the lack of historical evidence that the mythologies and beliefs of Hindus could be supported with²⁰. He concluded that there was no reason to believe that the Hindus were once a high civilization; he drew from writings from the time of Alexander's invasion into India, that the Hindus were as downfallen as they were now in the time of the British²¹ (Mill 1826, 147).

Surely, Mill's account proved powerful in strengthening the supremacy of the colonial rule over its subjects and justified their dominance as a civilizing mission of the 'uncivilized' people²². The accounts of the history of India continued to be written by colonial scholars over the period of nineteenth and twentieth century. The idea foregrounded by James Mill about the 'barbarity' and 'crudeness' of the colonized people

¹⁹ Mill writes, "... an account of India, complete in all its parts, at any moment still more through a series of ages, could never be derived from the personal observations of any one individual, but must be collected from the testimony of a great number of individuals, of any one of whom the powers of perception could extend but a little way, it follows, as a necessary consequence, that the man best qualified for dealing with evidence, is the man best qualified for writing the history of India" (Mill 1826, 12).

²⁰ "The offspring of a wild and ungoverned imagination, they mark the state of a rude and credulous people, whom the marvellous delights, who cannot estimate the use of a record of past events; ... This people, indeed, are perfectly destitute of historical records (ibid., 143).

²¹ Mill wrote, "... the Hindus, at the time of Alexander's invasion, were in a state of manners, society, and knowledge, exactly the same with that in which they were discovered by the nations of modern Europe; nor is there any reason for differing widely from this opinion" (ibid., 147).

²² Mill was rewarded for his historical account by the East India Company as he was employed in the capacity of Assistant Examiner with the Company in 1819. His books ran into several editions; he achieved promotion and increment in stature and income working with the Company until his death in 1836.

endured over the years as even though there were sympathetic accounts of history by other scholars over the years, they could never dismiss the subordination of the colonized people. Broadly, what emerges in this discussion of the diverse oriental discourse regarding the Indian nation was the emanation of the key categories of language, religion and civilization among others (geography, architecture, philosophy) as important indicators of understanding the Indian nation. In fact, the category of the nation itself and its various features that make it distinct, stood out in the oriental studies about India. The meaning of the term 'nation' as it was used in the oriental discourse had not yet acquired the modern notion denoting a political unit. But what is noteworthy is that it emerged as a category used for a large community of people who shared common racial and cultural characteristics.

These ideas were circulated not just among the British but also among the native population via school textbooks, journals and pamphlets. The Indian intelligentsia from the nineteenth century onwards began to respond to the oriental researches about the culture, languages, religion and civilization of the country. Even though they were influenced from the colonial discourse in terms of the categories that became important and the kind of rationale employed for their arguments, they inverted the gaze at the European civilization and colonial empire to argue their distinction and difference from the latter and to redefine the meanings of the categories.

2.2 Reverting the Gaze: The Indian Reponses

From the mid-nineteenth century onwards to the beginning of the twentieth century, the conceptions among the Indian intelligentsia and leaders became diverse; they began to address not just the detractors in the colonial empire but also the alternatives within the Indian political and intellectual sphere. The competing notions of Indian civilization, language, religion and the aims for the Indian nation began to proliferate as the demand for independence from the British accelerated in the twentieth century. Some of the

strong voices from the Indian political discourse had a hugely influential and lasting impact well over in the post-independence period. Three such authoritative figures who provide a glimpse of the differentiation, richness and diversity within the political and intellectual discourse in India are Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore and Veer Damodar Savarkar²³.

The broad questions that these political thinkers and leaders dealt with were with regard to the nature of the Indian nation, ideas about Indian civilization and its distinctiveness. It came upon the native leaders and intelligentsia to reconstruct the imagination of Indian society and culture. This discourse went beyond the theoretical aspects to the practical concerns of dealing with the questions of linguistic and religious communities, gender and caste. In the independent nation, the questions of accommodating diversity in one way or the other and ways to deal with the hierarchical oppression of caste, class and gender were determined from the ideas about the nation, language, religion and civilization. These concerns were marred by the newly emerged awareness among the people of one's location, in history, in the majority and minority communities and vis-a-vis tradition (scriptures) in lieu of a variety of colonial measures aimed at enumeration, categorization, historiography and translation. Therefore, the ideas about the various political themes discussed above disclose political implications for the Indian nation and its people. From what follows next, I trace the debates about the ideas of Indian civilization, language of the nation, religious diversity and the Indian nation as can be found in the works and speeches of the three leaders mentioned above.

2.2.1 Indian Civilization

²³ The choice of these three leaders in no way exhausts the diversity of ideas and imaginations that prevailed in the Indian nationalist discourse. However, the limited ideas that this thesis is occupied with make these leaders as the optimum selections for the discussion of the political and intellectual context of the early twentieth century.

The remarkable feature of the constructions of Indian civilization among the native intelligentsia has been that in the barrage of existing notions produced by the orientalist and colonial rule, they were able to revert the gaze back at the colonizer and propound their own visions of the past and culture of their country. In Gandhi's idea of civilization, there is a trenchant critique of the fundamental thrust of the Western civilization. Rejecting the hierarchy and supremacy of Western civilization, he argued that material progress cannot be a measure of a prosperous civilization. For Gandhi, the purpose of civilization is for the person to realize their true self. He wrote, "Civilization is that mode of conduct which points out to man the path of duty. Performance of duty and observance of morality are convertible terms. To observe morality is to attain mastery over our mind and our passions. So doing, we know ourselves." Gandhi believed that instead of serving its purpose, the Western civilization propagated indulgence in material comfort and bodily pleasures²⁴ (Gandhi 1997, 67). Moreover, its unbridled support for machinery has converted human beings into slaves. The violence, that western civilization perpetuates, takes the people even farther from achieving self-realization (ibid., 114). Gandhi refers to the western civilization as 'irreligion' and 'satanic' because it falsely makes bodily indulgences as markers of the progress a civilization has achieved.

After shifting the metrics of judging a civilization, Gandhi argues that once we accept this definition of civilization, it becomes clear that it is the Indian civilization that has much to not change and rather, impart to the world and not vice versa. Gandhi asserts that the Indian civilization was based in morality and *dharma*. At the root of Indian civilization is the tendency to rein in uncontrolled desires and indulgences. It propagated a notion of happiness in following the path of truth and morality and not in violence, in achieving self-sufficiency and not in greed, and in promoting cooperation and not

²⁴ He wrote in *Hind Swaraj*, "The people of Europe today live in better-built houses than they did a hundred years ago. This is considered an emblem of civilization, and this is also a matter to promote bodily happiness. Formerly, they wore skins, and used spears as their weapons. Now, they wear long trousers, and, for embellishing their bodies, they wear a variety of clothing, and, instead of spears, they carry with them revolvers containing five or more chambers. If people of a certain country, who have hitherto not been in the habit of wearing much clothing, boots, etc., adopt European clothing, they are supposed to have become civilized out of savagery. Formerly, in Europe, people ploughed their lands mainly by manual labour. Now, one man can plough a vast tract by means of steam engines and can thus amass great wealth. This is called a sign of civilization" (ibid., 35).

competition (ibid., 67). He does not dismiss that the Indian civilization had been marred with ailments such as child marriage, prostitution and animal sacrifice, instead he perceived them as imperfections or defects that limit the Indian civilization. These defects are to be removed along with the inspirations of modern civilization that have crept in Indian civilization²⁵.

We can find an approximation of these views in Tagore's position with regard to Indian civilization. Rabindranath Tagore attacks the notion of civilization that is propagated by the West and relying on which, India has been declared a backward and degraded civilization. In his lecture delivered in 1924, he urged the listeners to rethink the idea of civilization and argued, "Only very lately, we have begun to wonder if we realize in its truth what the Western people mean when they speak of civilization. We ask ourselves, 'Has it the same meaning as some word in our own language which denotes for us the idea of human perfection'" (Tagore 1924). He criticized that by collecting and recording the historical events of a country, one can trace the nature of their civilization. In Tagore's views, Civilization cannot be the arrangement of historical events in a particular order or shape²⁶. Instead, for Tagore, civilization represents a much more powerful force. He asserted that it is an indicator of a moral force that drives the people towards the goal of perfection. Civilization evolves people towards achieving self-fulfillment. He does not look at the idea of perfection in the social darwinian sense of improved technology and bodily comforts that man has achieved with feats in science. For him, man has more significance than just a biological one and therefore, the notion of perfection cannot be limited to their own bodily pleasures²⁷.

²⁵ Gandhi argued that the nation always had lawyers, doctors and politicians but under the influence of modern civilization, these professionals are unbound by morality and driven by consumerism in their work (Gandhi 1997).

²⁶ In his 1924 lecture, Tagore said, "Civilization cannot merely be a growing totality of happenings that by chance have assumed a particular shape and tendency which we consider to be excellent. It must be the expression of some guiding moral force which we have evolved in our society for the object of attaining perfection" (Tagore 1924).

²⁷ He went on in the same lecture, "The word 'perfection' has a simple and definite meaning when applied to an inanimate thing, or even to a creature whose life has principally a biological significance. But man being complex and always on the path of transcending himself, the meaning of the word 'perfection', as

Tagore argued that in the Indian context, the moral force that empowered people is 'dharma'. He believed that the Sanskrit word *dharma* came closest to defining the notion of civilization in India. He asserted, "The specific meaning of *dharma* is that principle which holds us firm together and leads us to our best welfare. The general meaning of this word is the essential quality of a thing. *Dharma* for man is the best expression of what he is in truth" (Tagore 1994, 147). Tagore urged that instead of judging a people and their civilization by material criterias of progress, we should look at their central force. He instantiated the fundamental force of Indian civilization as *dharma* from an anecdotal example where he borrowed water to drink when his motor broke on the way, and none of the unknown people refused him water or accepted any reward for their act. For him, this simple act signified the nature of Indian civilization where it was considered a duty by the people to serve the strangers and not accept acclaim for it. He said, "In a few years' time it might be possible for me to learn how to make holes in thousands of needles instantaneously by turning a wheel, but to be absolutely simple in one's hospitality to one's enemy or to a stranger requires generations of training. Simplicity takes no account of its own value, claims no wages, and therefore those who are enamoured of power do not realize that simplicity of spiritual expression is the highest product of civilization" (ibid.,).

Tagore's rendering of the idea of civilization and Indian civilization in particular is a scathing attack against the colonial idea about India. It is backed by a moral force in its arguments and inverts the gaze for the colonizers to analyze selves and their actions. For Tagore, a person who is driven by achieving riches in their life or power through internal and external means, has moved away from their eternal force. Such a person, for Tagore, is lifeless and has smothered the 'man within'. The western civilization that is characterized by attainment of power as its fundamental force has lost its inner ideal of love²⁸.

applied to him, cannot be crystalized into an inflexible idea. This has made it possible for different races to have different shades of definition for this term" (ibid.,).

²⁸ Tagore stated, "A civilization remains healthy...as long as it contains in its centre some creative ideal that binds its members in a rhythm of relationship. It is a relationship which is beautiful and not merely utilitarian...In the course of the last two centuries, however, the West found access to Nature's

In both Tagore and Gandhi, there emerge alternative ideas about understanding the category of civilization as such and Indian civilization in particular. Both these thinkers highlight a central moral force as the essence of Indian civilization. They rejected the dominance of machinery and warfare as metrics of the advancement a civilization has made²⁹. However, this was not true of the entirety of political thought in India at the time. In Savarkar's ideas, the historical continuity found in the culture of India is understood not as much through the idea of civilization but nation. For him, it is important to note that it is the 'Hindu' civilization, that is mentioned when referring to Indian civilization, which means the essential character of Indian civilization is determined from Hindu religion³⁰. For him, a past that goes back to the Vedic period represents an 'undeniable' and 'historical' presence of Hindu nation. The essence of the continuity that reached upto the then present is noted by Savarkar in the consciousness of a 'Hindu' unity. In his account of history, the ideals of duty towards the stranger and notion of *dharma* are replaced by the belief in the oneness of a 'Hindu' identity of all irrespective of religion, race and region. He asserted in his speech, "The long period of peace unmolested by external political danger worth the name- that intervened between the ultimate triumph of the Hindus over the Huns and the invasion of India by the Moslems was pre-eminently devoted to the further consolidation of our people and their religious, cultural, racial and political oneness grew so pronounced, definite and conscious that by the time, the Moslems came in they found India full grown into a homogeneous Hindu people" (Savarkar 1964, 18). The homogeneity of the Hindus, according to Savarkar, is so striking that it makes them stand out when compared with the non-Hindus such as Japanese, the English and even the Indian Muslims (ibid., 44).

storehouse of power, and ever since all its attention has irresistibly been drawn in that direction. Its inner ideal of civilization has thus been pushed aside by the love of power" (cited in Jahanbegloo 2007).

²⁹ Tagore was to keep in mind the diversity within the notion of the west, whereas for Gandhi, the western civilization had become symbolic of machinery and violence (Bhattacharya 1997, 67). It later became an objection to Tagore who did not agree with a blind rejection of everything 'western'.

³⁰ For both Gandhi and Tagore, the discussion about civilization in the Indian context was referred to as Indian civilization. In a way, they rejected Mill's three fold division of the Indian past.

Unlike Tagore and Gandhi, Savarkar did not have qualms about imitating the violent and imperial ambitions of the western civilization. In his views, it was in fact the non-violent and dominance of spiritual aspects in Indian civilization during certain phases that had it fallen prey to foreign occupation and atrocities. He urged that Hindus must ‘re-gain’ their ‘martial spirit’ and ‘military strength’ by joining the British war efforts, for the reason that Hindus be enabled to defend their interests (ibid., 90-91). His ideas become clearer in the discussion on the religious and linguistic diversity and the imaginations of the Indian nation. Here, it is sufficient to note that Savarkar presented another understanding of Indian history and civilization which not just disagreed with the colonial historiography but also had less in common with the imaginations of Gandhi and Tagore. As we shall see through the course of this thesis, the two Hindi thinkers will bring out other ways of thinking about Indian civilization.

2.2.2 Language and Religion

In the early part of the twentieth century, while most of the leaders appreciated the diversity of cultures that their country inhabited, they also deliberated about arrangements to manage this diversity while forging an independent, united and distinct Indian nationhood. In the case of massive linguistic diversity in the country, many political leaders pin-pointed the need for a common language for the nation. The vision behind the need for a common language differed from ensuring unity among various regions of the country, for asserting a national identity or for administrative purposes of enabling communication between centre and states. The debates around the need for a national language and the role it is to play in the independent nation came to bear immediate political implications in the independent India³¹.

³¹ The question of official language/s of the Indian state and other states and, linguistic reorganization of states were the two important policy decisions that reflected the debate on language in the Indian political discourse.

For Gandhi, adopting the Hindi-Hindustani language as the national language of the Indian nation was an ‘essential’ element of attaining *swaraj*. One of the reasons Gandhi believed that western civilization permeated in India was through the hierarchical teaching of English language over native languages. He expressed that with an unequal priority given to the learning of the English language, in his own experience, he became distant from his own family members and felt superior to them³² (Gandhi 1960). In the similar vein, the use of a foreign language that was not accessible to the majority, removed its speaker from the masses and instilled a sense of hierarchy in him or her (ibid.,). In the lack of their training in their native languages, the knowledge gained from the use of English language remains untranslatable to the native masses³³. Further, while the English language may be important in its own place and respect, it made the speakers in India aloof from their own ancient treasures of knowledge. For him, it was important that the education be imparted in the provincial languages. He also believed that the law courts and legislature at the provincial level be run using the provincial languages. However, the functioning of the central administration and intercommunication shall be conducted in the national language³⁴.

In 1917, Gandhi asserted, operationally, there were five main criterias for the national language- it should be easily accessible for the government officials and for the masses; it should be able to carry the religious, economic and intellectual intercourse throughout the country and spoken by the majority; and, it should not be marred by temporary interests (Gandhi 1960). He believed that it was the Hindi language, which he also referred to as

³² Gandhi said that he went on to adopt the mannerisms and the dress code of the English people as he became proficient in the language (Gandhi 1960, 169).

³³ Gandhi lamented in 1921 in *Young India*, “I find daily proof of the increasing and continuing wrong being done to the millions by our false de-Indianizing education. These graduates who are my valued associates themselves flounder when they have to give expression to their innermost thoughts. They are strangers in their own homes. Their vocabulary in the mother tongue is so limited that they cannot always finish their speech without having recourse to English words and even sentences” (Gandhi 1953).

³⁴ He wrote, “In order to enhance the status and the market-value of the provincial languages, I would have the language of the law courts to be the language of the province where the court is situated. The proceedings of the provincial legislatures must be in the language, or even the languages of the province where a province has more than one language within its borders...At the centre Hindustani must rule supreme” (Gandhi 1953).

Hindustani, with words not too Sanskritized or Persianized, written in either Devanagari or Urdu script which is capable of imbibing this role. He argued that in this version of Hindi-Hindustani that adopted common words from the masses, it was the most widely spoken language in the country. The question of the script for Gandhi is limited to its role of translatability and ensuring accessibility of the knowledge in different languages to the masses. Even though he endorsed the Nagari script as the common script for the nation in 1925, he moved to the position of adopting two or more scripts for the country in 1947. He believed that while it was simpler for speakers of languages with origins from Sanskrit to learn Hindi, it was to pose a difficulty for the languages of the Dravidian family. He founded the *Dakshin Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha* in 1918 to promote the learning of the Hindi language in the South.

Gandhi wrote to Tagore in 1918 before the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan at Indore seeking his views on adoption of the 'Hindi (as bhasha or Urdu)' as the national language, for Congress proceedings and as a secondary language in post-primary schools. Tagore agreed with Gandhi that there was a need to promote a common medium of communication which was not a foreign language among the people of the 'motherland' who shared common feelings and but spoke different languages (Tagore 1994, 736). For him, it reeked of humiliation for him as being the 'poet of the land', he was interpreted in a language foreign to the land to be understood by Gandhi or other fellow countrymen. Tagore replied in affirmative that 'Hindi is the only possible language for inter-provincial intercourse', but with some reservations. He insisted that the change of language into Hindi at the Congress must be gradual as the political leaders were not yet ready to express their ideas in the Hindi language for the lack of proficiency as well as for the domination of the English language for thinking and structuring ideas. Tagore suggested that it could be adopted by a future generation of politicians who accept it voluntarily as part of their 'national obligation' (ibid.,).

Tagore exhibited two important concerns with regard to the matter of promoting the Hindi language. One, the Hindi language to be adopted for the purpose of communication must not be antagonistic to the status and needs of the regional languages and diversity of

mother tongues. The *lingua franca* was not to replace the language of expression which was the mother tongue as Tagore believed it was only in the mother tongue that a writer or poet could truly express themselves. Second, he also insisted that the nature of the Hindi language must not be embedded with communal undertones. The Hindi language that is to be the *lingua franca* must inhabit the cultural and linguistic heritage of Sanskrit as well as Persian³⁵ languages (ibid., 737).

The consensus between the two thinkers, thus, was not complete. Tagore had earlier disagreed with Gandhi's denunciation of the English language and culture in the expression of ideas by reformers like Rammohan Roy and Tilak³⁶. Tagore, who had received much intellectual exposure from the West and the English language, expressed his disagreement strongly. He wrote in a letter to C.F. Andrews, who was a mutual companion of Tagore and Gandhi, "... it hurts me deeply when the cry of rejection rings loud against the West in my country with the clamour that the Western education can only injure us. It cannot be true. What has caused the mischief is the fact that for a long time we have been out of touch with our own culture and therefore the Western culture has not found its prospective in our life very often found a wrong prospective giving our mental eye a squint" (Bhattacharya 1997, 68). For Tagore, one must be able to appreciate the knowledge, art and beauty of human beings and their creations irrespective of the source of origin. He distanced himself from a passionate rejection of the West in lieu of one's

³⁵ Tagore wrote, "... I hope that the language which is to claim our allegiance as *lingua franca* will prove and maintain its complete freedom from any communal bias. It must truly represent the double current of Sanskrit and Persian that have been working side by side for the last many centuries and must boldly enfranchise all the words that have been naturalized by long use" (Tagore 1994, 737).

³⁶ Gandhi strongly believed that the use of English language decapitated the minds of Indian people for whom it was not their native language or vernacular. In 1921, he wrote, "Ram Mohan Roy would have been a greater reformer, and Lokmanya Tilak would have been a greater scholar, if they had not to start with the handicap of having to think in English and transmit their thoughts chiefly in English. Their effect on their own people, marvelous as it was, would have been greater if they would have been educated under a less unnatural system. No doubt they both gained from their knowledge of the rich treasures of English literature. But these should have been accessible to them through their own vernaculars. No country can become a nation by producing a race of imitators" (Gandhi 1960, 159).

inflated nationalist ideals. For him, such a rejection is a reflection of narrow nationalism as it fails to welcome the common humanity of all human beings³⁷.

From this set of agreement and disagreement, it is possible to understand that for Tagore, the support for Hindi as the national language was to play a functional role of facilitating communication among the diverse linguistic regions of the country. It was not to prevent access to the English education and the expression of ideas in the foreign language, under the impression of a compulsory usage of the vernaculars. While the English language is to be replaced from the place of domination by Hindi, it must be done with responsibility and caution. The Hindi language as the *lingua franca* was not to promote communal sentiments exposing disregard for the Persian and Arabic cultural and linguistic currents as well as negate the presence of regional languages and vernaculars.

These fears of promoting the use of Hindi at the behest of nationalist and communal sentiments that attacked the English as well as the Persian languages come true in the ideas of Savarkar. For the latter, the adoption of the Hindi language as the national language goes beyond functional roles of facilitating communication to representing the national identity of the united Indian nation. Savarkar believes that a Sanskritized Hindi is capable of serving the purpose of a 'national pan-Hindu language'. Unlike Gandhi's suggestion of adopting common words that are mixed in the vernaculars, Savarkar suggests that every effort must be taken to segregate words sourced from English or Persian languages from the Hindi language³⁸. In Savarkar's view, Sanskritized Hindi language represents the ancient united Hindu nation that India once was. He asserted,

³⁷ In lieu of Tagore's criticism of his views on the English language, Gandhi famously replied, "I hope I am as great a believer in free air as the great Poet. I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any. ..I refuse to put the unnecessary strain of learning English upon my sisters for the sake of false pride or questionable social advantage. ... I would not have a single Indian to forget, neglect or be ashamed of his mother-tongue, or to feel that he or she cannot think or express the best thoughts in his or her own vernacular" (Bhattacharya 1997, 70).

³⁸ Savarkar said, "This Sanskrit Nishtha' Hindi has nothing to do with that hybrid, the so-called Hindusthani which is being hatched up by the Wardha scheme. It is nothing short of a linguistic monstrosity and must be ruthlessly suppressed. Not only that but it is our bounden duty to oust out ruthlessly all unnecessary alien words whether Arabian or English, from every Hindu tongue-whether provincial or dilectical" (Savarkar 1964, 47).

“The Hindu pilgrim, the tradesman, soldier, the pandit travelled up and down from Bengal to Sindh and Kashmere to Rameshwar by making himself understood from locality to locality through Hindi. Just as Sanskrit was the national language of the Hindu intellectual world even so Hindi had been for at least a thousand years in the past the National Indian tongue of the Hindu people” (Savarakar 1964, 47). Savarkar also endorses the adoption of a singular script, ‘Devanagari’, for the nation. He argues that while it may not be immediately practical and possible to achieve the uniform usage of the Hindi language, the application of a uniform script is a more accessible target to succeed at.

It is noteworthy that three thinkers discussed here, even though they belonged to non-Hindi speaking states and were not native to speaking Hindi language, they all agreed for different reasons to support some version of the Hindi language for national status. While on the surface, it appears that all the three thinkers discussed above expressed support for the adoption of the Hindi language as the national language, the nature of the language and its role as envisaged by them discloses the deep disagreements and fissures in the imaginations of the Hindi language. In Tagore, one finds the role of national language limited to the functional duties of facilitating interregional communication. For him, expression in his mother-tongue Bengali as well as in the Western language, English, were indispensable to his belief in realization of humanist ideals. While Gandhi does not dismiss the importance of the English in its own respect, in the Indian context, he believed that it has to be removed from a higher pedestal to counter the hegemony of western civilization. He felt that the Hindi language was capable of playing that role at a mass scale. Since, this attack is not a solely ‘Hindu’ attack that is aimed at ‘purity’, he decries the efforts of Sanskritizing the Hindi language. Savarkar, on the other hand, strongly believed in the purity of the Hindi language as a marker of Hindu civilization. Thus, for him, a version of the Hindi language, that assimilates words of common usage from Persian and English, taints the language and the nation.

The three thinkers were in the middle of the raging debate between the Hindi, Urdu and Hindustani languages. Their positions on the language are inherently linked to the

positions on religious identities and the Indian nation. The question of maintaining unity in Indian society and the nation while at the same time dealing with religious differences that threatened mutual living and support among diverse communities was another dominating debate that characterized the Indian political discourse. Gandhi's ideas influenced a major part of the debate among the two dominant religious identities of the Hindus and the Muslims. In his career, Gandhi studied scriptures from various religions and came in contact with their votaries. In 1919, he stated that through his contacts with Muslim merchants in South Africa, he came to closely understand the habits and ways of living of Muslims. Gandhi rejected the notion that there was an unbridgeable disunity and antagonism among the Hindus and Muslims³⁹. However, he was not unaware of the lack of mutual cooperation among the two communities and for him, forging and preserving a unity between the two communities constituted one of the missions of his life.

Gandhi tried to allay the fears raised by some Muslim leaders that the independent India would be dominated by Hindu interests. He urged that the Indian nation shall be constituted of mutual respect and toleration towards religious diversity. He argued that with numerical majority on their side, the Hindus of the country must be ready to sacrifice for accommodating the demands of their fellow Muslim citizens. He put the burden on the Hindus who were numerically dominant to assuage the fears of the Muslim minorities and assure them of their continued importance in the Indian nation⁴⁰. For Gandhi, non-violence was an important aspect of his Satyagraha and violence by the strong towards the weak was abhorrent. It was important for the Hindus to practice self-sacrifice towards the Muslims as a step towards satyagraha and non-violence. Gandhi believed that if the Hindus were to assert the advantages of their majority to the detriment

³⁹ Gandhi wrote, "My experience of all India tells me that the Hindus and the Muslims know how to live at peace among themselves. I decline to believe that people have said goodbye to their senses so as to make it impossible to live at peace with each other, as they had done for generations" (Gandhi 2021, 6).

⁴⁰ He said, "As a man of truth, I honestly believe that Hindus should yield up to the Mohammedans what the latter desire, and that they should rejoice in so doing. We can expect unity only if such mutual large-heartedness is displayed" (ibid., 11). He faced severe objections to this argument.

of the Muslim minority, they would be trapped in the vicious cycle of violence where the Hindus could be heckled another day by another more powerful force⁴¹.

Gandhi recognized and asserted that there was significant value in the teachings of Islam. He distanced from the interpretations of the religious clergy and instead relied on his own readings and experiences of Islam. He believed that at its core, Islam, like Christianity and Hinduism, espoused for peace and harmony. On the question of the history of Islamic transgressions of violence, Gandhi believed that it was important to prioritize what the book said and not what was practiced. On the criticism of violence supported in the Quran, he argued that similar support for transgressions and violence can be found in other religions as well. Gandhi's personal faith in Hinduism did not prevent him from pursuing an empathetic understanding of Islam as a religion and Muslims as fellow members of the nation. In the wake of the rising communal tension in the 1930s, he remained a staunch supporter of the mutual respect of all religions. He went on to assert that even if one were to not appreciate Islam and Christianity, it was still possible to tolerate it and mutually co-exist with each other. He stated, "Mutual toleration is a necessity for all time and for all races. We cannot live in peace if the Hindu will not tolerate the Mohammedan form of worship of God and his manners and customs, or if the Mohammedan will be impatient of Hindu idolatry or cow-worship. It is not necessary for toleration that I must approve of what I tolerate" (Gandhi 2021, 10).

Gandhi's strand on the importance of the unity of the Hindus and Muslims was equally shared by Tagore. For Tagore, syncretism was an essential characteristic of Indian culture and civilization. The mutual co-existence, assimilation and toleration of diversity of religions and races was the strength of the Indian civilization and its people. The enmity of the two religious communities threatened the ideals of peace and harmony. Tagore acknowledged that the Islamic invasions in India were tainted with the history of barbarism and violence. But for him, it was the strength of the Indian civilization to

⁴¹ Gandhi wrote, "... if the strong become brutes and tread upon the weak. Then, they must be trodden under by the stronger" (Gandhi 1963, 69).

realize soon after that the truth inherent in Islam was not far off from the truth practiced by the Indian civilization and its people⁴².

For Tagore, the communal antagonism between the two religious communities was against the ideas of Indian civilization. He had asserted that the force of Indian civilization was syncretic in nature where through the course of its history, it has attempted to accept and enrich from the diverse traditions. The genuine divergences were recognized and ensured appropriate separate places without threatening their existence or assimilation. Further, for him, it was possible to see the unity of the inner truth in all religions. He celebrated the poetry of Bhakti and Sufi saints and the poetry of Bauls that highlighted this unity of faith in the human being.

Tagore's brush with the divide between the Muslim and the Hindu religious communities was during the Swadeshi movement in 1905. For him, there were little efforts from the educated Hindus to include the Muslims and the lower caste Hindus in the movement. The use of Hindu religious vocabulary in the movement alienated the Muslims and communal propaganda were often used as well.⁴³ According to him, there was no genuine concern about the participation of the Muslims to the nationalists' call for agitation. After the non-cooperation and Khilafat movement, Tagore wrote in a letter to a fellow author, Kalidas Nag, that while Muslims could welcome Hindus in their homes and dine with them, Hindus on the other hand have erected several social barriers that prevent them

⁴² In an essay in Bengali in his book *Shantiniketan*, Tagore states, "wherever this religion [Islam] has gone, it has never rested before striking out against religions opposed to itself and laying them to the ground. India also had to bear [the momentum of] this terrible assault that worked its way through centuries. ... If we discuss the sayings of the saints [*sadhak*] who awoke to the age of the advent of Muslims [Tagore named Nanak, Ravidas, Kabir, and Dadu], we clearly see that Bharatvarsha was able to withstand easily the impact of this assault by baring her inmost truth... Bharatvarsha showed then that the [inner] truth of the religion of the Musalman was not something opposed to what Bharatvarsha regarded as the truth" (cited in Chakrabarty, Dipesh n.d.).

⁴³ "A decade back, during the days of Swadeshi Movement against the partition of Bengal, a nationalist propagandist refused to drink a glass of water, because a Muslim compatriot has touched the glass ... The Bengalee Muslims did not share our agony over the partition of Bengal, because we had never thought of them truly as our brothers...To the educated nationalists, India meant the India of the highly-educated - the common people, the average Muslim and the, so- called low caste Hindus were not part of that 'India'", (cited in Chattopadhyay 1991).

from offering hospitality and equality to the Muslims. He further wrote that the religion of the Hindus is based in non-violent non-cooperation with all other religions⁴⁴. During the communal tensions in 1926, Tagore had urged for the indispensable need for maintaining the religious harmony among the Hindu and Muslims for asserting the demand for independence. He had argued, “India has two major communities - Hindus and Muslims. If we think that we can achieve our welfare by excluding the Muslims, we shall be committing a grave error. Out of anger, one may say that while building the roof, we shall erect not eight but five pillars, because we hate the other three pillars - yet that will not lead to erection of a stable and strong roof” (translated from Bengali by Chattopadhyay 1991). Towards 1930s, as the communal differences accentuated, Tagore increasingly became disenchanted with the efforts from both the communities to bring about harmony⁴⁵.

Savarkar did not agree with the importance of syncretism and diversity of religious traditions in Indian nationhood. For him, the antagonism between the Hindus and the Muslims goes back to centuries of Indian history. He strongly opposed the notion that the unity of the Indian nation can only be achieved when Hindus and Muslims come together for the cause of the nation. For Savarkar, it is a failure of the votaries of such demands to understand that with such pleas to the minority community by the majority, the former will respond with conditions or special interests⁴⁶. There is a sense of deep mistrust that Savarkar exhibits against the Muslim minorities. According to him, the root of the oppositions to songs or slogans, raised by Muslim leaders that were found to be

⁴⁴ “We refuse to eat with the Musalman, because prescribed usage is against it. In other words, we have systematically pursued a course of blind routine and habit, in which the mind has no place” (ibid., 75).

⁴⁵ In a speech at Shantiniketan, Tagore said, “Straight-forward atheism is preferable to this terrible thing, delusion of religiosity. If you do not keep your eyes shut you can see how disgusting is the satanic bestiality which wears the garb of religion ... I do not see any path other than beginning anew by burning in the fire of atheism all perversions of religion” (cited in Bhattacharya 2012, 78).

⁴⁶ In his speech at the 1937 session of Hindu Mahasabha, Savarkar asserts, “When an overwhelming majority in a country goes on its knees before a minority so antagonistic as the Mohammedans, imploring them to lend a helping hand and assures it that otherwise the major community is doomed to death, it would be a wonder if that minor community does not sell their assistance at the higher bidder possible, does not hasten the doom of the major community and aim to establish their own political suzerainty in the land. The only threat that the Mohammedans always hold before the Hindus is to the effect that they would not join the Hindus in the struggle for Indian freedom unless their anti-national and fanatical demands are granted on the spot” (Savarkar 1964, 12).

antagonist to Muslims or dominated by Hindu interests, was the ‘malady deep seated in Moslem mind’ (ibid., 11). He argued that the Muslims intended to assert their domination over the country and self-humiliation in the minds of other non-Muslims. Savarkar was firm that the antagonism between the Muslims and the Hindus were cultural, religious and national. India was not a homogeneous and unitary nation; it comprised the two nations of the Hindus and Muslims (ibid., 13). For Savarkar, the fight for independence of the country meant fighting not just the British but also the Muslim hegemony.

Reinterpreting swaraj, Savarkar argues that it goes beyond the territorial freedom of the country. He argues, “...Indian swarajya or Indian swatantrya means, as far as the Hindu Nation is concerned, the political independence of the Hindus, the freedom which would enable them to grow to their full height...to the Hindus independence of Hindusthan can only be worth having if that ensures their Hindutva-their religious, racial and cultural identity. We are not out to fight and die for a 'swarajya' which could only be had at the cost of our 'swatva', our Hindutva itself !” (Savarkar 1964, 10). Savarkar also redefined the category of Hindu. In his definition of the Hindu, all those who regard the geographical boundary of the country as their ‘fatherland’ and ‘holyland’ which is to mean that the country was the land of their ancestors as well as the land of their religion or faith⁴⁷. In this notion of Hindu, different religious communities such as the Buddhists and the Sikhs, religious sects such as Jains, Lingayats, Arya Samaj and Prathana Samaj and indigenous tribes were merged and assimilated as Hindus. The Muslims and the Christians, because of the foreign origin of their religion, for Savarkar, do not qualify this definition. In Savarkar’s view, for the Muslims to become a part of the Indian nation, they must be assimilated by accepting the country as their ‘holyland’ as well (ibid., 45).

Unlike other thinkers of his period, Savarkar asserts that the divide between the Muslims and Hindus is not limited to the religious affiliations. Rather, it is cultural (ibid., 13-14). While Gandhi and Tagore had asserted the cultural diversity as well as mutual influences of various religious traditions, Savarkar drove a deeper wedge between the two

⁴⁷ Savarkar argued, “Every person is a Hindu who regards and owns this Bharat Bhumi, this land from the Indus to the Seas, as his Fatherland as well as his Holyland;-i.e. the land of the origin of his religion, the cradle of his Faith” (ibid., 46).

communities. The assimilation that Savarkar supports for Muslims into the Indian/Hindu nation denies them recognition of their particular religious identity. As his insistence on a singular language and script for the country and a uniform religious-cultural identity of Hindu explicates, Savarkar's imagination of the Indian nation varied vastly from Gandhi and Tagore.

The varying ideas from the three thinkers on the different issues reflect the diverse and contrasting imaginations of the nations. In Gandhi's views, the capacity of 'assimilation' is the crucial element that is supposed to define the Indian nation. His idea of Indian civilization centrally emphasizes on the accommodation of diversity, mutual cooperation and co-living among the diverse religious and cultural streams. He is vehement that such differences prevent India from constituting a nation. In his ideals for the Indian nation, non-violence is another important aspect that becomes important. His notion of assimilation is different because it is based in non-violence. The accommodation and toleration of the other is not, for Gandhi, based in erasure and denial of equality to the minority. For him, the majority has to exhibit faith in non-violence in incorporating the minority religious and cultural streams.

Tagore, from 1910 onwards, expressed mistrust in the capacity of the nation to celebrate the equality of all human beings. For him, nation was 'the aspect of a whole people as organized power'. While for him, the faculty of assimilation of diversity was important to the nature of Indian civilization, nation as a unit for him is a vehicle of aggression and slavery⁴⁸. Tagore severely doubted the capacity of the nation in celebrating and valuing the ideal of humanity common to all beings. The swadeshi movement, the rejection of English language and revolutionary movements in India, for Tagore, were instances of the fears he raised against the unchecked sentiments of nationalism. However, he does not dismiss the faith in the Indian nation altogether. For him, what is necessary is that the

⁴⁸ Tagore stated, "This organization incessantly keeps up the insistence of the population on becoming strong and efficient. But this strenuous effort after strength and efficiency drains man's energy from his higher nature where he is self-sacrificing and creative. For thereby man's power of sacrifice is diverted from his ultimate object, which is moral, to the maintenance of this organization, which is mechanical. Yet in all this he feels all the satisfaction of moral exaltation and therefore becomes supremely dangerous to humanity" (Tagore,).

swaraj of the country is tied to the swaraj of the individual. A nation that hinders the realization of the full creative potential of its people is not an ideal to be imbibed but strongly rejected. He abhorred the idea of Hindu Nation with its focus on uniformity. The latter idea found sympathetic dealing from Savarkar. For him, the Indian nation is idealized as the Hindu nation. The notion of assimilation entailed rejection of the specific interests and particularities of various communities towards the cause of the nation. The territorial integration is not a sufficient factor for the nation; it must be supplemented with 'cultural, religious, historical, linguistic and racial' commonality to ensure a homogenous and organic nationhood. This nation must be homogenous to exert a distinct identity in relation to other nations of the world. For Savarkar, this homogeneity can only be exercised through the ideal of Hindu nation where the people share their 'holyland' and 'fatherland' within the territorial frontiers of the country.

These ideas express the diversity of social-political responses and aspirations that were prevalent in the national discourse in the twentieth century. Each of the thinkers presented their unique ways of thinking about language, religion and the nation. In later chapters, the views of Shukla and Dwivedi shall be understood in the context of these ideas. In the political and intellectual climate that was characterized by the diversity of ideas discussed in this section, the debates within the Hindi literary sphere reflect engagement with the above at various levels. While this chapter is not the space to discuss in detail the engagements of Shukla and Dwivedi with the three thinkers, it is sufficient to note that each of the three thinkers figure significantly in the ideas of the two literary critics to be discussed in chapter three and four. In the next section, we move on to going through the ideas and conceptions that were prevalent within the Hindi literary sphere from where Shukla and Dwivedi picked up the trail.

2.3 Debates in the Hindi Literary Sphere: Bharatendu Harishchandra and Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi

The latter half of the nineteenth century marked the rise of the literary sphere in various languages such as Bengali, Oriya, Telugu, Tamil and Hindi across different regions in the country. The literary works in various languages experimented with different new genres such as novels, short stories, letters to the editors, essays, plays; as well as in various themes, satire, drama, socio-political commentaries, historical essays and travelogues. In the northwestern provinces, the period also witnessed the emergence of the movement for the admission of Nagari script in courtly and administrative work of the government⁴⁹. The debates within the Hindi language with regard to the notions of language, religion and the nation can be traced to the political and literary sites of the North-western province of the present day Uttar Pradesh.

The roots of the standard modern Hindi, the Khari Boli variant written in Nagari script, can be traced to this period of the nineteenth century. In the writings of Bharatendu Harishchandra⁵⁰ (1850-1885), who is acknowledged as the ‘father of modern Hindi literature’, and Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi (1864-1938), it is possible to trace the development of a consciousness of the idea/s of the Hindi language and the various forms and themes that it can be expanded into. Bharatendu is especially known for promoting the writing of poetry and prose in the newly cultivated Khari boli variant of the Hindi language and expanding its use in various genres and literary devices; he also composed

⁴⁹ From the 1830s onwards, the British government introduced changes in official linguistic policy by adopting English over Persian at the higher levels of administration and replacing Persian with vernaculars at the lower levels. In most of North India, Hindustani (i.e.) in Persian script was the chosen vernacular. The Hindi and Nagari script were not considered yet. The Nagari script was introduced gradually across different provinces from the 1870 onwards even though the language continued to be Hindustani until the twentieth century. In the Central Provinces, the Nagari character was introduced in the administration in 1872. It was followed in Bihar soon after in 1874 and 1875. In light of these changes being introduced, Northwestern and Oudh provinces also witnessed petitions and pleas for introducing the Nagari character which was accepted in 1900. Even though there were oppositions to replacing Persian, such as in Dacca in 1839, no other province saw massive opposition against the pleas for Nagari Script (King 1994, 53-73).

⁵⁰ Harishchandra was a writer, poet and playwright who was adorned with the title, ‘Bharatendu’ (The moon of India) in a public meeting in 1880. Born in Banaras, he belonged to a family of landlords who made a fortune supporting British. He was a polyglot with his knowledge of Sanskrit, Punjabi, Bengali, Marathi, Gujarati and Urdu. He composed poetry in different languages including Urdu, Braj Bhasha, English and Hindi. He experimented with the use of languages by mixing different languages such as English and Hindi. Some of his plays that are popular even today are *Andher Nagri*, *Bharat Durdasha*, *Mudrarakshas*, *Satyaharishchandra* and *Neeldevi*.

bhakti poetry in Braj Bhasha and gazals in Urdu. He was particularly influential in promoting the usage of the modern Hindi for various kinds of literary expressions among new writers; some of whom famously came to be known as ‘*Bharatendu Mandli*⁵¹’ who carried forward the legacy of his ideas in the twentieth century. The period of his works is referred to as ‘*Bharatendu Yug*’ or the ‘era of Bharatendu’ in the history of Hindi language as his large corpus of writings epitomize the language and themes of the period. Before the Hindi literary sphere became the arena of battle for the status of national language, in the nineteenth century, it was characterized with the initial churnings of ideas and experiments in the script, nature and form of the so-called Hindi language and notions of its importance. In lieu of the textbooks and translations from Bengali and English that were available, the writings of Bharatendu also depict the initial ideas about Islam and Muslims in the Indian society. Within the literary sphere of Hindi language, Bharatendu’s writings signify the beginning of the ideas around the concerns and issues that India as a nation faced.

Apart from the contributions made to the development of the modern variant of the Hindi language, Bharatendu was also the progenitor of the idea of the importance of ‘one’s own language or *nij bhasha*. The ideas expressed in the form of a long poem titled, ‘*Hindi ki Unnati par Vyakhyan*’ (1877), Bharatendu elaborated on the wide ranging significance of learning and using one’s own language. He defined the *nij bhasha* as the language spoken and understood by the mother and children in the household⁵². He famously asserted that *nij bhasha* was the root of all progress possible and without it, one cannot express their pain and suffering⁵³. According to him, with the lack of the knowledge in *nij bhasha*, any

⁵¹ Writers and poets such as Pratap Narayan Misra (1856-1894), Balkrishna Bhatt (1844-1914), Badrinarayan Chaudhary ‘Premghan’ (1855-1923), Ambikadatt Vyas (1848-1900), Thakur Jagmohan Singh (1857-1899), Radhacharan Goswami (1859-1925) were together referred to as *Bharatendu Mandal*. Misra was known for coining the famous slogan of ‘Hindi, Hindu, Hindustan’; Bhatt started the famous journal, ‘*Hindi Pradip*’; Premghan started the journals, *Anandkadambini* and *Nagari Neerad*; Goswami founded the journal ‘*Bharatendu*’.

⁵² “सो माता हिंदी बिना कछु नहि जानत और, तासों निज भाषा अहै, सबही की सिरमौर” (Harishchandra 1987, 228)।

⁵³ “निज भाषा उन्नति अहै, सब उन्नति को मूल, बिनु निज भाषा-ज्ञान के, मित न हिय को सूल” (Ibid.,) ।

amount of eloquence in English, Sanskrit and Persian remained deficient⁵⁴. He argued that while knowledge must be collected from all available languages, it was crucial that it must be translated in *nij bhasha* for that will ensure education and prosperity of all members of the household and the society⁵⁵. The usage of *nij bhasha* was also emphasized upon to uncover the economic loot and legal oppression perpetuated by the colonial rule⁵⁶. Bharatendu asserted that the massive diversity in the country was the cause of much trouble and with the use of one language, i.e. the *nij bhasha*, the unity of the people could be espoused⁵⁷.

Clearly, for Bharatendu, *nij bhasha* which he also refers to as Hindi was of utmost importance. In defining Hindi, Bharatendu elaborated that it was devoid of Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic words. In another essay on Hindi language written in 1873, Bharatendu had listed several forms of Hindi, that were prevalent in his time, but he lent his support to either a Hindi that contained few and simple Sanskrit words or with none at all⁵⁸ (Harishchandra 1987, 1048). He also recognized that the language of the household is far too diverse to be qualified as a uniform language.

There is a conundrum that emerges in Bharatendu's writings with regard to the issue of language. While he believed firmly in the importance of the usage of 'one's own language' or language of the household, in education and employment, he also raised concerns about the plurality of it. In his response to the Hunter Commission in 1882, with regard to the vernacular language of the people and the medium of instruction in schools,

⁵⁴ "पढ़े संस्कृत जतन करि पंडित भे विख्यात, पै निज भाषा ज्ञान बिन कहि न सकत एक बात । पड़े फारसी बहुत बिध तौहू भये खराब ।...अंग्रेजी पढ़ि के जदपि सब गुन होत प्रबीन, पै निज भाषा ज्ञान बिन रहत हीन के हीन" (ibid.,)।

⁵⁵ "विविध कला शिक्षा अमित, ज्ञान अनेक प्रकार, सब देसन से लै करहू, भाषा माहि प्रचार" (ibid.,)।

⁵⁶ "कछु तो बेतन में गयो कछुक राज-कर माँहि, बाकी सब व्यौहार में गयो रह्यौ कछु नाहिं ।... तैसहि भोगत दण्ड बहु बिनु जाने कानून, सहत पुलिस की ताड़ना देत एक करि दून " (ibid., 229)।

⁵⁷ "भारत में सब भिन्न अति, ताहीं सों उत्पात, विविध देस मतहू विविध, भाषा विविध लखात" (ibid., 229)।

⁵⁸ The other types of Hindi that Bharatendu mentioned with examples were Hindi 'languages' with Sanskrit dominated vocabulary, Persian words, Words from English, vernacular tongue of Benares, vernacular of 'half-educated' people in Benares, Hindi spoken by people in the South, Bengali people, English people and Hindi used in railways (ibid., 1049).

Bharatendu lamented that there was no uniform common language spoken by the people⁵⁹. It differed massively within the city of Banaras and the North-western province. Bharatendu also asserted that the language varied according to the social position of the speaker⁶⁰.

Despite this, in the deposition to the Hunter Commission, in lieu of then ongoing movement for recognition of Nagari Script in government affairs, Bharatendu narrowed down to selecting the '*Khari boli*' variant of the vernacular which was spoken in the public, according to him, as against the '*Braj Bhasha*' variant which was used for poetic compositions (ibid., 1056). He emphasized that upon adding abundant Persian words and written in Persian character to this variant, it was noted as 'Urdu'. Distancing from some of the positions taken in the Nagari movement, Bharatendu asserted that 'Hindi' and 'Urdu' were not two different languages⁶¹. He also decried the efforts by Pandits for adding Sanskrit words profusely making it unintelligible to the common people. Bharatendu distanced his notion of 'Hindi' from the inclusion of words from both Sanskrit and Persian-Arabic sources. His support of Hindi was based on the then prevalent disparity in the large number of schools imparting education in Nagari, in contrast to the employment opportunities available to them in the public offices. He did not indulge in a wholesale denouncement of the Persian dominated Urdu in lieu of his support for Hindi. His rhetoric against Urdu was aimed at addressing the unintelligibility

⁵⁹ In an essay titled, '*Hindee Bhasa*' written in 1873 in English, Bharatendu wrote, "If those who are fighting for Hindee wish to introduce, and adopt for writing the current dialect of this country, let them bear in mind, that there is no such dialect...The vernacular of one city perceptible differs, and is distinguishable from another. If they wish to bring in a language which is not really spoken but, in their opinion ought to be spoken, they will cause insurmountable difficulty and inconvenience by their recommendation" (Harishchandra 2008, 367).

⁶⁰ Bharatendu wrote, "When you observe such vast variety in one and the same common dialect used in one and the same place, what can you say of the language used throughout the entire province? The vernacular of this province, therefore, varies according to the caste, birthplace and attainments of the speaker" (ibid., 388-89).

⁶¹ The statement of Bharatendu Harishchandra given to the Hunter Commission in 1882, two years before his death, challenges Dalmia's argument that Harishchandra had moved to the supposition of Hindi and Urdu as two different languages. In his elaborate testimony, Harishchandra is at pains to emphasize the diversity of languages to be neatly categorized as Hindi and Urdu. He assures that Hindi and Urdu were not two different languages, rather the same language which differed on the aspect of script and the excess of words used (Harishchandra 1987, 1056).

of Persian-Arabic dominated language and the corruption perpetuated because of it in public life⁶².

In a similar fashion, with regard to views on the Muslim rulers in India, even though Bharatendu acknowledged that parts of the history were shadowed with religious oppression against Hindus, he restrained from vilifying the entire medieval period in the writing of history. In his review of the then '*Itihastimirnask*' by Babu Shiv Prasad which was widely subscribed for the teaching of History in Hindi language, Bharatendu criticized the one-sided vilified account of the Mughal rule. He wrote, pointing out Akbar, Shah Jehan and Jahangir as 'benefactors of human race', "...they have done all that could have been expected from the civilisation and the form of government of that period, much better than the rulers of Europe of those days. They have proclaimed toleration in matters of religion when it was unknown in the civilized Europe" (Harishchandra 2008, 374). The crippling taxation of the Mughal, Bharatendu asserted, was continued under the British with only refinement in their labels. In another account written in 1873, titled '*Badshah Darpan*', Bharatendu mentioned about the 'slavery' of the Hindus under the Muslim rulers and yet, wrote humanizing opinions about each individual ruler⁶³; criticizing and admiring accordingly⁶⁴ (Harishchandra 1987, 731-770). He also seemed to differentiate between the history of Islam in India and Islam as a religion. Apart from translating Quran in Hindi, parts of which appeared in his magazine

⁶² A famous poem by Bharatendu Harishchandra that is cited as an attack or mockery of Urdu language is '*Urdu ka Siyapa*'. Scholars like Shamsur Rahman Faruqi (2003) and Vasudha Dalmia (1997, 200) have read in the poem, 'vulgarity' and 'lapse' in Harishchandra's idea of the death of Urdu. I agree with Trivedi's assessment (2003, 973) that the poem is a reflection of a 'death' noted by supporters of Urdu language in his period because of the 'betrayal' by Raja Shiv Prasad. Harishchandra does not express or wish for the death of Urdu in the poem. It is a work of satire, a farcical commentary in the form of a mocking elegy.

⁶³ Sudhir Chandra notes that the essay written a year before Bharatendu's death depicted a changing portrayal of Akbar, the Mughal ruler, in Bharatendu's works. The latter had intended to 'expose' Akbar from the garb of inclusive and positive image around him (Chandra 2014, 134).

⁶⁴ About the last Mughal ruler, Bahadur Shah Zafar, Bharatendu wrote, "दिल्ली के बलवे में अंग्रेजों ने बिचारे बुढ़े के नाम मात्र होने पर भी कैद करके रंगून भेज दिया। और ईब की आँखों के सामने इसके भाई भतीजे लड़के पोते सब काटे गए" (Harishchandra 1987, 758)।

in 1875, he also wrote biographical essays of five reverential figures in Islam, including Prophet Mohammed, under the title '*Panch Pavitraatma*' in 1884⁶⁵.

Bharatendu raised caution against denigrating Islam and Muslim rule lest it could lead to sentiments of revenge and hatred among the Hindus. In his famous Ballia speech in November, 1884, a few months before his death, Bharatendu asserted and urged both the Hindus and Muslims that they must counter the ills and sectarianism in their respective faiths that hinder their progress (ibid., 1013). To counter the economic dependence on the colonial rulers and movement of wealth away from their country, it was important, Bharatendu argued, that the sectarian differences among the people be removed. Bharatendu's writings and views were hailed as heralding a new consciousness in the Hindi literary sphere. With the introduction and expansion of the Khari boli variant, Bharatendu's contribution was particularly influential in bringing about a discourse on diverse social-political themes of nationalism, language and religion in the literary imagination of the Hindi language. There were many other voices in the period who differentiated from Bharatendu.⁶⁶ However, the legacy of the latter proved dominant in impacting the course of the Hindi literary sphere.

If Bharatendu's brief but important career marked the beginning of new experiments in the Hindi literary sphere, it is in Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi's literary efforts that we can locate a consolidated move towards generalizing and expanding the shifts in the Hindi language. Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi (1864-1938) was born in a Brahmin household in the district of Rae Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh. His father was a sepoy in East India Company posted in Punjab, who escaped after his unit was under attack in reaction to their mutiny against the Company. Dwivedi learnt Sanskrit, Persian, English and Urdu languages in

⁶⁵ The other four were Ali, Bibi Fatima, Imam Hasan and Imam Hussain (ibid., 890). Writing about Prophet Mohammed, Bharatendu stated, "प्रभू का आदेशपालन के हेतु सब प्रकार का दारिद्र, क्लेश, अपमान और आत्मीय जन का निग्रह अम्लान बदन से सिर नीचा करके सहन किया" (ibid., 961)।

⁶⁶ Raja Shiv Prasad was one such figure. He primarily made his career, rising in ranks over his lifetime, with the British. He supported the use of Persian script, even though he did not always support Persian Arabic vocabulary. His '*Itihastimirnasak*' was based on the lines of British historiography that appreciated and necessitated British rule for the colonized population (Sharma 1984).

different schools. He worked as a telegraphist for most of his life with the Great Indian Peninsular Railway. He also read and wrote the journals produced by Nagari Pracharini Sabha and Bharatendu Harischandra. He quit his job in 1904 to contribute full time to the weekly journal ‘Saraswati’ which became widely popular under his editorship, joining in 1903, that lasted eighteen years until 1921. The Khari boli variant of Hindi was popularized, uniformized and standardized in the form of poetry and prose through the efforts of Dwivedi. The latter picked up the trail from Bharatendu’s pronouncements in his writings and established new standards for the written form of Hindi language. Many popular poets, literary critics and writers such as Maithilisharan Gupt, Premchand, Ramchandra Shukla, Badrinath Bhatt and Kamtaprasad Guru⁶⁷.

Dwivedi wrote many books on subjects that ranged from geography, history, economics, history and literary criticism⁶⁸; he also translated English works such as ‘On Liberty’ by John Stuart Mill, essays on education by Herbert Spencer and essays by Francis Bacon. However, most of Dwivedi’s influential efforts towards the Hindi language came from his editorship of the journal ‘Saraswati’ that gained immense popularity under his leadership. With the expansion of the printing press and the postal system along with literacy and employment among young professionals, prose assumed a new function (Kumar 1990, 1247). More people participated in text creation, relying on it for remunerative reasons⁶⁹ as well as for disseminating their ideas in the enthusiastic social and political environment of the period. Dwivedi’s expositions as a literary critic, during the early

⁶⁷ These writers were attracted towards writing in Hindi language through the journal ‘Saraswati’ with Dwivedi as the editor. Maithilisharan Gupt, who was referred to as ‘*Rashtra-kavi*’ (national poet) by Mahatma Gandhi, considered Dwivedi as his mentor.

⁶⁸ Some of his writings are *Sampatti Shastra*, *Kavita Kalap*, *Vaigyanik Kosh*, *Kalidas aur unki Kavita*, *Kautilya Kuthar*, *Puravritt*, *Pracheen chih*, *Charitra Chitran*, *Vigyan Vaarta*, *Alochnaanajali*, *Drishya Darshan* and others. The titles depict the wide range of subjects that Dwivedi wrote about.

⁶⁹ Writers experimented with different scripts and subject matters, at times, based on the sale-ability of the books. Premchand shifted to writing in Hindi and Nagari from Urdu around the first decade of the twentieth century (Trivedi 2003) allegedly under such pressures. Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi mentioned in his autobiographical essays about his early stints in the topics that could get more readers to buy the text and earn him money. He later was embarrassed that one such text he wrote under this impression was ‘*Sohagraat*’ (Dwivedi 2012, 7).

decades of the twentieth century, were significant in standardizing the use of Hindi language in this rapidly diversifying and expanding period of literary production.

With Bharatendu's untimely death, the Khari boli variant had not taken roots in literary expression. Braj Bhasha continued to dominate the writing of poetic compositions. Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi was particularly influential in spreading the use of the Khari boli variant of Hindi for poetry and prose. He instilled confidence in the minds of young writers and poets towards using this form. Further, he also standardized the grammar and spelling in the Hindi language which was often diverse and inconsistent during Bharatendu's period. Dwivedi was known for his role as a literary critic who did not mince words in expressing displeasure and disappointment at the literary and linguistic limitations of the writers and poets contributing to his journal. He also came down heavily against plagiarism in literary works. He expressed his abhorrence of the popularity of English language among the educated sections of the society.

For Dwivedi, the function of literature went beyond pleasure and entertainment. He also defined literary writings as fiction and nonfiction works of history, science, philosophy, news and other plethora of subjects⁷⁰. For him, the immediate task at hand was to promote and expand the scale of Hindi language in Nagari script for all kinds of topics. In the tussle with Urdu, Dwivedi argued that without Persian and Arabic vocabulary, Urdu did not exist independent of the Hindi language (Dwivedi 2012). In the use of Hindi he promoted, he accepted words from Persian that had become common at the time, however, he relied on Sanskrit for coining new terms. Dwivedi warned against the excessive use of Sanskrit and Persian in the Hindi language lest it became illegible or unattractive for readers. Yet, in his writings and the works he encouraged, a dominance of Sanskrit ridden vocabulary is apparent⁷¹.

⁷⁰ Ramchandra Shukla differed from Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi on this issue of covering all subjects under the head of Hindi literature. (Mody 2018, 91-92)

⁷¹ Consider the opening lines of the essay on newspapers, written in 1904 by Dwivedi under the pseudonym Kamalkishore Tripathi, "हे विराट् स्वरूपिन समाचार-पत्र ! आप सर्वान्तर्यामी साक्षात् नारायण हैं। वृत्त पत्र, वर्तमान पत्र, समाचार-पत्र, गैजट, अखबार आपके अनेक नाम और रूप हैं। अतः 'अनेकरूपरूपाय विष्णवे प्रभविष्णवे' – आपको प्रणाम (Dwivedi 2012, 157)।"

One of the important contributions of Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi that is crucial to be discussed here is in encouraging the works around the subject of the history of the Hindi language. He wrote, '*Hindi Bhasha ki Utpatti*' in 1907 in which he argued that the origin of Hindi language was not strictly from Sanskrit but from Apabhransa which in turn was followed from Prakrit (Dwivedi 1925). Unlike the previous attempts by oriental scholars, the concern behind promoting the discussion around the nature and history of the Hindi language was different in Dwivedi's works. In my argument, Dwivedi noted the difference between the diversity of languages that could be called as mother tongues by people from across the country and the need recognized by him and others of his period, for a uniform language and script. His support and endorsement was for Hindi language written in Nagari script as the uniform language and script for the country. The question-how could a supporter of Hindi and Nagari convince speakers of Bengali, Marathi, Gujarati and other regional languages to adopt Hindi as their mother tongue, emerges pertinently in Dwivedi's concerns⁷². He raised the question and the need to answer it. He urged writers and authors to probe and resolve this query. His own attempt was in the form of the short text, '*Hindi Bhasha ki Utpatti*'. Even though previous attempts in tracing the history of languages through literary writings had been prevalent, Dwivedi initiated a nationalist projection of these histories. With the idea that through the history of Hindi language, the speakers of regional languages could be convinced to adopt it as their lingua franca or as the national language required that the Hindi language presented a pan-India presence and linkages. As we shall see in the next chapter, Ramchandra Shukla wrote the influential *Hindi Sahitya ka Itihaas* in 1927, even though parts of it had started appearing 1917 onwards.

The ideas of Bharatendu and Dwivedi represent the swiftly expanding and changing sphere of the Hindi language and literature. By the 1920s, in the highly volatile political environment of nationalist movement, the debates limited to the Hindi language and

⁷² Dwivedi wrote in the preface to the book, "हिंदी भाषा की उत्पत्ति कहाँ से है? किन पूर्ववर्ती भाषाओं से वह निकली है?... हिंदी को उसका वर्तमान रूप कब मिला? ... इस समय इस देश में जो और भाषाएँ बोली जाती हैं उनका हिंदी से क्या सम्बन्ध है?... हिंदी के हितैषियों को इन सब बातों का जानना बहुत ही जरूरी है। और प्रांतवालों को तो इन बातों से अभिज्ञ करना हम लोगों का सबसे बड़ा कर्तव्य है। क्योंकि जब हम उनसे कहते हैं कि आप अपनी भाषा को प्रधानता न देकर हमारी को दीजिये-उसी को देश-व्यापक भाषा बनाइए- तब उनसे अपनी भाषा का कुछ हाल भी तो बताना चाहिए। अपनी भाषा की उत्पत्ति, विकास और वर्तमान स्थिति का थोड़ा सा भी हाल न बतला कर, अन्य प्रांतवालों से उसे कबूल कर लेने की प्रार्थना करना भी तो अच्छा नहीं लगता" (Dwivedi 1925, 2)।

literature assumed larger importance. The aspirations for Hindi language are no longer limited to Northwestern provinces but are raised for national status. The writers and critics writing in Hindi language responded to the social-political questions that were part of the nationalist discourse. The brief discussion on Gandhi, Tagore and Savarkar depicted the diversity of imaginations that were prevalent in the political sphere.

The Hindi literary sphere is another socio-political space of significance where similar ideas around national questions were being debated and discussed. The mutual influences and interactions between the two spheres represent the heterogeneity of ideas and the variety of spaces in which they took place. The question of the distinct identity of the nation was framed around the linguistic indicator within the Hindi language. In the next chapter, we move on to discuss an important thinker in the Hindi literary sphere who constructed one such imagination of the nation based on the idea of Hindi language.

Chapter 3

The Construction of Language, Religion and Nation in the Works of Ramchandra Shukla

We have discussed in the previous chapter that with the efforts of colonial administrators, orientalist scholars and Christian missionaries, a discourse is initiated that is directed at understanding the colonized society of India. It brought to the forefront categories of civilization, language, religion and nation as the key markers around which the colonized people are to be made sense of. The diverse discourse of colonial interventions is surpassed by the responses from the native intelligentsia who reverted the colonial gaze to produce their own imaginations of the country. They brought out new meanings to the categories of civilization and nation that challenged the colonial discourse. From this reverted gaze, they asserted the sense of a distinct identity of the self and their aspirations for the future. In the political sphere, the heterogeneous and contesting notions of the role of language, religion and the nation became sharper with the accentuation of anticolonial movement and in lieu of the upcoming independence of the country. The previous chapter had also discussed the nature of these political debates in the Hindi literary sphere by discussing the ideas of Bharatendu Harishchandra and Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi. In the end of the nineteenth century, the idea that the language which was native to people, was to be employed not just for administrative usage but also in other wider public spheres, had become dominant. The language of one's own was also identified as of utmost importance for the political, economic and intellectual freedom of the colonized people. In North India, the Hindi language was increasingly getting shaped for this purpose.

As was also evident in the political-intellectual context presented in the previous chapter, an understanding about the history and the past events was deemed as a crucial resource that founded the interpretations of who the people in the country were, are and ought to be⁷³. Within the Hindi literary sphere, an important resource for producing a historical interpretation of the country and the people was through the history of Hindi language and literature. As the Hindi language geared up for a larger role beyond the territory of the United provinces to national ambitions, the scholars in the Hindi literary sphere employed these resources in presenting a comprehensive imagination of the Indian nation based in the Hindi language. It is here that the important role of Ramchandra Shukla emerged.

Taking forward the developments already made in the Hindi language, I argue that Shukla constructed a distinct imagination of Indian civilization from the perspective of the history of Hindi language and literature. He widened the idea of Hindi language from the one based in the United provinces to encompass many more regional languages and dialects. Further, Shukla divulged into the idea of religion from the vantage point of the Hindi language. Together with the composite characteristics of language and religion of the people, he envisaged a specific imagination of the Indian nation. Shukla's majoritarian notion of the Indian nation highlighted its own sets of cultural outsiders and others who are either assimilated or eliminated accordingly.

Namwar Singh argued in the introduction to the volume of selected writings of Ramchandra Shukla that while a number of works discussed the literary influence of Shukla, there was a dearth of analytical works on the socio-political ideology of Shukla (Singh 1988, 3). This chapter aims to fill the stated gap by analyzing the social and political aspects of Shukla's works. Through this, the chapter highlights one of the imaginations of the Indian nation that dominated the literary and political landscape of the Hindi language. The chapter begins with a brief biographical sketch of Ramchandra Shukla. It goes on to discuss his ideas about the notions of Hindi language and literature

⁷³ Immortalized in the lines, "हम कौन थे , क्या हो गये हैं और क्या होंगे अभी" from *Bharat-Bharati* by Maithili Sharan Gupta, the question of who 'we' were was intimately tied to the question of who 'we' are to be (Gupta 2007, 14).

in the second section. The third section brings out a construction of Indian civilization that Shukla presented in his history of Hindi literature. The fourth section discusses the notion of ideal religion that is dominant in his works. The final section critically analyzes the idea of nation that emerges in Shukla's works.

3.1 Biographical Account of Ramchandra Shukla

Ramchandra Shukla was born, a few months before Bharatendu Harishchandra died, in October 1884 in the Agauna Village in the district of Basti in Uttar Pradesh. He was from an orthodox Brahmin family. At home, Shukla was inducted into learning Sanskrit and Hindu scriptures such as Ramayana and Mahabharata from an early age. His father worked as a revenue inspector (*kanungo*) with the government. The association with colleagues from Hindu Kayastha and Muslim communities introduced Shukla's father to Persian language and culture. His father encouraged the reading of poetry in Persian language, newly emerging poetry in the Hindi language and writings of Bharatendu Harishchandra. Shukla's early education was in English, Hindi and Urdu at home. The family moved to the city of Mirzapur in 1893 where he was introduced to reading literary works in English and Hindi languages at the local library. This was the period when writers and editors who carried forward Harishchandra's legacy spearheaded the Nagari movement across United Provinces.

Shukla was brought into contact with Upadhyay Badrinarayan Chaudhary 'Premghan' and Kedarnath Pathak who were the members of the often referred to as 'Bharatendu Mandal'⁷⁴. He was inducted into reading the new literature as it was being shared in the literary circles and also the works by classic writers such as Kalidas, Valmiki and

⁷⁴ Refer to footnote number 51.

Bhavbhuti. Shukla mentioned his curiosity and wonderment with the Hindi language and the writers of the period⁷⁵. He became the editor of the journal started by 'Premghan', titled as '*Anandkadambini*' in 1903. He refused the opportunity to work with the government at the position of tehsildar in 1904 to contribute full time to working in Hindi language. Shukla began contributing articles in literary journals such as 'Saraswati' and 'Hindustan Review'⁷⁶. He joined the Nagari Pracharini Sabha in 1907 and started working on the project of Hindi dictionary. The Hindi dictionary enterprise concluded in 1929 with an eleven volume '*Hindi Shabd Sagar*' with 93,155 words in it. He also wrote articles in the Nagari Pracharini Patrika, the journal of Nagari Pracharini Sabha, championing the cause of Nagari script and Hindi language.

By 1910, Shukla was deeply involved in the multiple responsibilities at the Sabha- as the editor of the dictionary and the journal of the Sabha and as the jury member in various committees. He also organized seminars and meetings for the cause of Hindi language. This is the period when Shukla wrote extensively on a variety of subjects of social, psychological, political and literary importance. Some of his commentaries on Hindi language were responses and interventions to the ongoing debate with supporters of Urdu language. He wrote, *The State of a Vernacular* (1905), *Observation on Hindi Literature* (1905), *अपनी भाषा पर विचार* (1907), *उर्दू राष्ट्रभाषा* (1909), *भाषा की उन्नति* (1910) and *हिंदी की पूर्व और वर्तमान स्थिति* (1911). Some of his historical essays written for Nagari Pracharini Patrika were *प्राचीन पारस का संक्षिप्त इतिहास* (1907), *महाराज कनिष्क का स्तूप* (1909), *बुद्धदेव की हड्डियाँ* (1909), *प्राचीन भारत का एक शक राजा* (1910) and *शाह-आलम* (1912). He translated from Bengali and English works such as *शशांक* (1922), *A Simple Life* by David E. Shi as *आदर्श जीवन* (1914), *राजप्रबंध शिक्षा* (1913), *मेगस्थनीज का भारतवर्षीय वर्णन*, Ernst Haeckel's '*Riddles*

⁷⁵ In his essay remembering Premghan titled, '*Premghan ki Chhaya Smriti*', Shukla reminisces about his delight at finding Premghan's house and spotting him from a distance. He also expressed his happiness on getting in touch with Kedarnath Pathak whose library he visited, and his sense of veneration towards Bharatendu Harishchandra's house. He remembers with some honor that the Hindi speaking family of Shukla was particularly nicknamed by the Urdu speaking members of the neighborhood (Shukla 2007, 110).

⁷⁶ The journal 'Saraswati' under the editorship of Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi had especially been important for Shukla in embarking his journey of intellectual engagement with the questions of literature and poetry in the Hindi language. Shukla had offered his disagreements with Dwivedi's expansive notion of literature, by limiting it those subjects that were arenas of imagination and subjectivity unlike science which the former argued was characterized by objectivity (Mody 2018, 92).

of Universe' as विश्वप्रपंच, Edwin Arnold's 'Light of Asia' as बुद्धचरित and John Henry Newman's 'The Idea of a University Defined'.

Shukla joined the newly opened Hindi department in the Banaras Hindu University in 1919 and headed the department in 1937 until his death in 1941. In 1919, he published a collection of his essays on various topics on the subject of literary criticism as चिंतामणि. In 1921, he wrote two essays with strong political undertones directed at the non-cooperation movement, क्षात्रधर्म का सौंदर्य and 'Non-co-operation and Non-mercantile Classes of India'. He published his monumental 'हिंदी साहित्य का इतिहास' in 1929 even though parts of it began appearing from 1919 in various forms. He edited the anthologies of the works of Tulsidas (1933), Malik Mohammed Jayasi (1924) and Surdas with essays in literary criticism on each respectively. Apart from these, he also wrote several biographical, behavioral and philosophical essays on various themes. He also wrote a reader 'Hindi Sahitya' in 1932 that was prescribed for the subject of Hindi language in primary vernacular language schools in United Provinces.

Through his writings, Shukla cemented the newly emerging field of literary criticism in Hindi language and literature. In the rapidly expanding literary sphere of Hindi, his insights and ideas about poetry influenced the writers of the period. He was engaged in debates with several writers and poets of his period, especially the *Chhayawadi* poets. His 'Hindi Sahitya ka Itihaas' saw immense popularity that continues to influence the discipline of the Hindi language. It established the framework of the canon of Hindi literature which set the benchmark for the new histories that followed soon after. Shukla's works initiated debates that continue to be raging in the discipline of Hindi language on the themes of the various linguistic traditions, religious traditions and their trajectories. Writing in the time of the anticolonial movement and the ongoing political debates of the period, Shukla's works on literary themes reflect the deeply political implications of his works. As we shall see in the course of this thesis, his ideas inspired the political imaginations of various political leaders who rose to prominence in Indian politics. By keeping Hindi language as the prime lens to understand various social and political indicators, Shukla presented a holistic notion of the nation that continues to enjoy

dominance in Indian politics. Through a critical analysis of his works, in the next few sections, I carve out his ideas about language, religion and the Indian nation of his imagination.

3.2 Defining the Hindi Language

The fundamental category around which Ramchandra Shukla creates the idea of Indian civilization and nation is Hindi language. In order to understand these ideas, it is crucial to make sense of the importance attached to the category of language and the definition of 'Hindi' language that emerges in Shukla's writings. It has been argued that Ramchandra Shukla created the self-consciousness of Hindi language that aimed for national status (Kumar 1990). In this section, I argue that Shukla created an idea of Hindi language that formed the basis of his imagination of the nation. Through the history of Hindi literature, Shukla built his understanding of Indian civilization.

The question that first needs to be investigated is with regard to the importance of the category of language to the socio-political project of the nation. In Shukla's understanding, language is the most important indicator of the cultural, social and religious marker of a community. Language connects the community to their past, instills the people with pride about their heritage and reminds them of the importance of their ancient knowledge. Even under adverse conditions, it is the language that preserves the social, cultural and historical tradition of the community. Moreover, from the vantage point of language, it is possible to discern the distinctive nature of the civilization of the community of people. Language can highlight the essential characteristics and aspects of the people. In '*Apni Bhasha par Vichar*', he wrote,

“भाषा ही जाति के धार्मिक और जातीय विचारों की रक्षणि है; वही उसके पूर्व गौरव का स्मरण कराती हुई, हीन से हीन दशा में भी, उसमें आत्माभिमान का स्रोत बहाती है। कहने की आवश्यकता नहीं है कि भाषा ही किसी जाति की सभ्यता अलग से झलकाती है, वही उसके हृदय के भीतरी पुरजों को पता देती है जिसका निदान उन्नति के उपचार के लिए आवश्यक है” (Shukla 2007, 15)।

So far, Shukla has argued that language is crucial to understanding the civilization of a community because it connects them to their past, historical heritage and ancient traditions. Language is intimately tied to the nature of the community. It gives a view of their key characteristics that define them. But why is that so? The reason that Shukla provides is that the cultural and physical environment that constitutes the mental landscape of the people, also creates their language. The words and the meanings that comprise a language are the products of the natural and the cultural habitat in which it originated. The environment, both natural and the socio-cultural surroundings, unite the people and their speakers as it is the common backdrop on which both are created. Shukla wrote,

“जिस जलवायु ने हमारे स्वभाव और रूप रंग को रचा उसी ने हमारे शब्दों को भी सृजा। ये शब्द हमारे जीवन के अंश समान हैं; इनमें से हरएक हमारी किसी ना किसी मानसिक अवस्था का चित्र है। इनकी ध्वनि में भी हमारे लिए एक आकर्षण विशेष है। निज भाषा के किसी शब्द से जिस मात्रा का भाव उद्भूत होता है उस मात्रा का समान अर्थवाची किसी विदेशीय शब्द से नहीं। क्योंकि पहिले तो विजातीय शब्दों की ध्वनि ही हमारी स्वाभिक रुचि से मेल नहीं खाती, दूसरे वो विस्तार में हमारे मानसिक संस्कार के नाप के नहीं होते” (ibid., 14)।

Shukla is firm that the bond of affinity that exists between the language of one's own surroundings cannot be formed by a foreign language. The latter fails to capture the mindset or the mental makeup of the people who are based in a different physical and cultural habitat. Therefore, a language that is not native to the physical and cultural

environment of the speakers lacks the sense of belonging and connectedness that the speakers possess with their native language.

It is important to note here that in this notion of language, elaborated by Shukla, there emerges two essential aspects- territory and past heritage. By emphasizing the idea of natural and cultural environment as of constitutive importance to the language, the latter is tied to the boundaries of physical and cultural borders. The natural environment, that is the flora-fauna, the climate and topography of a territorial space, along with the cultural habitat, that is the folklores, cultural motifs and relationships, are the boundaries that a language is intimately tied to. A foreign language is one that is not from within the specific geographic and cultural territory. Further, because of the centrality of the territory, the speakers of the language are also bound to their territory through a distinct sense of belonging. Thus, in this idea of the language, the people who speak a particular language are also connected to their native territory.

The second crucial aspect that gets highlighted in this conception of language is the relation of the speakers to their past heritage or tradition. Language is perceived as the conservator or reservoir of ancient knowledge or the heritage of a community. Language records the shifts and changes in the trajectory of the community of speakers. If language is the window to the history and tradition of the community, the speakers of the language shall remain intimately connected to their past. Thus, in this notion of language conceptualized by Shukla, the speakers of the language are affiliated to their ancient history and tradition. To reiterate, a language that is native to the speakers relates them to their territory and their tradition or heritage. It is only their own native language that characterizes the social and cultural roots of the speakers. The native language and the role accorded to it, according to Shukla, is so crucial that without it, the community of speakers and their civilization is rendered into destruction. He writes,

“किसी जाति को अशक्त करने का सबसे सहज उपाय उसकी भाषा को नष्ट करना है (ibid., 15)।

Once Shukla has established this notion of language, the next step is to define the Hindi language. Shukla argues that within the territory of India, the language that captures the physical and cultural environment of the Indian habitat is called the Hindi language. The meanings and expressions created from the experiences of the natural and socio-cultural environment can only be manifested in the words of the Hindi language. It is this notion of Hindi language that is capable of representing the ancient Indian culture and tradition. The people of the country are connected to their 'motherland' and to their heritage through the use of Hindi language. The latter highlights the distinctive attributes of the Indian cultural heritage and its people as a community of speakers. He mentioned in his speech in 1938,

“हमारे व्यावहारिक और भावात्मक जीवन से जिस भाषा का संबंध सदा से चला आ रहा है वह पहले चाहे जो कुछ कही जाती रही हो अब हिन्दी कही जाती है। इसका एक एक शब्द हमारी सत्ता का व्यंजक है, हमारी संस्कृति का संपुट है, हमारी जन्मभूमि का स्मारक है, हमारे हृदय का प्रतिबिम्ब है, हमारी बुद्धि का वैभव है। देश की जिस प्रकृति ने हमारे हृदय में रूप रंग भरा है उसी ने हमारी भाषा का भी रूप रंग खड़ा किया है। यहाँ के वन, पर्वत, नदी, नाले, वृक्ष, लता, पशु, पक्षी सब इसी हमारी बोली में अपना परिचय देते हैं और अपनी ओर हमें खींचते हैं। इनकी सारी रूप छटा, सारी भाव भंगी हमारी भाषा में और हमारे साहित्य में समाई हुई है” (ibid., 63-64)।

Since, in Shukla's notion of language in general and Hindi language in particular, the territory becomes the key attribute, the Hindi language so conceived has a vast canvas. Within this notion of Hindi language, Shukla includes the tradition of ancient languages of Sanskrit, Prakrit and Apbrahmsa. He wrote,

“यह वही [हिन्दी] भाषा है जिसकी धारा कभी संस्कृत के रूप में बहती थी, फिर प्राकृत और अपभ्रंश के रूप में और इधर हजार वर्ष से इस वर्तमान रूप में जिसे हिन्दी कहते हैं लगातार बहती चली आ रही है... हजारों वर्ष से यह दीर्घ परम्परा अखंड चली आ रही है। ऐसी भव्य परम्परा का गर्व जिसे न हो वह भारतीय नहीं” (ibid., 63-64)।

In Shukla's idea of the Hindi language, by marking the geographical territory as the key identifier, all the languages that are born and brought in the physical landscape of India, are referred to as the Hindi language. The languages that share the tradition of words and the meanings could be collectively combined as the Hindi language. In this way, the regional languages such as Bengali, Marathi and Gujarati could be assimilated as Hindi language. This is the bold move that is characteristic of Shukla's definition of Hindi language. To gauge the importance of this idea, it is helpful to reiterate the conundrum detailed out in the second chapter of this thesis, expressed in the writings of Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi.

In the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century, there were two important concerns that were well spread with regard to the language in North India. The notion of the importance of one's own language had been established by Bharatendu Harishchandra in the end of the nineteenth century. The second concern was with constructing a uniform and standard language for national status. As realized and emphasized by Harishchandra and recognized by Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi, there were a plethora of languages that were people's own. If there is to be one language as the national language, here the case was made for Hindi language, it must appeal to the other regional languages and vernaculars to commit to the Hindi language in a way that accepts the latter as its own. Dwivedi had urged the intellectuals in the Hindi literary sphere to resolve this conundrum, that is, to fill the gap between the diversity of languages and the uniform language needed for national status. Ramchandra Shukla's attempt at redefining Hindi language by taking it out of the bounds of Khari boli variant found in the territories of Delhi-Agra, and expanding it to include the states of Maharashtra, Bengal, Gujarat and the United provinces is to be understood in this context. He wrote,

“साहित्य की जो देश व्यापक परम्परा बंगाल, महाराष्ट्र, गुजरात आदि और प्रान्तों में चली आ रही है, वही परम्परा तो हिन्दी की भी है - अर्थ परम्परा भी और शब्द परम्परा भी। इसी अर्थ परम्परा और शब्द-परंपरा से इस देश की दस बारह करोड़ जनता परिचित है” (ibid., 67)।

Shukla reiterated that it is not just the geographical boundaries that bound these various regional languages together in the construct of Hindi language, but also the commonly running cultural current that connects them to each other in a seamless manner. The cultural folktales, metaphors, myths and ties that animate these languages are common to all of them. The sentiments and expressions generated from common experiences of culture are found similarly in all the regional languages. The poets and writers who wrote in a regional language such as Marathi or Gujarati often also wrote in Hindi language. In an article wrote in Nagari Pracharini Patrika titled, '*Bhasha ki Purv aur Vartman Sthiti*', Shukla states,

मैथिल कवि विद्यापति ठाकुर ने अपने पदों को हिन्दी से मिलती जुलती भाषा में लिखने के अतिरिक्त कुछ कविताएँ शुद्ध हिन्दी में भी रची हैं। बंग भाषा के पुराने कवि भारतचन्द राय ने भी हिन्दी में कुछ कविताएँ की हैं। इससे प्रतीत होता है कि उत्तरीय भारत में हिन्दी किसी समय साहित्य की परिष्कृत भाषा समझी जाती थी। गुजराती के पुराने नाटकों में पहिले पात्रों का कथोपकथन ब्रजभाषा में कराया जाता था। अब भी गुजरात में ब्रजभाषा का व्यवहार बहुत है। तुलसी, सूर आदि महाकवियों के पद बहुत दूर दूर तक फैले। जम्मू में 'सुदामा मन्दिर देख डरे' आदि पद स्त्रियों में बराबर प्रचलित हैं। महाराष्ट्र के राजदरबारों में हिन्दी कवियों का बड़ा मान होता था। हिन्दी पद्य महाराष्ट्र देश में बड़ी चाह से सुने जाते थे। पहिली ही भेंट में भूषण के कविताओं को सुनकर शिवाजी का प्रसन्न होना यह सूचित करता है कि शिवाजी लिखने पढ़ने की हिन्दी अच्छी तरह जानते थे। पूना, नागपुर, इंदौर आदि के मरहटे दरबारों में हिन्दी कवियों के रहने का पता बराबर लगता है (Shukla 2007, 39)।

It is clear that in Shukla's notion of Hindi language, all the other regional languages and vernaculars are appropriated as the Hindi language. This grand idea of Hindi language is able to connect large number of speakers, who could be speaking Bengali, Gujarati or Maithili, but as long as the language originated in the geographical bounds of India and shares the cultural markers with the surroundings; they are united as the speakers of a uniform language called Hindi. This language is capable of connecting the speakers to

their land of birth and instill pride in their ancient tradition. Once, Shukla has constructed this gigantic idea of Hindi language, he moves on to present that the history of Hindi literature is a window to the Indian civilization. The question that becomes important here is, why is it literature, and not let's say the spoken language, that provides a panoramic view of Indian civilization.

Shukla argues that the history of literature in a particular language is an indicator of a continuity of civilization in the community of speakers. The written form of language or the literary works represent the independent and essential identity of the community of people. The history of literature is able to highlight the protected voice of the community that has been preserved via the written texts. More importantly, Shukla argues that there is a seamlessness that can be brought out across the literature in a language that highlights the presence of a civilized community of people. Through this cumulative history of literature, it is possible to understand the nature of the civilization. Shukla argues,

“साहित्य किसी जाति की रक्षित वाणी की वह अखंड परंपरा है जो उसके जीवन के स्वतन्त्र स्वरूप की रक्षा करती हुई जगत की गति के अनुरूप उत्तरोत्तर उसका अंतर्विकास करती चलती है। उसके भीतर प्राचीन के साथ नवीन का इस मात्रा में और इस सफाई के साथ मेल होता चलता है कि उसके दीर्घ इतिहास में कालगत विभिन्नाओं के रहते हुए भी यहाँ से वहाँ तक एक ही वस्तु के प्रसार की प्रतीति होती है... व्यक्त वाणी का यह संचय असभ्य जातियों में तो केवल मौखिक रहता है, पर सभ्य जातियों में पुस्तकों के भीतर हिफाजत के साथ बंद रखा जाता है।.. साहित्य की अखंड दीर्घ परम्परा सभ्यता का लक्षण है” (Shukla 2007, 62)।

The seamlessness that connects the history of literary works to the present is not, according to Shukla, to refer to the similarity of literary writings or themes in the works. Rather, it is to argue that there is a common essence that binds all the literary works together. This common essence that ties all the literary work in a common thread in the history of Hindi literature is indicative of Indian civilization. Further, he argued that the

literature represents the voice of the people and the community as they expressed in the particular period. The collective sentiments and emotions (*चित्तवृत्ति*) of the people were being presented in the literary writings of the particular era or period (Shukla 1993, 1). The changing responses of the people to new social and political conditions also impacted the trajectory that the Hindi literature undertook. With new social, cultural and political situations, people adapted to situations and those diversions are recorded in the history of Hindi literature. He writes,

“जबकि प्रत्येक देश का साहित्य वहां की जनता कि चित्तवृत्ति का संचित प्रतिबिम्ब होता है, तब वह निश्चित है कि जनता की चित्तवृत्ति के परिवर्तन के साथ साथ साहित्य के स्वरूप में भी परिवर्तन होता चला जाता है। आदि से अंत तक इन्ही चित्तवृत्तियों की परम्परा को परखते हुए साहित्य परम्परा के साथ उनका सामन्जस्य दिखाना ही ‘साहित्य का इतिहास’ कहलाता है” (ibid.,)।

Such a conception of literature assumes a certain unity that prevailed among the speakers that the literature of a particular period is able to exhibit. The role of the writer in this understanding of literature emerges as that of a representative who is expressing the collective concerns and expressions of the society. Especially, in tracing the history of the literature, the work and its author who are located in a different period of time and location are understood to be reflecting the sentiments of society as a whole towards the changing social and political conditions. The voices of the people and the author have been united as one in the construction of this history of literature. Such a connection between the text and the collective sentiments of the people becomes especially difficult to understand when it is well known that most of the texts and authors were dependent on royal patronage and support. However, this oneness is a crucial aspect for Shukla as it allowed him to present the dominant expression of the text as the common sentiment of the people. The project of the history of Hindi literature is therefore intimately linked to his notion of Indian civilization.

The common essence mentioned briefly in the above paragraphs shall become the guiding foundation that defines the Indian civilization in Shukla's view. This essence becomes explicit in his canon of Hindi literature for a thousand years. The next section discusses the history of Hindi literature that Shukla presented and the notion of Indian civilization that emerges from therein.

3.3 The Hindi language and Indian Civilization

If according to Shukla, the continuity of literature is representative of a civilization, then through his history of Hindi literature, one can arrive at the picture of Indian civilization that it aims to portray. This section discusses the history of Hindi literature that is carved by Shukla to understand the nature and essence of Indian civilization that is constructed. Shukla arranged his canon of history of Hindi literature under four major eras in the last 900 years. In each of these four identified moments in history, primarily an intrusion from outside the territory of the country but also, interventions from the socio-religious forces within the country, impacted the trajectory of Hindi literature. Each of the four periods of the history are labelled according to the theme or sentiment that is dominant in the literary works of the period. This overwhelming theme is represented in most of the literary works of the period, however, those works that did not fit with the theme; they were identified as sectarian in nature. Such literary works were not included as part of the canon of Hindi literature.

In the first moment of Hindi literature which began in the year 993 and goes upto 1318, the literary works seem to be predominantly occupied with tracts of celebrating valour and bravery of the respective kings and rulers in the period. They seem to be cheer-leading their kings who were waging wars against the enemies. Shukla argued that this was the period when the invasions from Muslim rulers had begun on the Western

territory⁷⁷. The Hindu rulers were impassioned in defending their kingdoms from the attacks of the Muslim invaders which led to several battles being fought. The literature in this period expressed the sentiments of the people who lauded the chivalry of their native rulers. They prayed for doomsday on the attackers. He referred to this period as ‘*Veer-gatha kaal*’ (993- 1318). Some of the important texts of the period that Shukla mentioned were *Khumanraso* by Rawal Khuman (899- 969), *Bisaldevraso* by Bisaldev (- 1155), *Prithvirajraso* by Chand Bardai (1168- 1192), *Jaychandprakash* by Bhatta Kedar (1167-1186) etc. The majority of the literature during this period was understood to be united in support of the native rulers, in the protection of their homeland⁷⁸. Shukla refers to this period as ‘*Veer-gatha kaal*’ (993- 1318). He continued,

“उस समय तो जो भाट या चारण किसी राजा के पराक्रम, विजय, शत्रुकन्याहरण आदि का अत्युक्तिपूर्ण आलाप करता या रणक्षेत्रों में जाकर वीरों के हृदय में उत्साह की उमंगें भरा करता था, वही सम्मान पाता था। इस दशा में काव्य या साहित्य के और भिन्न-भिन्न अंगों की पूर्ति और समृद्धि का सामुदायिक प्रयत्न कठिन था। उस समय तो केवल वीरगाथाओं की उन्नति संभव थी” (ibid., 17-18)।

In the second moment in the history of Hindi literature, the prevalent sentiment diverged towards devotional prayers and religious dedication. This period was referred to as ‘*Bhakti kaal*’ (1318- 1633). Most of the literature that emerged in this period consisted of devotional poetry and songs of worship of their respective gods. Shukla argued that this was the period when Muslim rulers were attacking the faith of Hindus. “The idols of their lords were dismantled and their gods were insulted in front of them” (ibid., translated by self). The people of the then period felt their religious faith was under attack. In such

⁷⁷ Shukla writes, “भारत के इतिहास में यह वह समय था जबकि मुसलमानों के हमले उत्तर-पश्चिम की ओर से लगातार होते रहते थे। इनके धक्के अधिकतर भारत के पश्चिमी प्रांत के निवासियों को सहने पड़ते थे जहाँ हिंदुओं के बड़े-बड़े राज्य प्रतिष्ठित थे। सारांश यह कि जिस समय से हमारे हिन्दी साहित्य का अभ्युदय होता है, वह लड़ाई-भिड़ाई का समय था वीरता के गौरव का समय था” (ibid.,16)।

⁷⁸ The two eminent writers of the period who did not subscribe to the theme of valor and chivalry were Amir Khusro (1253-1325) and Vidyapati. Even though both the poets wrote in the popular Hindi vernaculars of their respective regions, Shukla argues that they wrote poetry with the themes of beauty and devotion. He mentions these poets as separate from the canon in an ‘others’ column (ibid.,).

changed scenarios, They resorted to poetry that sang praises of their religious gods and goddesses. People put themselves into the devotion of their religious lords to save their religion from the Islamic onslaught. He wrote,

“देश में मुसलमानों का राज्य प्रतिष्ठित हो जाने पर हिंदू जनता के हृदय में गौरव, गर्व और उत्साह के लिए वह अवकाश न रह गया। उसके सामने ही उसके देवमंदिर गिराए जाते थे, देवमूर्तियाँ तोड़ी जाती थीं और पूज्य पुरुषों का अपमान होता था और वे कुछ भी नहीं कर सकते थे।...आगे चलकर जब मुस्लिम साम्राज्य दूर तक स्थापित हो गया तब परस्पर लड़ने वाले स्वतंत्र राज्य भी नहीं रह गए। इतने भारी राजनीतिक उलटफेर के पीछे हिंदू जनसमुदाय पर बहुत दिनों तक उदासी सी छाई रही। अपने पौरुष से हताश जाति के लिए भगवान की शक्ति और करुणा की ओर ध्यान ले जाने के अतिरिक्त दूसरा मार्ग ही क्या था” (ibid., 35)?

Another intervention that was identified, was the internal socio-religious forces in the form of Natha and Siddha sects, that had deprived people of their natural impulse towards devotion; from which the diversion in Hindi literature towards *Bhakti* could be accorded to⁷⁹. These sects, through their devotion-less form of faith and consistent diatribe against the everyday orthodoxies of the people, failed to inculcate a religion among people that enabled them to access god on their own. Their metaphysical knowledge of God, according to Shukla, disenchanted people from religion. Under these oppressive conditions, people expressed their resentment by resorting to a devotion that included and enabled everyone (ibid.). The Hindi literature expressed this sentiment in the form of *Nirgun* (indeterminate) poetry by the poets like *Kabir*, *Guru Nanak*, *Dadu Dayal*, *Malukdas*, *Kutaban*, *Malik Mohammed Jayasi* and *Sagun* (determinate) poetry by the poets like *Goswami Tulsidas*, *Nabhadas*, *Bhallabhacharya*, *Surdas*, *Mirabai*, *Nand Das*,

⁷⁹ He states, “आदिकाल के अंतर्गत यह दिखाया जा चुका है कि किस प्रकार वज्रयानी सिद्ध, कापालिक आदि देश के पूरबी भागों में और नाथपंथी जोगी पश्चिमी भागों में रमते चले आ रहे थे। इसी बात से इसका अनुमान हो सकता है कि सामान्य जनता की धर्मभावना कितनी दबती जा रही थी, उसका हृदय धर्म से कितनी दूर हटता चला जा रहा था।.... अर्थशून्य बाहरी विधिविधान, तीर्थाटन, पर्वस्नान आदि की निस्सारता का संस्कार फैलाने का जो कार्य वज्रयानी सिद्धों और नाथपंथी जोगियों के द्वारा हुआ... उनकी बानी तो 'गुह्य, रहस्य और सिद्धि' लेकर उठी थी। अपनी रहस्यदर्शिता की धाक जमाने के लिए वे बाह्य जगत् की बातें छोड़, घट के भीतर के कोठों की बात बताया करते थे। भक्ति, प्रेम आदि हृदय के प्रकृत भावों का उनकी अंतस्साधना में कोई स्थान न था, क्योंकि इनके द्वारा ईश्वर को प्राप्त करना तो सबके लिए सुलभ कहा जा सकता है” (ibid.,35-36)।

Raskhan and others. The nirgun poets *Rahim* and *Keshavdas* among others were included as distinct from the predominant devotional theme of the period.

After these two crucial moments, the third and fourth epochs are relatively modern. In the third era which is referred to as *Ritikaal* was the period when Hindi literature gained stability and delved into an elaboration of courtly aesthetics and notions of beauty in poetry. This period saw the rise of poetry in which instead of devotion and valour, adulation and indulgence took prominence. Instead of the quality of the sentiments, it was the literary and theoretical aspects that became the concern in poetry. In the fourth period or *Gadyakaal*, which is the modern period, Shukla argued that prose emerged as the new genre where writers began to experiment with new literary themes and styles. This period hailed the emergence of Bharatendu Harishchandra in this period who, according to him, identified the nerve of his time which was the need for love and esteem for one's nation and community. Amidst the situation of dependence and slavery under the colonial rule, people were to express the sense of pride in their nation and love for community as reflected in the works of Bharatendu Harishchandra⁸⁰.

According to Shukla, while the people were beginning to feel resentment towards the foreign rule as an outside force and yearned for belief in their nation and community, the literature of the period did not reflect these emotions. Until the rise of Bharatendu, Hindi literature was stuck in the past, reflective of notions that were not true to the then prevalent situation. Following Bharatendu's writings, there was a move in literature towards depicting the 'real' sentiments of people which were about love for one's nation, need for reforms in the society, exposing the hypocrisy of imitative and modernizing elites and recognizing the ancient glory of the nation. The tradition of Hindi literature was then brought on track as it came to reflect the upgraded general emotions among the people. This is the tradition of Hindi literature that according to Shukla continued to flow across centuries and is reminiscent of India's unhindered civilization.

⁸⁰ Shukla writes, "नई शिक्षा के प्रभाव से लोगों की विचारधारा बदल चली थी। उनके मन में देशहित, समाज हित आदि की नई उमंगें उत्पन्न हो रही थीं। काल की गति के साथ साथ उनके भाव और विचार तो बहुत आगे बढ़ गए थे, पर साहित्य पीछे ही पड़ा था" (ibid., 246)।

Shukla suggested that the history of Hindi literature is not just a series of literary works arranged chronologically but an unobstructed tradition where while the themes may change in different periods yet the essence remains the same. In each of the eras discussed, the core essence that is highlighted is the tendency of the people to act as a community who are united in defending the society and their country. In the *veer-gatha kaal*, the fear and anger against Muslim invasions united the voice of the people as a community which was reflected in the songs of valour. It plunged them into defending the territories of their region by making a call for the dignity and protection of their homeland and native rule⁸¹. This according to Shukla's arguments depicted not a community in making but a community that already existed. This community of people understood the sense of respect for the territory and self rule, as the pride of the individual. In the medieval period or *Bhakti kaal*, the community was alerted in the defense of their religious faiths. This time, the attack is both from the Islamic faith and the declining religiosity amongst the existing sects. The people in such a situation expressed resentment and anguish against the attack on their faiths and to strengthen the latter, they were united for devotion and worship of their gods⁸².

Shukla acknowledged the large number of participation by the lower castes and classes among the followers of Bhakti saints. It was particularly noteworthy in the case of Kabir, who he argued was a critic of Brahmanical Hindu orthodoxy. The presence of the lower castes and classes in the followership of Bhakti poets did not constitute the assertion against caste hierarchy entrenched in Hinduism. Rather, it was argued that the discontentment from then prevalent metaphysical musings of Natha and Siddha saints led to the large presence of 'illiterate' masses towards the new Bhakti poetry. As we shall see in the fourth chapter, this dismissal of the Natha and Siddha sects is countered in another

⁸¹ Shukla asserts in '*Hindi ki Purv aur Vartman Sthiti*', "लाहौर के चन्दबरदाई की वीररसोद्धारिणी कविता युद्ध में अग्रसर होते हुए महाराज पृथ्वीराज के कानों में बराबर पड़ती रही। बीकानेर के पृथ्वीराज के एक दोहे ने महाराणा प्रतापसिंह पर जादू का असर किया। भूषण के कवित्त महाराष्ट्र के वीर छत्रापति शिवाजी के मन में औरंगजेब के अन्याय को दमन करने की उत्तेजना बराबर बनाए रहे। शेख बुरहान के चले कुतबन और मलिक मुहम्मद जायसी ऐसे हिन्दूभावों से सहानुभूति रखनेवाले कवि हुसेनशाह और शेरशाह को लोकप्रिय और प्रजापालक बनाने में सहायक हुए" (Shukla 2007, 38)।

⁸² Shukla exhorted in one of his essays, "15वीं शताब्दी से देश में हिन्दी द्वारा भक्ति का जो स्रोत उमड़ा उसने सारे उत्तरीय भारत को प्रेम और शांत रस में मग्न कर दिया। सारांश यह कि 800 वर्ष से जातीय जीवन में जितने उलट फेर होते आए उन सबका आभास हिन्दी साहित्य में विद्यमान है और किसी जाति के साहित्य का यही लक्षण है" (Shukla 2007, 38-39)।

construction of the history of Hindi literature. Here, it is suffice to note, that in Shukla's ideas, there emerges a sense of unity that prevailed among people as a community under the oppression and disillusionment from Islam and the Naha-Siddha religious sects respectively.

Moving on, in the modern period, Shukla located the continuation of the united expression against protecting the motherland in the sentiments of nationalism in the literary works of the period. The literary writings recognized the foreign-ness of the colonial rulers and asserted the demand for self-rule. The legacy of Hindi literature is restored in the writings of Bhartendu Harishchandra who brought the dawn of nationalism and unity. In this, there is a parallel theme that remained unobstructed and guiding sentiment for the tradition of Hindi literature to abide by. And since literature is the reflection of the collective view of the people, this central theme depicted the shared and governing sentiment of the people.

The idea that the people have been united under adverse circumstances and worked for the *lok-sangrah* (preservation and sustenance of society) is the essence of Indian civilization that Shukla envisaged in his canon of Hindi literature. In Indian civilization, the tradition of Hindi literature showed that the people have always been a united community. This community is not localized but a national community in its outlook. Different classes and caste groups of people have been united for the cause of their nation and religion a thousand years back. The community of the speakers of the Hindi language as represented in the history of Hindi literature were governed by the concern of *lok-sangrah*. It is the sentiment of preserving the status quo in society by protecting the territorial boundaries and the religious-cultural ethos of the people that emerges as the fundamental essence of Indian civilization.

To understand Shukla's imagination of Indian civilization, it is important to view it in lieu of other dominating ideas about Indian civilization. It was discussed in the previous chapter that for both Tagore and Gandhi, there was something distinctive about Indian civilization that marked it out from other civilization/s. They believed that at the core of

Indian civilization it was a moral force, *dharma* or duty that guided the action of the people. Two important aspects, that both Gandhi and Tagore believed, had defined the Indian civilization were non-violence and cooperation. In the various examples they had drawn to present the core of Indian civilization, the focus was on a sense of moral duty that aimed at the achievement of self-efficiency and self-realization. The latter could not be fulfilled without non-violence and cooperation.

In Shukla's conception, there is indeed a central guiding principle of Indian civilization. But it is significantly different from the one propagated by Gandhi. Here, the protection and preservation of the society or the collective was the guiding principle of Indian civilization. The perfection of the individual, according to this idea of civilization in Shukla, could be achieved when he/she is in sync with the social whole. The spirit of cooperation that is central in Gandhi and Tagore's understanding of Indian civilization is shifted to the sense of uniformity and homogeneity of people. This uniformity is threatened in the face of the invasion and religious oppression. For Gandhi and Tagore, there is no threat as the strength of Indian civilization is towards cooperation, toleration and non-violence. For them, the Indian civilization aimed at finding means of accommodating the other by highlighting the fundamental unity of the other with the self. For Shukla, this was not the case. The Indian civilization responded by protecting themselves from the onslaught of the other and preserving their social and cultural ethos. The other, here, is an excluded outsider who induces community action.

The idea that co-operation and toleration of the other formed the essential characteristics of the Indian civilization had been opposed in Savakar's ideas as well. For Savarkar, the identity of Indian civilization was Hindu in nature, someone who found the territory of this country as both the land of their birth and worship. Anyone who fell outside this category either had to be assimilated or annihilated. In such an understanding, the ideas of non-violence and toleration were linked to passivity or inactivity among the people. Even among other thinkers of the period who believed that religion and spirituality were the guiding lens of Indian civilization, there was a shared view about the alleged passivity

and inactivity of the Indian people⁸³. In order to motivate action and passion among the people, many leaders reinterpreted the religious texts such as Bhagwad Gita, re-imagined the past events and borrowed instances of active participation from other civilizations⁸⁴. In Shukla's construction of Indian civilization of the tradition of Hindi literature, the non-violence or the passive nature of the people do not figure as important concerns. Rather, Indian civilization depicts an alertness and spirit of immediate action already available in the past among the people when facing adverse circumstances.

The guiding force of *lok-sangrah* is the prime motivation that has pushed people into action for protecting their community. The sense of obligation towards one's community trumps all other religious, ideological and regional differences. The very strength of this civilization, according to Shukla, is that the people from the ancient period have been active agents of society. They come together as united individuals aiming for the welfare of the community over their individual and group differences. The active and passionate nature of the community of people in this conception is rather a continuous unhindered aspect, the essence of Indian civilization. Keeping the idea of *lok-sangrah*, as the core or essence, in mind, the next section moves on to understand the specific configurations of language and religion that emerge in Shukla's understanding.

⁸³ An important view that gets strengthened in the various perspectives of Indian civilization based on religion and spirituality is that the Hindus were a passive people. They were non-resistant and non-violent people. Hindus believed that renouncement from earthly desires and non-action was the preferable route to be adopted in life. The oppression and attacks from foreign rulers hardly bothered their nature for the outside world is never their priority. The idea is that they considered the material world as an illusion and unnecessary for the pursuit of religious truth. The focus is on liberation '*moksa*' from the material world. It was a dominant conception that continued among nineteenth and twentieth century thinkers. For Aurobindo, merger with the higher spiritual consciousness is the aim in the spiritual life of people in India (Aurobindo 1997).

⁸⁴ Tilak, to tackle this alleged passivity, had re-interpreted the Bhagwad Gita. He argued that '*Karmayoga*' i.e. duty of action was the true message of Gita (Tilak 1919, 245). He insisted that an active public-political life was not against the ideals of religion, rather in conformity with it, to convince people to engage in political action.

3.4 *Lok-sangrah*- Shared Linguistic and Religious Identity

Shukla presented, in his understanding of Indian civilization, the presence of a united community that was steadily guarding its territorial and religious interests from both external and internal aggressions. The community in this conception exhibited the features of a national community in promoting a homogenous unified voice irrespective of social differences of caste and class. It is notable that this notion of community is essentially the community of the speakers who understand and communicate in the same language. This is not to suggest that other identities of religion, region and caste were lost on the people. On the contrary, as we shall see, the idea of *lok-sangrih* was definitive in presenting the notion of shared religiosity among the people as well. The important point to recognize is that the vantage point for imagining this national community, that has a legacy based in the history of Indian civilization, was founded on the category of language. In what follows, the attempt is to analyze closely the linguistic and religious identities of the community that are conceived in such an idea of Indian civilization based on *lok-sangrah*.

The idea of one's native language is tied to the essential being of the people in this conception. The very habitat that constructs their mental being is the key component in the language. The community of people who speak and share the native language are united in sharing with each other, the common essential element that characterizes them. In his essay, '*Ek Naya Andolan*', Shukla wrote, "एक भाषा रहने से कोई व्यक्ति अपनी आत्मा का प्रतिबिम्ब दूसरे में देख सकते हैं" (ibid., 380)। The civilizational distinctiveness that reflects a community's uniqueness and history is reflected through their native language. In the conception of Indian civilization that is highlighted through the history of Hindi literature, it is the essence of *lok-sangrah* that is the key character of the Indian people.

Further, language, here, is the key to forming a lived/living community based on everyday exchange of experiences and sentiments. In the notion of language that is highlighted, the words and phrases are inherently linked to the meanings and sentiments

that they express. The natural habitat, the social and cultural environment develop the experiences and emotions that one shares with the other members of the community. Words and phrases in a language that express those emotions are based in the physical, cultural and natural environment. This enables the people who inhabit the same surroundings to share their routine experiences with nature (particular climate, trees, animals, fruits and flowers), social bonds (relationships of friendship, family and professions) and cultural resources (folk stories, festivals and art) with each other. Language, native to the speaker's habitat, therefore, is the key to forming a socio-cultural community that is based on mutual everyday lived experiences and sentiments. Even if the pronunciation and words vary, as long as they understand the meanings and the sentiments from their environment that someone is referring to, they can be said to be sharing the same bond. It is the set of common language speakers who were able to emerge as a united community in the history of Indian civilization and provide the foundation of a nation. In such an understanding, a common language enables the bond of homogeneity and unity. It is capable of trumping the interests based on caste, class, region and religious differences for the national good.

The common linguistic identity that Shukla envisaged for the nation, as inspired from his notion of Indian civilization, is based in Hindi language. All other regional languages such as Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi and dialects are assimilated in his understanding of the Hindi language. This grand creation of the Hindi language is the key identity of the national community that is envisaged here.

By now, it is clear that while the grand idea of Hindi language appropriates the regional languages, Marathi, Gujarati and Bengali, within its fold, it maintains a silence about the Southern languages that do not directly share the tradition of words with Hindi. Shukla does not account for southern languages as part of his idea of the Hindi language. However, the base assumption is that because of the geographical and cultural-religious habitat being common to the Southern languages of Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam, it is possible for these languages to adapt to Hindi. Just as in the national

community highlighted in the notion of Indian civilization, the ‘national’ interest is to trump the interests of regions, religious and linguistic differences.

The major exclusion from this ideal linguistic identity is that of the Perso-Arabic linguistic tradition. Since, a language that is not based in the socio-cultural environment of its origin fails to render the impact of belongingness, esteem and independence that is possible through the use of the native language/s, Shukla excluded the Persian and Arabic language from sharing the contribution in the Indian civilization. He cited the example of poets of Persian language in the eighteenth and nineteenth century India who, according to him, did not accept the cultural and natural metaphors from their local environment and carried the legacy of Persian poetry from the place of its origin. In his own words,

“भारतवर्ष की भुवनमोहिनी छटा से मुँह मोड़कर शीराज और इस्फहान की ओर लौ लगाए थे, गंगा जमुना के शीतल शान्तिदायक तट को छोड़कर इफ़रात और दजला के रेतीले मैदानों के लिए लालायित हो रहे थे; हाथ में अलिफलैला की किताब पड़ी रहती थी, एक झपकी ले लेते थे तो अलीबाबा के अस्तबल में जा पहुँचते थे। हातिम की सखावत के सामने कर्ण का दान और युधिष्ठिर का सत्यवाद भूल गया था; शीरीं फरहाद के इश्क ने नलदमयन्ती के सात्विक और स्वाभाविक प्रेम की चर्चा बन्द कर दी थी। मालती, मल्लिका, केतकी आदि फूलों का नाम लेते या तो हमारी जीभ लटपटाती थी या हमको शर्म मालूम होती थी। वसन्त ऋतु का आगमन भारत में होता था, आमों की मंजरी से चारों दिशाएँ आच्छादित होती थीं पर हमको कुछ खबर नहीं रहती थी, हम उन दिनों गुले लाला और गुले नरगिस के फिब्राकष में रहते थे; मधुकर गूँजते और कोइलें कूकती थीं, पर हम तनिक भी न चौंकते थे, अड्डे पर कान लगाए हम बुलबुल का नाला सुनते थे” (Shukla 2007, 15-16)।

As stated in the above quote, it is argued that the Muslim writers who wrote in Persian language in Arabic script did not incorporate words and meanings that were native to India. The cultural and linguistic differences between the two languages were retained as such without any effort to bring Persian poetry closer to the Indian cultural setup. Shukla

also commented about the poetry of fifteenth century sufi poet Noor Mohammed who in his couplet talked about being taunted for writing in Hindi being a Muslim.

“इसका तात्पर्य यह कि संवत् 1500 (ई 1443) तक आते आते मुसलमान हिन्दी से किनारा खींचने लगे थे। हिन्दी हिंदुओं के लिए छोड़कर अपने लिखने पढ़ने की भाषा वे विदेशी अर्थात् फारसी ही रखना चाहते थे। जिसे 'उर्दू' कहते हैं, उसका उस समय तक साहित्य में कोई स्थान न था”
(Shukla 1993, 62)।

What emerges in this position with regard to the Perso-Arabic linguistic tradition is that the difference is not just that it emerged outside the geographical boundaries of India but also that the cultural difference was not bridged. One of the dominating positions in the debate between Hindi and Urdu language, in the time when Shukla was writing, was presented by supporters of the Hindustani language. Gandhi and Premchand were two well-known supporters of a mixed common language spoken and understood among the masses. It was often referred to as Hindustani, which according to its supporters, when written in Nagari script, was called Hindi and in Arabic script, it became Urdu. Essentially, it highlighted the possibilities of a mixed heritage for the national language by incorporating Persian words and meanings⁸⁵. Shukla strongly opposed such a position. He dismissed the idea of Hindustani which for him was based in political ambitions of bringing harmony among Hindus and Muslims⁸⁶. There were irreconcilable differences in the heritage of Hindi and Urdu. The difference is not just linguistic but also cultural as for him Persian language and its variety, Urdu, were incapable of incorporating the sentiments and expressions of the Indian habitat. For him, Persian and Urdu languages

⁸⁵ Gandhi mentioned in his speech in 1936 at Akhil Bharatiya Sahitya Parishad, “The reason why Hindi is qualified by the word ‘Hindustani’ is that words originating from the Persian idiom may not be shunned in that language.” (Gandhi 1936, 382). In his letter to Tandon, Gandhi strongly opposed the idea of Hindi as devoid of words from Urdu. Premchand wrote, “सिर्फ हिन्दुस्तानी ऐसी भाषा है, जिसे यह दर्जा (कौमी भाषा) हासिल है। इसे उर्दू या हिंदी का अलग अलग नाम ना देकर मैं हिन्दुस्तानी कहता हूँ क्योंकि मेरे ख्याल में हिंदी और उर्दू एक जवान है” (Premchand 1945, 128)।

⁸⁶ Shukla mentions, “जो लोग राजनीतिक दृष्टि से हिन्दू मुस्लिम एकता अत्यन्त आवश्यक समझते हैं वे एक बीच का रास्ता पकड़कर 'हिन्दुस्तानी' लेकर उठे हैं। इस हिन्दुस्तानी का समर्थन कुछ उदार समझे जानेवाले मुसलमान और उर्दू की गोद में पले हिन्दू भी कर रहे हैं। हम भोली भाली जनता को इस 'हिन्दुस्तानी' से सावधान करना अत्यन्त आवश्यक समझते हैं। जो हिन्दुस्तानी इन लोगों के ध्यान में है वह थोड़ी छनी हुई उर्दू के सिवा और कुछ नहीं है” (Shukla 2007, 72)।

represented the cultural and religious interests of the Muslims. There was an unwillingness to merge and incorporate the linguistic and religious metaphors that were native to India. He stated in an essay, ‘*Urdu Rashtrabhasha*’,

“इस बात को दुनिया जानती है कि उर्दू में संस्कृत वा प्राकृत शब्दों की रती भर भी गुजर नहीं। अब उर्दू का ढाँचा और व्याकरण बिलकुल हिन्दी का है, उसके शब्द भी बहुत से हिन्दी के हैं, अतः व्याकरण सम्बन्धी किसी बात की खोज के लिए प्राकृत से होते हुए संस्कृत तक जाना होगा। इसी प्रकार शब्दों की व्युत्पत्ति भी प्राकृत और संस्कृत में टटोलनी होगी पर यह बात उर्दू पंडितों के लिए असम्भव ही है क्योंकि उर्दू साहित्य सेवा के लिए अरबी और फारसी की लियाकत की जरूरत होती है न कि संस्कृत और प्राकृत की।.... खेद के साथ कहना पड़ता है कि इस भाषा में हिन्दुओं के कोई भाव नहीं हैं। इसमें उनके धार्मिक शब्द तक नहीं, उनके पूर्व पुरुषों की अधिक चर्चा नहीं। इसमें हमारे नित्य के काम के शब्दों का समावेश नहीं। हमारी बहुत सी ऐसी गृहस्थी की चीजें हैं जिनका नाम लेना भी उर्दू को नापसन्द है। हमारे जीवन से इस भाषा का कोई लगाव नहीं। बहुत से ऐसे संस्कृत शब्द हैं जिसे इस देश के स्त्री- पुरुष, पढ़े अनपढ़े सब बोलते हैं पर जिनके उच्चारण करने तक की सामर्थ्य उर्दू में नहीं। किन्तु हमारे मुसलमान भाइयों के भाव और शब्द हिन्दी में बराबर पाए जाते हैं” (Shukla 2007, 24-25)।

For Shukla, while the Hindi language is capable of representing the cultural and religious differences of the Muslims and Persian language, it was not equally true of the Urdu language. Shukla hailed the poetry of Malik Mohammed Jayasi, in the fifteenth century, who in ‘*Padmavat*’ conveyed the sufi religiosity by employing the Awadhi language- a dialect of Hindi and the cultural metaphors from Indian habitat. He also mentioned other Muslim poets from the sufi tradition who composed poetry in Hindi language. But, for him, it was not reciprocated by the Persian language and its literature that has fallen short of incorporating religious, cultural and linguistic indicators of the Hindus and from the Indian environment.

In this position of language and nation, it is the Hindi language that is capable of executing the role of national language. Hindi language assimilates the linguistic and cultural indicators of regional languages uniting them into a singular homogenous whole. It is capable of representing the religious and cultural interests of Muslims and Persian heritage. More significantly, it is capable of building a lived community based on popular and routine exchange of sentiments and experiences. Unlike religion, this community is not based on a belief in a common metaphysical ideal but in everyday affirmations that could be felt, heard and seen around. It is this shared linguistic identity that Shukla brought out through his history of Hindi literature and other works.

Another important feature that is highlighted with regard to the identity of the community governed by *lok-sangrah* in Shukla's conception of Indian civilization is that of the shared religiosity. In the discussion so far, I have argued that for Shukla, it is important that the native language conveys the prevalent sensibilities of the habitat to which it belongs. In the rejection of the Urdu language, there is also a disdain towards the sensibilities associated with Persian language and Islam. Islam had also been the most important aggressive force in this version of the history of Hindi literature that motivated united response from the writers and poets in Hindi language. Even though, the Muslim poets and the Islamic faith as such are not dismissed, the nature of the sensibilities that are native to Indian habitat are clearly inclined towards Hindu religion. In the following discussion, it becomes pertinent to note that while language is the unit of imagining a nation and a civilization, such an understanding does not let go of the question of religion. In a way, religion takes a back door entry in such a construction of the language and nation.

In the discussion of the religious poetry of the *Bhakti* period, the emphasis is on the notion of *lok-sangrah* or *lok-mangal* to critically understand the poetry of four key bhakti and sufi poets. These four poets are Tulsidas, Kabir, Surdas and Malik Mohammed Jayasi. Apart from the history of Hindi literature, Shukla wrote critical essays on each

poet as introductions to their respective works. Even though their religiosity differed significantly from each other, there is a priority order or hierarchy that brought out the preference for a certain form of religiosity as essential for the idea of the community. The attempt is to bring out an ideal form of religiosity or *lokdharmā* (religion of the people/community) from Shukla's readings of the four bhakti and sufi poets.

Shukla divided the *Bhakti* period of Hindi literature into the two dominant forms of poetry- the *sagun* (determinate) and *nirgun* (indeterminate) forms of religiosity that emerged in the poetry. Even though it was presented that there were wide differences between the two forms of devotion, the presence of mixed forms of religiosity was recognized as well. For example, in the poetry of fourteenth century Mahashtrian poet, Namdev, there were elements of both *sagun* and *nirgun*. Such mixed forms of devotion allowed for the collective participation of Hindus and Muslims⁸⁷. Even in Kabir, it was argued there were prospects for enchanting both the Hindus and Muslims towards a common devotional path. However, Shukla asserted that for Indian devotionalism or *Bhaktimarg*, it is only the *sagun* (determinate) form that truly represents the essence of *lok-sangrah*.

In this notion of *Bhaktimarg*, the tradition of *nirgun* poetry that developed in the Hindi literature was influenced from three major streams of religiosity- the Indian Advaita tradition, Sufism and the legacy of Natha and Siddha poetry. Each of these varying forms of religiosity imparted their unique characteristic to the *nirgun* form of devotion. While the elements of love and emotions were borrowed from Sufism, the element of *gyan* or the knowledge was influenced from Advaita philosophy and the *Karma* was reflective of the legacy of Natha and Siddha sects. It was particularly epitomized in the poetry of Kabir.

⁸⁷ Shukla wrote, "भक्ति के आंदोलन की जो लहर दक्षिण से आई उसी ने उत्तर भारत की परिस्थिति के अनुरूप हिंदू मुसलमान दोनों के लिए एक सामान्य भक्तिमार्ग की भी भावना कुछ लोगों में जगाई। हृदयपक्षशून्य सामान्य अंतस्साधना का मार्ग निकालने का प्रयत्न नाथपंथी कर चुके थे, यह हम कह चुके हैं। पर रागात्मक तत्व से रहित साधना से ही मनुष्य की आत्मा तृप्त नहीं हो सकती। महाराष्ट्र देश के प्रसिद्ध भक्त नामदेव (संवत् 1328-1408) ने हिंदू मुसलमान दोनों के लिए एक सामान्य भक्तिमार्ग का भी आभास दिया। उसके पीछे कबीरदास ने विशेष तत्परता के साथ एक व्यवस्थित रूप में यह मार्ग 'निर्गुणपंथ' के नाम से चलाया" (Shukla 1993)।

Shukla noted that the foremost poet of *nirgun* tradition, Kabir, in his poetry, was a trenchant critique of the social hierarchies in Hinduism and Islam, idol worship among Vaishnava devotees and the emphasis on ostentatious or surfcial customs and rituals among people⁸⁸. It was further argued that, Kabir and his poetry, *nirgun* tradition in general, failed to enchant the educated or ‘sanskrit’ masses because of the focus on metaphysical musings or on the internal and individualistic form of devotion⁸⁹. The importance of Kabir to the uneducated masses, both Hindus and Muslims, who were directed away from the hierarchies of caste and class that pervaded the worship in dominant forms of Hinduism and Islam, was highlighted. In the most saint-poets of *Nirgun* tradition, the merger of the Hindus and Muslims masses towards a common devotion was an overwhelming concern. Saint-poets such as Dadu Dayal, Guru Nanak, Raidas, Malookdas attempted to bring out a shared form of devotion that could be adopted by both the communities. Shukla argued that in such attempts, like Kabir, many founded their own *panth* or religious sect to distinguish from either communities of Hindus and Muslims.

However, despite acknowledging the importance of the efforts of *nirgun* poets and their works to a large section of the masses, they are not identified as expressing the ideal of *lokdharmā*. Further, importance was attached to the works of sufi poets, such as Malik Mohammed Jayasi and Kutuban, who adapted the imageries, stories and language from the Indian habitat while expressing their respective faith, influenced from Islam. Even though these poets render the emotional elements in poetry close to the sentimental landscape of the Indian masses- both Hindus and Muslims, yet they do not fulfil the role

⁸⁸ Shukla stated, “उनके तथा ‘निर्गुणवाद’ वाले और दूसरे संतों के वचनों में कहीं भारतीय अद्वैतवाद की झलक मिलती है तो कहीं योगियों के नाडीचक्र की, कहीं सूफियों के प्रेमत्व की, कहीं पैगंबरी कट्टर खुदावाद की और कहीं अहिंसावाद की। अतः तात्त्विक दृष्टि से न तो हम इन्हें पूरे अद्वैतवादी कह सकते हैं और न एकेश्वरवादी। दोनों का मिलाजुला भाव इनकी बानी में मिलता है। इनका लक्ष्य एक ऐसी सामान्य भक्ति पद्धति का प्रचार था जिसमें हिंदू और मुसलमान दोनों योग दे सकें और भेदभाव का कुछ परिहार हो। बहुदेवोपासना, अवतार और मूर्तिपूजा का खंडन ये मुसलमानी जोश के साथ करते थे और मुसलमानों की कुरबानी (हिंसा), नमाज, रोजा आदि की असारता दिखाते हुए ब्रह्म, माया, जीव, अनहद नाद, सृष्टि, प्रलय आदि की चर्चा पूरे हिंदू ब्रह्मज्ञानी बनकर करते थे” (ibid.,.)।

⁸⁹ He argued, “बात यह है कि इस पंथ का प्रभाव शिष्ट और शिक्षित जनता पर नहीं पड़ा, क्योंकि उसके लिए न तो इस पंथ में कोई नई बात थी, न नया आकर्षण। संस्कृत बुद्धि, संस्कृत हृदय और संस्कृत वाणी का वह विकास इस शाखा में नहीं पाया जाता जो शिक्षित समाज को अपनी ओर आकर्षित करता। पर अशिक्षित और निम्न श्रेणी की जनता पर इन संत महात्माओं का बड़ा भारी उपकार है। उच्च विषयों का कुछ आभास देकर, आचरण की शुद्धता पर जोर देकर, आडंबरों का तिरस्कार करके, आत्मगौरव का भाव उत्पन्न करके, इन्होंने इसे ऊपर उठाने का स्तुत्य प्रयत्न किया” (ibid.,.)।

of *lokdharmā* that Shukla marks out as the essence of Indian devotionalism. Unlike the dominant concern of the *nirgun* saint-poets, the guiding ideal of *lokdharmā* emphasized, not as much a shared platform for different religious communities, but the need to identify a form of religiosity that is based in the Indian or indigenous roots and aims at preserving the social and cultural ethos of the society as it is. Shukla, declaring his meaning of *lokdharmā* stated,

“जिन गुणों से लोक की रक्षा होती है, जिन गुणों को देख हमारा हृदय प्रफुल्ल हो जाता है, उन गुणों को हम जिसमें देखें वही 'इष्टदेव' है- हमारे लिए वही सबसे बड़ा है (Shukla 1965, 33)।... जिस धर्म की रक्षा से लोक की रक्षा होती है-जिससे समाज चलता है-वह यही व्यापक धर्म है ...संसार जैसा है, वैसा मानकर उसके बीच से एक कोने को स्पर्श करता हुआ, जो धर्म निकलेगा, वही धर्म लोकधर्म होगा। जीवन के किसी एक अंग मात्र को स्पर्श करनेवाला धर्म लोकधर्म नहीं। जो धर्म उपदेश द्वारा न सुधरनेवाले दुष्टों और अत्याचारियों को दुष्टता के लिए छोड़ दे, उनके लिए कोई व्यवस्था न करे, वह लोकधर्म नहीं, व्यक्तिगत साधना है” (ibid., 27)।

It is only the *sagun* (determinate) tradition of Ramabhakti that truly imbibed and reflected the spirit of *lokdharmā*. He argued that for Indian devotionalism, the attachment of the individual with the almighty is to be based in the external world of which the individual is a part of. The external world or environment cannot be ignored in the true form of Indian devotion. The relationships and experiences they form and inhabit in their surroundings is the key to their expression of religiosity. This argument for *lokdharmā* is linked, inherently, to the essence of *lok-sangrih*. Just as language, religion has to be a part of popular, everyday and relatable experiences of the community of worshippers. Their external social world that consists of their roles, relations and responsibilities as members of a society can not be excused from their expression of religion. The *nirgun* devotionalism exhibited the irrelevance of the social reality of caste and customs in the path of god. It is not so much the collective and the social whole that was to experience with each other, the service to god. Rather, the focus was on an unembedded individual,

without the social markers of caste and gender, who became the subject of devotion towards god. Shukla disregarded the *nirgun* tradition for the status of *lokdharm* or the shared religiosity in the nation. Stating the importance of being able to relate their experience of the god with the external social world, he wrote,

“भारतीय भक्ति पद्धति 'रहस्य' की प्रवृत्ति को भक्ति की सबसे सच्ची भावना में बाधक समझती है। भारतीय परंपरा का भक्त अपने उपास्य को बाहर लोक के बीच प्रतिष्ठित करके देखता है, अपने हृदय के कोने में नहीं। ... भारतीय भक्ति-मार्ग व्यक्ति कल्याण और लोक कल्याण दोनों के लिए है। वह लोक या जगत को छोड़कर नहीं चल सकता। भक्ति-मार्ग का सिद्धांत है भगवान को बाहर जगत में देखना” (ibid., 8)।

In this conception, the true essence of *lokdharm* is epitomized in the *Ramcharitmanas* of Tulsidas. Shukla argued that unlike the mystic quality associated with the god in *nirgun* tradition, Tulsidas' *Ramcharitmanas* emphasized on the ease of access to god. The see-able or explicit nature of god in *Ramcharitmanas* enabled the devotee to engage in devotion without any detachment from their everyday life and social existence⁹⁰. Further, *Ramcharitmanas* offered the complete imagination of the god in the various social roles and responsibilities. The everyday relationships, roles and emotions that the god in *sagun* Ramabhakti devotion inhabits are also shared and worshipped by the devotees. The decisions and steps chosen by the god incarnate in the various stages of his life serve as ideals for the devotees to imbibe and pursue. People perceive their relationships with other individuals such as parents/children, friends, siblings, teacher/student, ruler/subject and husband/wife in the light of this faith in the god⁹¹. It is asserted that devotion in Tulsidas' does not rule out the social embeddedness of the devotee. Rather, it is the

⁹⁰ Shukla wrote, “जब भगवान मनुष्य के पैरों से दीन-दुखियों की पुकार पर दौड़कर आते दिखायी दें और उनका हाथ मनुष्य के हाथ के रूप में दुष्टों का दमन करता और पीड़ितों को सहारा देता दिखाई दे, उनकी आँखें मनुष्य की आँखें होकर आँसू गिराते दिखायी दे, तभी मनुष्य के भावों की पूर्ण तृप्ति हो सकती है और लोक-धर्म का स्वरूप प्रत्यक्ष हो सकता है” (Shukla 1965, 3)।

⁹¹ He mentioned, “हम अपने साथ जगत का जो सम्बन्ध अनुभव करते हैं उसी के मूल में भगवान की सत्ता हमें देखनी चाहिए। ... माता-पिता जिस स्नेह से हमारा लालन-पालन करते हैं, भाई-बंधू, इष्ट-मित्र जिस स्नेह से हमारा हित करते हैं, उसे राम ही का स्नेह समझना चाहिए” (ibid., 11)।

lok-sangrah element of the Tulsidas that emphasizes the involvement of the social reality with the religion. Shukla wrote,

“गोस्वामी जी की भक्तिपद्धति की सबसे बड़ी विशेषता है उसकी सर्वांगपूर्णता। जीवन के किसी पक्ष को सर्वथा छोड़कर वह नहीं चलती है। सब पक्षों के साथ उसका सामंजस्य है।... भक्ति की चरम सीमा पर पहुँचकर भी लोकपक्ष उन्होंने नहीं छोड़ा। लोकसंग्रह का भाव उनकी भक्ति का एक अंग था” (Shukla 1993)।

Even though Shukla lauded the poetry of sagun Krishnabhakti tradition, from the perspective of *lok-sangrah*, it does not quite fulfill the space as *Ramcharitmanas*. With respect to Surdas and other poets of Krishnabhakti tradition, it was observed that while they were based on the humanly everyday life of the god-incarnate, Krishna, the poets failed to exhibit an exhaustive imagination of a person's life. The emphasis in the poetry was on exemplifying Krishna as a child and as a teenage lover rather than as a warrior strategist, king or a householder⁹². By limiting to the elaboration of sentiments of beauty, adoration and love, the poetry of Krishnabhakti tradition could not present the ideal in other phases of a person's life.

One of the most important aspects of the *lok-sangrah* that emerges through *Ramcharitmanas* is the maintenance of the caste system⁹³. Shukla is emphatic that it is not in the critique of the status-quo that one relates with their everyday reality, rather, it is in the abiding of the social rules and customs for caste and gender that the true form of religiosity can be established. As epitomized in *Ramcharitmanas*, the roles and

⁹² Shukla wrote, “सूरदास आदि अष्टछाप के कवियों ने श्रीकृष्ण के श्रृंगारिक रूप के प्रत्यक्षीकरण के द्वारा 'टेढ़ी सीधी निर्गुण वाणी' की खिन्नता और शुष्कता को हटाकर जीवन की प्रफुल्लता का आभास तो दिया, पर भगवान के लोक-संग्रहकारी रूप का प्रकाश करके धर्म के सौंदर्य का साक्षात्कार नहीं कराया। कृष्णोपासक भक्तों के सामने राधा कृष्ण की प्रेमलीला ही रखी गयी, भगवान् की लोक-धर्म-स्थापना का मनोहर चित्रण नहीं किया गया” (Shukla 1965, 35-36)।

⁹³ Shukla stated, “गोस्वामीजी का समाज का आदर्श वही है जिसका निरूपण वेद, पुराण, स्मृति आदि में है; अर्थात् वर्णाश्रम की पूर्ण प्रतिष्ठा।... जिस प्रकार ब्राह्मण के धर्म पठनपाठन, तत्व। चिंतन, यज्ञादि हुए उसी प्रकार शान्त और मृदु वचन तथा उपकार बुद्धि, नम्रता, दया, क्षमा आदि भावों का अभ्यास भी। क्षत्रियों के लिए जिस प्रकार शस्त्राग्रहण धर्म हुआ, उसी प्रकार जनता की रक्षा, उसके दुःख से सहानुभूति आदि भी। और वर्णों के लिए जिस प्रकार अपने नियत व्यवसायों का सम्पादन कर्तव्य ठहराया गया, उसी प्रकार अपने से ऊँचे कर्तव्यवालों अर्थात् लोकरक्षा द्वारा भिन्न भिन्न व्यवसायों का अवसर देनेवालों के प्रति, आदर सम्मान का भाव भी” (ibid., 44-45)।

responsibility of each caste group and the gender do not threaten the devotional path to god. The god incarnate in the character of *Rama* pursued his caste duties as a Kshatriya and his wife, *Sita* idolized womanhood⁹⁴. In this understanding, the *Ramcharitmanas* presented the ideal where every member of the society could participate in the devotional path without compromising their social location. Rather, it is in the fulfillment of their social roles that one can truly express their devotion towards the almighty as exhibited in *Ramcharitmanas*.

Just as in the notion of language, by highlighting *lok-sangrah* as the essence of religion, Shukla envisaged the shared religiosity among the members of the national community. This national community that is the basis of his imagination of the nation expresses faith in *Ramcharitmanas* and exhibits its ideals. By emphasizing on the everyday and lived social reality of the people, the unity among the members is aimed to be achieved. In such an imagination, people are seen to be connected to each other as the fulfillment of their roles in family, society and country are a part of their fundamental essence. Their religion is in sync with their social life. Even though there are deep rooted hierarchies of caste and gender prevalent in the society, the members are in harmony because the true form of religion is in abiding by those social roles and locations.

The continued impact of *Ramacharitmanas* is because of its capacity to render the experience of devotion available to all the members without changing or abandoning their social reality, instead providing the motivation for it. It was acknowledged that this form of religiosity is available only to the Hindus as the *lok-sangrah* aspect does not make available a shared space for the Muslims. Unlike in *nirgun* devotion, the concern is not towards forming a shared path for members of diverse religions. Shukla does not share this concern. For him, the dominant concern is to establish an imagination of language and religion in the Indian or indigenous habitat. The essence of *lok-sangrah* is aimed at locating and affirming the fundamental nature of Indian civilization, language and religion. Based on these, such an imagination of the nation embarks on the process of

⁹⁴ Shukla ridiculed and mocked the idea that it was not important for women to relocate to their husband's house after marriage as was being questioned by some women in the society (add ref).

inclusion and exclusion of linguistic traditions, languages, religious groups and sects. It prioritizes particular language and religious path as the fundamental or essential to the Indian culture and habitat. The next section critically analyzes his idea of the nation that has emerged in the discussion so far.

3.5 Shukla's Idea of the Nation

The imagination of the nation that emerges in Shukla's works has, at its fundamental level, an overwhelming concern with indigeneity. The notion of 'indigeneity' is derived on the basis of territory; those languages, religious sects and cultural imageries that are native to the Indian physical habitat are considered for defining the nature of the nation. If Gandhi and the other supporters of Hindustani language are accused of concocting a language based on fulfilling their political aims of religious harmony, the political propaganda of Shukla's ideas is in constructing supposedly 'indigenous' sources of culture, language and religion to base the nation. The emphasis on Islam as an aggressive and intruding force and an undervaluation of any hints of their continued influence on language, religious and socio-cultural indicators bring out the concern with indigeneity to the forefront. By keeping territory as the prime marker, the idea of nation, here, rejected centuries old movements of languages and assimilation of religious beliefs and other socio-cultural influences as 'foreign' and thereby not fit for the 'truly' Indian identity of the nation. The influences and inspirations from the 'foreign' whether in the form of encounter with the West or with Islam in the twelfth century indicated infiltration into a parallel Indian tradition of language, religion and culture. Even though, it was recognized that there were some affirmative results as well from the assimilation of foreign

influences to the Indian mainstream but they were not to be endorsed because they failed to reflect the truly 'Indian' nature to them⁹⁵.

As the meaning of Indian is seen in terms of indigenous, with territorial boundaries filtering what is indigenous and what is not, there emerges an inevitable and interminable hierarchy between languages, religious sects and cultures. The languages that are seen as products of the native land such as Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati are prioritized over Persian, Arabic and Urdu. The latter are denied the same and equal recognition as accorded to those languages that are identified as indigenous to the country. A similar hierarchy is apparent in the treatment of various religious sects. In this conception, even though there is much to be appreciated in Sufism and its popularity among the Indian people, they are not equal in comparison to the indigenous religious sects and poetry. The hierarchy of language, religion and culture that emerges in Shukla's works reflect upon his idea of the nation. In the idea of the Indian nation that emerges, despite the centuries of assimilation found in Indian history and culture, the outsider remains excluded from being identified as Indian.

A second kind of parameter to map the hierarchy devised by Shukla in his imagination of the nation is that of the importance of protecting and preserving the social life-world. The latter is defined as the communal reality of Indian society in terms of the prevalent caste, class and gender hierarchies. The varna-ashrama hierarchy, the class differences and the hierarchized gender locations form a core of the '*lok*' or the social sphere in Indian context. In the idea of the nation, those linguistic and religious traditions that do not attempt to disturb the status-quo, rather preserve it are prioritized and adhered to over those that critique it or present alternatives to it. The support for the existing status-quo is laced as the support for the popular. The understanding that the Indian culture, language and religion are to be in sync with the popular and lived experiences of the people is employed as an affirmation for caste system, class hierarchies and gendered divisions.

⁹⁵ For instance, with respect to the *Chhayawaad* poetry, Shukla acknowledged the strength of the mystic symbolism inherent to the poetry in expressing issues and topics of social value, he urged the writers to adopt more Indian inspirations for the mysticism and reject the imitation of the foreign- whether European or Sufism (Shukla 1993).

Further, the view of the social sphere is that of a uniform space where critiques of caste and gender based hierarchies are projected as aberrations and disregarded from the popular. This homogenized and linear understanding of the '*lok*' is utilized as a parameter for organizing the religious sects and linguistic traditions into a hierarchized order.

'*Ramcharitmanas*', which according to this restricted conception of the *lok*, upholds the rules, regulations, customs and duties of the social sphere as worthy of veneration and as imperatives in the path to devotion, stands out as the ideal form of religiosity that the Indian nation identifies with. The *nirgun* saint-poets, such as Kabir, who critiqued the existing social framework for its exclusion and hierarchies meted out to people of lower caste, class and women, are seen as going against the fundamental fabric of Indian society. Instead, it is audacious on their part to invent their own alternative sects and separate from the larger social whole. Such a hierarchical order between different religious traditions, based on limited understanding of the social, reflect the distinct vantage point from where these ideas have been argued from. Clearly, the bias is in the favor of the upper castes of the Hindu religion. Moreover, it also demonstrates the patriarchal vantage point of understanding Indian society. That the roles and duties prescribed to each castes and gender shall continue uninhibited is the dominant concern of the nation based in a brahmanical patriarchal view.

On the question of devotion or *bhakti*, which formed the popular form of religious expression, the limited notion of *lokdharmā* made it almost impossible for any form of religiosity to exist outside of the *sagun* form while rendering an impact on the masses. It exclusively identifies the *sagun*, a determinate see-able form of god to be a perfect pathway to devotion in the Indian context. The indeterminate form of devotion were a possibility in other religions such as Christianity and Islam but in the Indian context, which is identified as the Hindu context, it could not form the ideal form of religiosity.

This limited understanding of the Indian social context ignores centuries of voices of oppression against the caste and gender hierarchies that are found in the literary and folk culture in India. It underestimates and negates the crucial nature of these voices that

present the simultaneous critique of the Brahmanical system of caste. The identification of *lok-sangrah* in terms of the preservation of the caste and gender duties is a brahmanical affirmation for an idea of India based in caste, class and gender hierarchies⁹⁶.

Through these filters, a specific notion of Hindi language and Hindu religion are the highlights of this idea of the nation. An idea of Hindi is created, that in its notional form, assimilated the regional languages and dialects. Such an idea of 'Hindi language' homogenizes the variety of dialects and languages into a uniform language as long as they share the same physical and cultural habitat. The conundrum about how the mother tongues- which could be Bengali, Bhojpuri, Punjabi or Gujarati for different people, be united under a common national language- Hindi, is resolved by keeping not the differences of scripts, words and pronunciation but the similarity of physical habitat and natural resources as the defining aspect for the language. In one of his lectures, Shukla argued that it was not of any consequence if one were to refer to this idea of 'Hindi' by any other name such as Hindustani, as long as the idea underneath remained unchanged. Urdu and Persian are denied an equal space or acknowledgement in the imagination of the Indian nation. They may continue to be used but they are not to be seen as belonging to the Indian context. The southern languages of Tamil, Telugu and Kannada, in such an imagination, are not imagined as the defining languages of the Indian nation for they do not share an affinity for Sanskrit language as the source of words. However, by the territorial aspect, they were to be brought closer to Hindi by adapting from Sanskrit for further development and learning the Hindi language.

Further, such an idea of the nation is undividedly committed to the Hindu religion but it is not all kinds of diversities within Hinduism that identify with the nature of the Indian nation. It is only the *sagun* Ramabhakti tradition that represents the ideal form of religion in Indian nation, here. Different notions of Rama as the sources of devotion prevailed in

⁹⁶ Shukla expressed his strong approval for an understanding of *kshatriya* duties as pursued by Rama's character in Ramayana to be adopted in the then present period in lieu of colonial rule. In his article in 1921, he argued that in a balanced world, an enemy or aggressor was to be punished for their action against the society. Shukla believed that if *kshtar-dharm* was adopted in his period, Indian society was not to suffer under colonial rule. It was also in lieu of his belief against the prevalent strategies of non-violence promoted by Gandhi. For a *Kshatriya*, violence towards a just was not to be avoided. Shukla, by affirming *Kshatriya* duties, seems to differ from the politics of satyagraha and non-violence (Shukla 2007, 200).

many religious sects including Natha and Siddha sects. But the *Ramcharitmanas* presented the ideal of religion that was in sync with the Indian context. The possibilities of challenges to the caste and gender norms of Indian society were not diminished in the Krishnabhakti tradition. Rather, an emphasis on the image of Krishna as a lover over a householder and a mischief-maker over a warrior was not in sync with the ethos of the Indian nation. A form of religion that endorsed and upheld the ideals of caste, gender and class hierarchies as worthy of veneration and devotion is the ideal religion that this imagination of nation endorses.

The other religious traditions that dismissed the Hindu household and critiqued the caste inequalities were negated and underplayed in imparting a characteristic role in the idea of the nation. The other religious identities that became part of the Indian context such as Islam and the various sufi sects, in Shukla's idea of the nation, were not to be eliminated. Even though they don't represent the ideal form of religiosity fundamental to Indian context, the other forms of religions were to adapt to the language, imageries and metaphors of the Indian habitat. For those that continue to employ the language and culture from that belonging outside the territory of India, they do not share any contributing or characteristic identity with the Indian nation. Such an idea of the nation encouraged Muslims and Christians to use languages and metaphors of the Indian context, in their discourse on religion and other communal areas. These specific notions of Hindi and Hindu constitute the idea of the nation here.

The imagination of the nation in this construct is based on the vantage point of the Hindi language. Even though the Hindi language has a specific notion to it, in this imagination, it goes beyond its role as a linguistic identity. On the foundation of the Hindi language, Shukla constructs his idea of the nation. Overridden with the overwhelming nationalist ideology, Hindi language, here, denotes not just a linguistic identity with communicative role but a complete and comprehensive imagination of the nation. There is an idea of religion that is linked and crucial to the notion of language in its process of identifying the character and nature of the Indian nation.

It is not difficult to understand that along with the language and religion, it also defines the priority of certain regions that assume importance in this form of nation. The region with the Hindi speaking population, here primarily the then United Provinces, becomes the region of hegemony in the overall territory of Indian state. On the gender front, the heterosexual gender norms are seen as ideal. The caste orthodoxy was affirmed and endorsed in society as part of the everyday experiences that contribute to people's lives.

The support for this idea of Hindi culminates in the comprehensive idea of the nation described. The argument here is that this idea of Hindi and its support as the national language comes with the attached imagination of religion, region, gender and caste as constituting aspects of the nation defined in specific terms. It is important to note that in the struggle against Urdu, the challenge was really against another dominant form of nationalism. One of the forms of nationalism associated with Urdu translated in territorial support for Pakistan and religion as Islam. Similarly, the Hindustani language presented another idea of the nation that rejected both the above forms of nationalism as exclusionary. It expressed its faith the composite whole of India without the separation of Pakistan, unity of religions of Hinduism and Islam and a mix of Hindi and Urdu as the national language. Shukla's understanding of Hindi presented its own form of majoritarian nationalism that homogenized regional languages and excluded Islam and Urdu language from identifying as the core of Indian nation.

Shukla's works present a majoritarian imagination of the nation based in Hindi language. It is metonymic in nature as one part attempts to define the entirety without an equal space for the other parts. It does not mention other ethnic groups such as tribal communities based in regions across the country. It maintains a quiet about the South Indian languages and cultures. This form of nationalism propagates a homogenous understanding of Hindi language with assimilation of all regional languages. In arguing for a distinctive indigeneity of Indian nation, it fails to take note of the specificity of the regional languages and their literature. The difference is highlighted only from those linguistic and religious traditions that are not seen as indigenous and are therefore incapable of homogeneity. The internal others such as the *nirgun* religious sects continue

to exist on the margins. The religious minorities are indicated to change or adapt to the said indigenous influences of language and culture. The dominating concern in this form of majoritarian imagination is with managing the diversity into uniformity.

With the deep interactions between the literary and political spheres, these ideas went beyond the literary circles to political leaders and intellectuals. They were discussed among prominent political leaders who had some form of cultural-political inclination towards Hindi language. However, Shukla's ideas present only one form of majoritarian nationalism in the Hindi literary sphere. It was indeed dominant but not without its opposite or alternative. There was an alternative idea of the nation based in Hindi language that was soon presented by another literary critic, Hazari Prasad Dwivedi, whose works are discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

The Alternative Conception of Language, Religion and the Nation in the works of Hazari Prasad Dwivedi

The idea of the Hindi language and the canon of its literature constructed by Ramchandra Shukla provided a foundation to the study and practice of Hindi language. It also impacted the relationship and role of Hindi language vis-a-vis the Indian nation. As we have discussed before, Shukla's ideas were crucial to the magnified position enjoyed by Hindi in comparison to other languages in Indian politics. He combined a systematic analysis of the history of Hindi language and its tradition with affectionate and emotional understanding of the community of its speakers. The strength of his arguments can be gauged from the fact that even his critics could not ignore his structure of canon formation to study the history of Hindi literature. However, despite all its strengths, Shukla's model did not provide the final word on the link of Hindi language to the Indian nation and civilization.

Shortly after Shukla, Hazari Prasad Dwivedi, prominent literary critic and thinker, expounded his ideas on the history of Hindi language and its literature, the nature of Hindi language and the link with various religious beliefs. Dwivedi created an idea of Hindi which can be seen as the alternative understanding of Hindi language and Indian nation. There is a redefinition of Hindi language that emerges in his works. In the attempt to reinterpret the history of Hindi literature and offer a different notion of Indian civilization, Dwivedi's works question some of the key assumptions and arguments in Shukla's imagination. This chapter charts out the crucial ideas as they emerge in

Dwivedi's works and analyses them vis-a-vis Shukla's arguments to discern the similarities and dissimilarities with the latter.

The first section of the chapter briefly states a biographical sketch of Hazari Prasad Dwivedi. The second provides the details of the alternate history of Hindi literature sketched in Dwivedi's works. The third section analyses the differences in Dwivedi's history of Hindi literature and the contrasting configuration of language and religion within Hindi in his ideas. It looks at the redefinition of Hindi language that emerges in Dwivedi's conceptualization. The fourth section of this chapter draws out Dwivedi's imagination of Indian civilization and nation.

4.1 Biographical Account of Hazari Prasad Dwivedi

Hazari Prasad Dwivedi was born as Baijnath Dwivedi in August 1907 in the village 'Dube ka Chhapra' of the district Ballia in Uttar Pradesh. His family was known for astrology, his father, Anmol Dwivedi, being a Sanskrit scholar and pandit. Hazari Prasad Dwivedi's early education included the teaching of Sanskrit texts. After completing his intermediate degree, Dwivedi moved to Banaras in 1923 for further studies. He acquired honorary degrees in Sanskrit as well as in astrology qualifying for titles of 'Shastri' and 'Acharya' respectively. In 1927, he completed his graduation from Banaras Hindu University (BHU) and joined Shantiniketan in 1930 as the tutor of Hindi language. He spent two most formative decades of his life at Shantiniketan working in proximity with Kshitimohan Sen and under the looming presence of Rabindranath Tagore. In several of his works, Dwivedi acknowledges inspiration and influences of Tagore with whom he lived in the Shantiniketan campus for eleven years. He joined the Hindi department in BHU in 1950 and moved out in 1960. Dwivedi's critical shift and differences from the canon established by Ramchandra Shukla has been alleged by later scholars as one of the

major reasons for Dwivedi's ouster from BHU (Singh 1989). Dwivedi was awarded with the prestigious national awards, Padma Bhushan in 1957 and Sahitya Akademi in 1973. He also joined the Hindi department in Punjab University in 1960 until his retirement. In 1955, Dwivedi was an appointed member of the first Official Language Commission set by the government of India.

Dwivedi was a polyglot with the knowledge of Sanskrit, Bengali, Punjabi, Gujarati, Pali, Prakrit and Apabhramsa languages. His wide ranging works on Hindi language and literature express also his deep interactions with Sanskrit texts and literary tradition. Through his works, Dwivedi emerged as the foremost scholar, literary critic, essayist and novelist in Hindi language. The research of the vernacular linguistic and religious traditions is the highlight in the diverse research conducted by Dwivedi. According to Namwar Singh, Dwivedi's contribution in Hindi language reflects the establishment of an 'alternative tradition'; the dominant tradition being guided by Shukla. Some of the major works and themes explored by Hazari Prasad Dwivedi are '*Hindi Sahitya: Uska Udbhav aur Vikas*', '*Hindi Sahitya ka Aadikaal*', '*Hindi Sahitya ki Bhumika*', '*Madhyakalin Bodh ka Swaroop*', '*Kabir*', '*Nath-Sampraday*', '*Sur-Sahitya*' and others. He wrote several novels that explored themes from textual traditions in Sanskrit language such as '*Banhatt ki Aatmkatha*', '*Punarrva*', '*Anaamdas ka Potha*', '*Charu-Chandralekh*' and he wrote many essays. Some famous essays by Dwivedi are '*Shirish ke Phool*', '*Nakhoon kyon Badhte hai*', '*Sahitya ka Marm*', '*Sehaj Bhasha*', '*Manushya hi Sahitya ka Lakshay hai*' etc.

Singh (1989) argued that the influence of Tagore brought to Dwivedi, a perspective of exploring the other side or the alternatives to the dominant traditions in Indian culture. This led to his foregrounding of hitherto ignored or under-recognized traditions of Natha sects and Kabir. He also highlighted different parameters of evaluating and understanding literature. However, Dwivedi's works also point out many similarities and agreements with Shukla. The next few sections discuss his works about the canon of Hindi literature, his views on medieval bhakti poets and the Hindi language to cull out the alternative

rendering of Indian civilization, configuration of language and religion and the Indian nation that become prominent.

4.2 The Emergence and Development of Hindi literature

The emergence of Hindi language and its literature is traced by Dwivedi into the history of a thousand years. Dwivedi asserts that the seeds for the rise of Hindi literature had been laid for a century before, i.e. in the tenth century. The dominant religious faiths then, Buddhism and Pauranic, were moving towards the popular practices prevalent in the period. Before the arrival of Islam, the two religious faiths owing to their own diversions and divisions had began to turn away from the priestly and text based approach to a faith belonging to the everyday living of the people (Dwivedi 2013, 43). Each focussed on varying aspects of everyday circumstances of the people. According to Dwivedi, this turn towards the popular brought about the use of vernacular languages for prose and poetry. The themes of writing also began to reflect the popular experiences as against an imaginative world in Sanskrit literature. This vernacularization of faiths according to Dwivedi was responsible for the vernacular turn in the use of language for literary works (ibid., 38).

In the first period of the history of Hindi literature, Dwivedi argues that there were two dominant types of literary works that can be found. The first kind belongs to the religious writings of the Buddhist, Nathas and Jain sects. According to him, these writings contain scattered works in vernacular languages of the period that are to be seen as the historical versions of modern regional languages and dialects. The second kind belongs to the texts written by bards and minstrels from the royal courts of the period (Dwivedi 2013a, 298). According to the tradition of bard poetry, these writings were based on the themes of valour and bravery of the kings in the wars, elaborating their marriages and charity.

Dwivedi lists *Prithvirajraso*, *Dingal Kavya*, *Prakrit Painglam* as some of the writings from this period of Hindi literature. Dwivedi also mentions *Sandeshrasak* and *Kirtilata* by Vidyapati as the literary texts in vernacular language on the theme of love and separation (ibid., 304). He writes,

“दो प्रकार के साहित्यिक प्रयत्न इस काल में प्रमुख हैं- एक तो बौद्ध और नाथ सिद्धों की तथा जैन-मुनियों की रुक्ष तथा उपदेश-मूलक और हठयोग या कायायोग की महिमा का प्रचार करने वाली रहस्य-मूलक रचनाएँ। ... दूसरी श्रेणी में चारण कवियों के चरित-काव्य हैं जिनमें राजस्तुति, युद्ध, विवाह आदि के वर्णन हैं” (ibid., 303-4)।

Some of the key texts that were conclusive for Shukla to argue that the period reflected the collective sentiments of bravery of rulers and support of natives against foreign invasions were dismissed by Dwivedi as dubious and unreliable. These writings were *Khumanraso*, *Bisaldevraso*, *Hammirraso* and *Vijaypalraso* (ibid., 285). Dwivedi states that it was believed that these writings were written in the times of the kings who figure in their title but that has been disproved by later research. He further argues that even *Prithvirajraso* (which was very conclusive for Shukla) is also not without its share of doubt (ibid., 295). It is to be noted that these texts were crucial in defining the central theme of an era in the history of Hindi literature for Shukla.

In Dwivedi, one can unambiguously trace the distance with Shukla's description of the first era of Hindi literature. While Shukla labelled this period as *Veer-gatha kaal* (period of chivalry), Dwivedi destabilizes the foundation for such a label as he questions the historicity of the writings allegedly belonging to the then period. Further, for Dwivedi, several other texts that are found to belong to the period undercut Shukla's contention that the dominant theme of the writings of the period was the celebration of bravery and chivalry of the rulers. Dwivedi does not attempt to compartmentalize the literary works produced in this period on the basis of an overarching theme as Shukla had done. According to him, even though bard poetry is an important theme of the texts of the period, it may not be solely so (ibid., 304). He writes,

“इस काल में वीररस को सचमुच ही बहुत प्रमुख स्थान प्राप्त है। किन्तु इसी काल में या इसके कुछ पूर्व से ही नाथपंथी और सहजयानी सिद्धों तथा जैन मुनियों की निर्गुणिया भावापन्न कविताएँ भी प्राप्त होती है।.... इन रचनाओं में सहज सत्य को कभी कभी बड़ी प्रभावशाली भाषा में प्रकट किया गया है, जो तत्कालीन रुढ़ि-प्रवण धर्म विचारों से जकड़े मनुष्य को विद्युत् की चमक के समान- सत्य को उदभासित कर देता है” (ibid., 304-05)।

The historicity of the bard literature is questionable enough, for Dwivedi, to doubt the claim that they reflect the sentiments of the people of the particular period in protecting their motherland against invasions. He relies on later research which doubts the older dates assigned to the various literary works allegedly belonging to the first era of Hindi literature⁹⁷. Also, the Buddhist, Jain and Natha-Siddha literature found in the period are equally crucial to understand the socio-religious context and the development of religious poetic expositions. These works are essential to interpret the language, style and the structure of verse in poetry of the period. Dwivedi labels this period of Hindi literature as *Hindi sahitya ka aadi-kaal* distancing from any thematic commentary on the period. The nomenclature adopted by Dwivedi to label the different eras in the history of Hindi literature reflect the uncertainty about any overarching essence central to the literary works; it relies on the specification of the time period to divide different eras.

Moving on, Dwivedi discusses the second era in the development of Hindi literature. He refers to this period as *Madhyakalin sahitya dhara*. The literary works in the medieval period of Indian literature were dominated by the Bhakti element. Dwivedi emphasizes that from the fourteenth century onwards, the beginning of the Bhakti literature marked the actual or real initiation of Hindi literature (ibid., 306). The important aspect that characterized the beginning of bhakti literature, according to Dwivedi, was the integration of the popular beliefs and religious predispositions among the masses with the

⁹⁷ Dwivedi argues that it was falsely believed that the works titled by the names of various rulers were written during their reign. He cites historical research works from Royal Asiatic Society to prove the dates ascribed to some of the literary works are unreliable. Some of these works are *Prithivirajraso*, *Khumanraso*, *Bisaldevraso*, *Alhakhand* and *Vijaypalraso* (Dwivedi 2013a, 285).

Shastra approved and Pauranic supported knowledge or commentaries. The religious commentators and leaders such as Shankaracharya, Ramananda, Vallabhacharya and Ramanujacharya interpreted religious texts and provided easy commentaries that resonated with the popular religious belief among the masses. Moving from the South to the North of India, the bhakti poetry became a powerful force because of the strong acquiescence of the popular religious poetry with the shastras⁹⁸. The revered religious poets who wrote in the vernacular languages emerged from this social and cultural development.

The question that confronts Dwivedi as it confronted critics before him had to do with explaining the turn of events that led to the emergence of Bhakti. There were two dominant explanations that existed before Dwivedi that sought to analyze the rise of Bhakti literature in the medieval period. The first one was provided by George Grierson, British linguistic oriental scholar, who alluded to the influence of Christianity as the motivation for Bhakti literature⁹⁹. The second explanation, which was especially authoritative, was cemented by Shukla who had argued that it was in reaction to the Islamic conquest and attack on Hindu faith that the turn towards Bhakti had emerged. Bhakti literature, in this view, was seen as affording relief to the masses from the invasive Islamic forces. Dwivedi is critical of both these explanations.

He rejects the explanation rendered by Grierson as based on false factual assumptions (ibid., 306). He delves meticulously into Shukla's idea that perceived Bhakti as a reactionary force vis-a-vis Islam. He dismisses this idea strongly countering that if Islam

⁹⁸ John Stratton Hawley, in his book 'India and the Idea of the Bhakti Movement' (2015) argues that it was in the writings and commentaries of Hazari Prasad Dwivedi that the first invention and consolidation of the idea of Bhakti movement as a 'single, simple and coherent' notion emerged. Even though Dwivedi cites it from the writings of George Grierson, it is really Dwivedi's translation of Bhakti as an '*andolan*', unlike Shukla's Bhakti *marg* (pathway), that the idea of the movement of Bhakti from South to North was popularized (Hawley 2015, 52-55). As we shall see in the fifth chapter, this idea of a unified Bhakti movement was employed by the political leaders to emphasize the link of Hindi language between South and North of India.

⁹⁹ George Grierson had stated that the influence for Bhakti was passed by Nestorian Christians who had arrived to the Madras Presidency from the second or third century BC. Their presence inspired the elements of love and compassion in Ramanujacharya who spread it to the North later (cited in Dwivedi 2013a, 306).

was the catalyst for Bhakti, then Sindh was a more viable place for the rise of Bhakti as against the Southern and Northern part of the country. He argues that even though Islam exerted inappropriate physical power on the people, they were battled back in the same way. He writes,

“इससे बढ़कर उपहासास्पद बात और क्या हो सकती है कि मुसलमान तो गदा के आघात से सोमनाथ की मूर्ति को चूर्ण विचूर्ण करते रहें और हिन्दू इस आक्रमण से रक्षा पाने के लिए 'मिताक्षरा' लिखा करें। ... हम यह स्वीकार करते हैं कि मुसलमानों ने कभी-कभी अनुचित शारीरिक बल का प्रदर्शन किया था; पर उसके लिए हिन्दुओं ने शारीरिक बल से ही- भले ही वह अल्प या असंहत हो- आत्मरक्षा की चेष्टा की थी” (Dwivedi 2013b, 54)।

Dwivedi argues that the emergence of Bhakti literature in the medieval period is reflective of a bigger turmoil undergoing in the social, political and cultural setting of the then period. He discusses several factors that cumulatively led to the spread of Bhakti in the medieval period. It is worth examining them here as they project a different view of Islam in Indian history and civilization.

Islam, according to Dwivedi, cast a strong threat to the varna-ashrama order of the Hindu society. The Islamic religion represented an institutionalized and organized form of religion wherein once a person or group was initiated into its fold, their particularities stopped to matter. Within Islam, people were not segregated on the basis of their social location. Instead of the individual, the focus is on the community in Islam. Unlike this way of organizing society, Indian society was a conglomeration of various caste groups (Dwivedi 2013a, 312). Each caste administered its own rules of social behavior and strongly prohibited intimate relations and mingling with people from other caste groups. Further, new tribes or old groups or individuals who were ostracized for transgressing caste boundaries were often accommodated as another caste group in Indian society. In his own words,

“यह [Islam] धर्म साधना व्यक्तिगत नहीं, समूहगत होती है। यहाँ धार्मिक और सामाजिक विधि-निषेध एक-दूसरे में गुँथे होते हैं। भारतीय समाज नाना जातियों का सम्मिश्रण था। परन्तु मजहब इस से ठीक उल्टा है, वह व्यक्ति को अपने समूह का अंग बना देता है, और अंगीकृत होने के बाद व्यक्ति की जाति हमेशा के लिए गायब हो जाती है” (ibid.,)।

Dwivedi asserts that political and armed hostilities were not new to Indian society, it was rather the organizational and communal way of religion that posed a risk to the social and cultural order of Indian society (ibid., 313). Apart from Islam, there were other indigenous factors that added to the turmoil. Commenting on the role of remnants of Buddhism among different sects, Dwivedi writes that even though Buddhism had declined centuries before the Bhakti period, it left a lasting impact on the Vedic religion. The latter ended up incorporating several elements from Buddhism such as idolatry, belief in renunciation and suffering/sorrow (Dwivedi 2013b, 54). The Nathpanthi yogis who were a strong force in the Northern region at this time carried the Buddhist legacy. They repudiated the caste system and renounced the socio-cultural order of the Hindu society. Bhakti poets, Surdas and Kabir addressed the Natha and Siddha yogis in their poetry indicating that they were an attractive and popular force at the time.

In the presence of Islam and the Natha-Siddha sects, large numbers of people or groups who were ostracized from their castes could now be incorporated into either another religious faith or as renouncers to other sects. Added to this were the sufi saints and poets who went beyond the superficial code of conduct and social customs of the people to fundamental forms of devotion that were common to all. They were able to enchant masses who were otherwise kept under the thumb by a faith dominated by extrinsic customs and rituals. Dwivedi writes,

“देश में पहली बार वर्णाश्रम व्यवस्था को इस विकट परिस्थिति का सामना करना पड़ रहा था। अब तक वर्णाश्रम व्यवस्था का कोई प्रतिद्वन्दी नहीं था। आचारभ्रष्ट व्यक्ति समाज से अलग कर दिए जाते थे और वे एक नयी जाति की रचना कर लेते थे। इस प्रकार सैकड़ों जातियों, उपजातियों की

सृष्टि होते रहने पर भी वर्णाश्रम व्यवस्था एक तरह पर चलती ही जा रही थी।... परन्तु अबकी बार समस्या बड़ी टेढ़ी हो चली। सामने ही एक विराट शक्तिशाली प्रतिद्वन्दी समाज था, घर में ही वैराग्यप्रधान साधुओं का भरी विद्रोह था; ये दो बातें ही वर्णाश्रम व्यवस्था को हिला देने के लिए काफी थी” (ibid., 55)।

Dwivedi mentions a third paradoxical situation which added to the complexity of the social and cultural environment. The growing challenge to the caste system from Islamic faith and the Natha-Siddha sects had led to the rigidification of the former (Dwivedi 2013a, 313). The upper castes recoiled to preserve their specific status. At the same time, Dwivedi states that there were several instances of saints and holy men from lower castes of the Hindu order who were being appointed as teachers for both Brahmins and Shudras without withdrawing from the caste order and renouncing from Hindu society. Thus, while there were instances of the breaking up of caste rigidity at the margins, the upper caste order did not address the challenges in any real sense (Dwivedi 2013b, 55).

Together, these three forces offered a vigorous possibility of putting the varnashrama order of the society in jeopardy. It is in this context that the emergence and spread of Bhakti is explained according to Dwivedi. He argues that the notion of Bhakti that spread from south to the north helped in mitigating the impact of caste orthodoxy in its poetry even though it accepted the varnashrama order and caste hierarchy in society. Theoretically, it established the equality of all human beings in front of the almighty even though in practice, the caste system continued to divide the people in society and hierarchize the access to god. As the alternate arrangement of society in the then living instance of Islam and the renouncers from Hindu order in the form of Natha yogis offered their opposition to the caste system, the ‘ideology of bhakti’ gave the necessary boost to the Hindu society (Dwivedi 2013a, 314). Dwivedi holds the bhakti literature at a high pedestal when he remarked that it signified a new beginning for Hindi literature. The latter is driven from the inspiration of bhakti towards higher goals of human emancipation and prosperity (ibid.). He states,

“चौदहवीं शताब्दी के बाद का साहित्य अत्यंत संवेदनशील प्राणधारा से उद्वेलित है और महान आदर्शों से अनुप्राणित है। रोगमुक्त मनुष्य की भांति उसमें स्वास्थ्यजन्य क्षुधा और नरुज्यजन्या स्फूर्ति स्पष्ट परिलक्षित होती है। यहाँ से हिंदी साहित्य नए मोड़ पर खड़ा हो जाता है और यद्यपि वह पुरानी परंपरा से एकदम विच्युत नहीं हो जाता, तथापि उसमें रूप और शोभा के प्रति आकर्षण का अभाव है (ibid., 315)।”

It is important to note that while for Shukla, Islam was an aggressive force that made people reach out for respite from the attack and invasion. Natha and Siddha sects disenchanting the public from their individualistic and metaphysical musings that failed to capture their hearts. But for Dwivedi, Islam emerges as a force that offered an alternative and opposition to the dominant religious values and culture. It criticized the faults of the dominant Hindu faith. Natha and Siddha sects were important because they rejected the orthodoxy. The catalyst to the Bhakti movement was in the form of intellectual, religious and cultural opposition from the three fronts. Such an understanding of the Indian socio-religious forces of the period reflects the deep diversity of traditions that were prevalent in the society. Unlike an imagination of a protagonist versus the antagonist where the territorial outsider and non-compliant insider played out the role of aggressors, in Dwivedi's reading of the Indian society, the emphasis is on the struggle between the fundamentals of each faith and the way each interacted and influenced the other.

Moving on, Dwivedi narrows down to two main religious commentators and leaders whose influence could be traced on the majority of the Bhakti poets. These two leaders are Ramanand and Vallabhacharya. According to Dwivedi, these two religious commentators were able to impress the various religious poets and their faith based on the diverse religious sentiments prevalent in different regions. He identifies three major streams to which bhakti poets could be associated, based on their works, who were influenced from an integration of popular religious sentiments and teachings of the above two gurus. The *nirgun* form of bhakti was born from the confluence of bhakti and the *nirgun* yoga dominated beliefs of Nathpanthi sects. Within the *sagun* tradition, when bhakti was brought together with popular sentiments of love, playfulness and separation

in Krishna worship, it inspired the poets of *Krishnabhakti* stream of *sagun* tradition. The confluence of *smriti* dominated Pauranic beliefs and bhakti brought the worship of Rama under the *sagun* tradition (ibid., 319). Thus, these three streams of bhakti, according to Dwivedi, can be listed as *nirgun*, *Krishnabhakti* in *sagun* and *Ramabhakti* in *sagun* streams. The element of Bhakti influenced all of these different religious faiths and produced rich poetry and literature in vernacular. Dwivedi comments,

“... नया साहित्य मनुष्य जीवन के एक निश्चित लक्ष्य और आदर्श को लेकर चला। यह लक्ष्य है भगवदभक्ति, आदर्श है शुद्ध सात्विक जीवन और साधन है भगवान के निर्मल चरित्र और सरस लीलाओं का गान” (ibid.,)।

In Dwivedi’s description of the *nirgun* and *sagun* forms of devotional poetry, there is a special focus on similarities. There is much to share between the two major streams of Bhakti. According to him, both *nirgun* and *sagun* poets agree on two essential ideas. The first idea that runs parallel among the Bhakti poets is to do with the interpersonal relationship between the god and the follower/*bhakt* (Dwivedi 2013a, 104). Each poet seeks to establish an interpersonal relationship in which the two parties are dependent upon each other. The second commonality among all the *bhakti* poets is *leela*, loosely translated as play or charms of god. While the nature of this play may differ for the two categories of poets, the agreement on celebration of the charms of their god remains. For the *sagun* poets, the description of the everyday life of the incarnation of the god qualifies as *leela*. For the *nirgun* poets, the description of cosmic play, all reality in the world, is god’s *leela* (ibid.,).

Further, among the bhakti poets who write in the tradition of *Ramabhakti*, Dwivedi elaborates on the similarities among *sagun* and *nirgun* poets. He states that both the categories of poets believe in the chant of Rama even though the meaning of Rama may differ for them. The notion of *leela* among *sagun* poets of *Ramabhakti* is the celebration of the everyday lifestyle of Rama incarnate, while for the *nirgun* poets, it goes beyond the life and world of the incarnation (Dwivedi 2013a, 377). The belief in *leela* is common for both.

It is important to note the difference in the understanding of Bhakti poetry between Dwivedi and Shukla. For Shukla, the categories of *Nirgun* and *Sagun* divided the bhakti poetry in two separate paths of devotion. Even though Shukla did not dismiss some mutualities that existed between the two but for him broadly *nirgun* poets were distanced from the popular form of worship. They had little in common with *sagun* poets. In Shukla's understanding, *nirgun* poetry lacked reverence for the social reality of the worshippers and failed to capture the hearts of the common people. It indulged in metaphysical musings which were individualistic in nature. He also perceived the impact of Islam on some of *nirgun* poetry and argued that they were separated from an Indian mental landscape. Dwivedi is critical of these observations by Shukla. According to him, there was much to share between *nirgun* and *sagun* poetry as they were sourced from the same tradition of Ramanand and Vallabhacharya. The more important difference for Dwivedi was between those who belonged to the Ramabhakti tradition and those who followed the Krishnabhakti tradition. This distance with Shukla, allows Dwivedi to put equal weightage to *nirgun* poetry in Indian religious tradition.

The poets who are listed under the *nirgun Ramabhakti* tradition by Dwivedi are Kabir, Dadudayal, Namdev, Raidas, Sikh Gurus such as Guru Angad, Amardas, Ramdas, Arjundev, Teg Bahadur and Gobind singh, Sheikh Farid, Dhana, Pipa and others. The *sagun* poets listed under *Krishnabhakti* are Surdas, Kumbhandas, Nanandas, Mirabai, Rahim, Gang, Raskhan, Dhruvdas, Nagaridas, Albeli Ali and many others. The *sagun Ramabhakti* poets, according to Dwivedi, were Tulsidas, Krishnadas Payhari, Nabhadas, Priyadas, Keshavdas and Vishwanathsinhju. The three main figures from each stream of Bhakti are Kabir, Surdas and Tulsidas respectively. Dwivedi's treatment of Bhakti influences his reading and positioning of the three poets. Given their significance in Shukla's tradition of Hindi literature, it is worth elaborating in brief the interpretations that Dwivedi's readings of these three offer.

Hazari Prasad Dwivedi has been credited with coronating Kabir as one of the dominant figures in the Hindi literary canon against the treatment from Shukla who had not found Kabir to be of much worth. Dwivedi reinterprets Kabir to assert that the latter knows no

equal in poetry other than Tulsidas. He also established Kabir as a guru who did not abide by the available leading religious paths of Nathapanth, Islam and *sagun* Bhakti. Being related to each of the faiths in diverse ways, Kabir did not accept any wholeheartedly. Instead, he was able to peek through their issues and carved out a third way (Dwivedi 2013b, 339).

Dwivedi delves at length to argue that Kabir was a foremost Bhakti poet. He was a product of the confluence of Natha beliefs and Bhakti teachings from Ramananada (ibid., 316). In his assessment, Kabir represented not an empty harsh critic, as has been projected previously by Shukla, but as a deeply aware intellectual who knew about the prevalent religious faiths and social order too well. His poetry was aimed at freedom from orthodoxies and social discrimination with little to no regard for hierarchies and social customs (ibid., 341-42). The implication of this re-reading of Kabir is taken up in detail later. Here, it is sufficient to reiterate that the reinterpretation of Kabir in Dwivedi had a lasting impact on his image in Hindi literature in particular and Indian society in general.

The second crucial figure that Dwivedi discusses is Surdas. Among the *sagun* Krishnabhakti poets, Surdas's poetry played an important role in mingling the shastras with the then existing Krishna worship (ibid., 56). He states that before Surdas' poetry emerged, the Hindi region was already replete with folk songs and poetry about Krishnabhakti (ibid., 159). However, what marked Surdas as distinct was the reigning presence of popular lifestyle and sentiments in his poetry. Dwivedi argues that with Surdas, it is not easy to come across harsh criticisms or opposition towards their antagonist forces in the writings of the latter. The characters who feature in Surdas' poetry are ordinary and commonplace beings who are absorbed in their routines. Surdas' depiction of their emotions and sentiments in their ties with others makes their mundane lives remarkable. In Dwivedi's view, Surdas' poetry provides a view of the society and the communal life of his period, even though it is an incomplete picture (ibid., 63). He writes,

“लोक-जीवन ही 'सूरसागर' की लीलाओं की मुख्या सामग्री है। बिसातिन, दही बेचनेवाली, नट-बाजीगर, मेला, पनघट आदि के प्रसंग में सूरदास की वाणी सहस्र सुरों में मुखरित हो जाती है। टोना-टोटका, मात्र-जन्त्र, झाड़-फूँक आदि के लोक-प्रचलित विश्वासों के माध्यम से रस का महास्रोत उमड़ पड़ा है” (ibid., 159)।

Commenting about the *Ramabhakti* stream of bhakti poetry, Dwivedi asserts that the central focus of this literature is the protection of social conduct. Tulsidas' *Ramcharitmanas* is the finest work of literature from the medieval period (ibid., 542). It has been able to enchant the Hindu masses and inspire them in their daily conduct for several centuries. Dwivedi states that the mystery behind this magnificent achievement is to do with Tulsidas' capacity to bring alliance and integration of diverse values (Dwivedi 2013a, 387). The latter had profound knowledge of the shastras as well as the popular customs and beliefs. Dwivedi writes,

“लोक और शास्त्र के इस व्यापक ज्ञान ने उन्हें अभूतपूर्व सफलता दी। उसमे केवल लोक और शास्त्र का ही समन्वय नहीं है, वैराग्य और ग्राहस्थ्य का, भक्ति और ज्ञान का, भाषा और संस्कृति का, निर्गुण और सगुण का, पुराण और काव्य का, भावावेग और अनासक्त चिन्तन का, ब्राह्मण और चांडाल का, पंडित और अपंडित का समन्वय, 'रामचरितमानस' के आदि से अंत दो छोरों पर जानेवाली परा-कोटियों को मिलाने का प्रयत्न है” (ibid., 387)।

Apart from these works, Dwivedi mentions another category of literary works that are found to be of significance in this period. These were literary works of sufi poetry that consisted of religious teachings, popular love stories and semi-historical love accounts. Dwivedi argues that sufi poets employed the already popular folk stories to spread their religious teachings (Dwivedi 2013a, 404). There were other love ballads too that featured folk characters and leads. Some of the poets and their works that feature in this category were *Chandrawat* by Mulla Daood, *Mrigawati* by Kutuban, *Padamavat* by Malik Mohammed Jayasi, *Chitrawali* by Usman, *Madhumalti* by Manjhan and others. Dwivedi

argues that until the eighteenth century, most of the sufi poetry relied on the local sources of inspiration in the form of physical and environmental features, folk heroes and popular impressions in their works. They were written in vernacular languages in Persian script (ibid., 404). These love ballads depicted heart wrenching descriptions on the themes of love, separation and sacrifice which went across the boundaries of caste and communities in enchanting people. The idea was to convey the message of sufism and propagation of religious beliefs among the masses (ibid., 400). It is interesting to note that some of these literary works are so popular even today that they enjoy the reverence as historical events among people¹⁰⁰.

Together, all the literary works constitute the corpus of Hindi literature in the medieval period. This is followed by a rather mundane period of *Ritikavya*. Dwivedi argues that the fundamental spirit of bhakti continued to dominate the literary works well until the seventeenth century. The leading characters of bhakti poetry, Radha and Krishna, were featured in works of diverse nature. Not just in texts of religious nature, even works that were courtly and praised the royal kingdoms, and works elaborating the theme of beauty and aesthetics now featured Radha and Krishna as the leading motifs (ibid., 414). However, Dwivedi argues that gradually the poetry became devoid of the spirit of bhakti and only featured themes of beauty and aesthetics. The texts that he features in this period are *Rasmanjari* by Nananddas, *Hit-Tarangini* by Kriparam, writings of Keshavdas, *Shivrajbhushan* and *Shivbavani* by Bhushan, *Jagadvinod* by Padmakar and others.

Close to Shukla's assessment of *Ritikaal*, Dwivedi also believes that this period was a low point in Hindi literature as in his understanding it did not add any value to human lives. For example, Dwivedi believes that this period marked a downward steep in the quality of the depiction of female characters who were only as good as a piece of attraction for the males (ibid., 421). He states that the literature in this period did not

¹⁰⁰ Malik Mohammed Jayasi's Padmavat is one such love saga which enjoys the status analogous to a historical memory among the masses in parts of Rajasthan in India. A movie in 2018 based on the book invited huge protests and threats from the people who believed that the movie was not respectful to the folk-heroes, Padmavati and Ratan Sen, the protagonists of the saga.

ensure a balanced view of human life, the focus is too narrowly centred on beauty. He writes,

“जीवन की वास्तविक जटिलताओं के साथ सामना करने के लिए जिस प्रकार का वैयक्तिक साहस और सामाजिक मंगल का मनोभाव आवश्यक है, वह इसमें नहीं है, और न श्रृंगार-भावना को जीवन का सबसे बड़ा लक्ष्य घोषित करने का साहस ही है” (ibid., 422)।

Dwivedi then moves to the next phase of Hindi literature which is the modern period. His account of the modern period is rich with details of movements, transformations and events that contribute to the plethora of new emergence of literary works. Several contemporary writers have also noted the richness of this period especially in the literary sphere. In tracing the beginning of this period, Dwivedi notes several factors that distinguish this period as modern. He credits the emergence of the printing press and faster means of transport as two important scientific interventions in the Indian milieu. With the printing press, literary works were diversified into various genres as they no longer were dependent on the requirements of royal court, generosity of learned men and scholarly usage (ibid., 454). Another important factor that Dwivedi mentions is the intervention made by the colonial forces. He argues that even though British were not directly interested in the improvement and progress of literature in the country, but their indirect efforts towards the historical research into ancient literature and religion, archaeological researches into country's past and researches into languages and their families contributed to the expansion of the sphere of knowledge in general and Hindi literature in particular (ibid.,). He also credits the Christian missionaries, in their motive to spread their religion, who contributed to learning and writing and creating literary materials in the vernacular languages of the Indian masses.

One of the most significant developments in Hindi literature of this period is the spread of prose literature. Prior to this, poetry was the dominant form of writing but with the modern period, prose writing in various supporting genres of novel, short story, essays gained importance. Further, the rise of magazines, newspapers and pamphlets in Hindi

contributed to the development of these genres in Hindi Literature. Reform movements such as Arya Samaj helped in the development of other genres of writing such as letters, sarcasm and critical commentaries. Dwivedi argues that in the lack of formal support in terms of administrative recognition, Hindi language and its Nagari script developed because of its internal capacity (ibid., 460). It is implied by Dwivedi that even though Hindi language in Nagari script did not receive much value in attaining economic and social independence, there was a need at the mass level that was being fulfilled by Hindi. This was the need to run everyday affairs, the need for inspiration and motivation towards higher goals and to relate with each other.

A new kind of sentiment emerged in the nineteenth century which propagated the idea that each individual was a part of a larger community called a nation. This introduced a range of emotions and sentiments towards the nation. These were expressed in stories, plays and poetry which enriched the literary works with diversity of themes (ibid., 473). Dwivedi especially notes the contribution of Bharatendu Harishchandra who helped inspire a large number of writers through his writings. His works also inspired the masses towards the idea of the nation. Towards the culmination of the nineteenth century, Nagari script gained administrative recognition in the United provinces which gave a boost to the efforts for development of Hindi literature (ibid., 474-480).

He argues that in the nineteenth century, the various literary genres that were initiated remained underdeveloped. The beginning of the twentieth century witnessed a massive progress into these genres. The short stories and novels by Premchand represented the path breaking potential that Hindi literature exerted. The introduction of realism in his writings was a fresh shift from romanticism. Inspired by European trends, Dwivedi notes the influence of humanism that brought the focus on the real lives of human beings away from fatalism and other-worldliness. The idea was to express the condition of living of the majority of people and alleviate their sufferings. Initially humanism and nationalism combined to give much motivation to several writers in Hindi. Dwivedi notes Maithilisharan Gupt, Mahavirprasad Dwivedi, Shridhar Pathak, Ayodhyasingh Upadhyay, Makhanlal Chaturvedi and Sudarshan who were motivated by the two movements.

Moving on, Dwivedi mentions another new movement that emerged in the twentieth century in Hindi literature. On the rise of *Chhayawad* in Hindi literature, Dwivedi argues that the newly educated generation from the new education found itself disenchanted from old orthodoxies and hierarchies. They also distanced themselves from the violence unleashed by modern civilization. In the face of this lack of association with the old and the new, this generation of writers developed their own poetic voice which is referred to as *Chhayawad* in Hindi literature. The primary figures of this movement were Jayshankar Prasad, Mahadevi verma, Sumitranandan Pant and Suryakant Tripathi Nirala. It is interesting to note that Shukla had expressed his displeasure with Chhayawadi movement because of his belief that this body of literature was influenced from foreign sources. Dwivedi does not agree with this reasoning to criticize Chhayawadi poetry. He writes,

“रवीन्द्रनाथ, प्रसाद आदि कवियों में नवीन विचारों का प्राचीन विचारों से बहुत ही सुन्दर समन्वय हो रहा था, परन्तु संकीर्ण राष्ट्रीय गौरव-बोध की इस नयी वृत्ति ने हर नवीन बात का इसलिए विरोध किया कि यह बात 'हमारे यहाँ ऐसी नहीं थी' (Dwivedi 2013, 76)।

The modern period of Hindi literature according to Dwivedi stood up to the real meaning of literature which is to inspire human beings towards higher goals and alleviate their suffering. Broadly, this rounds off Dwivedi's history of Hindi literature.

It is clearly determinable that the structure of the canon remains inspired from Shukla's history of Hindi literature. The latter continues to be a defining work in the discipline of Hindi language. The similarities of temporal divisions to segregate various key moments of the history and the headers of poets to discuss their body of work from other authors are unambiguously influenced from Shukla's schema. However, besides these structural similarities, there are wide ranging differences that Dwivedi's history of Hindi literature highlights. Some of the key differences are directly addressed to Shukla's observations and assertions. Dwivedi also offers fresh perspective and alternative arguments to think about the history of Hindi literature. Keeping in mind the larger socio-political context that these arguments are based in, they are crucial to uncover the wide variety of ideas

prevalent on language and religion. The next section analyses one of these variations and their associated arguments.

4.3 Analyzing the Emergence of Alternative in Dwivedi's Works

The alternative journey of Hindi literature through the past charted out by Hazari Prasad Dwivedi established his authority as a critical thinker. His key interventions disclose to the readers possibilities of understanding language, religion and their interactions in different ways. It could be a useful task to read some of these interventions in detail here. There are broadly five major arguments that can be chalked out from Dwivedi's presentation of the history of Hindi literature. From the beginning of Dwivedi's saga of Hindi literature, there is an emphasis on looking at the emergence of new themes as continuities rather than as sudden. The factors that contribute to the emergence of particular ideas are traced to the continued changes that have been undergoing in the Indian setting for a longer previous period. This is a different reading from the one that alludes to the rise of these changes in response to sudden events such as Islamic invasions. This latter view perpetuates an understanding of the other as the catalyst for bringing path breaking innovations and adjustments. The former view allows for a more comprehensive imagination of the other or the outsider whose presence converged with extant factors to produce an effect.

While discussing the emergence of bard poetry and courtly literature, Dwivedi notes an already existing tradition of such literary themes. Unlike Shukla, he is hesitant to attribute their 'emergence' to Islamic invasions and attacks. On the question of the development of Bhakti poetry, Dwivedi distances from an understanding that accrues it to religious attack from Islam. The sudden-ness of Islam is not the biggest motivator in impacting the shifts and turns in the history of Hindi literature. The other as perceived in the form of

Christianity in explaining the rise of Bhakti is also according to Dwivedi overestimated. Dissociating from Grierson's interpretation, Dwivedi undertakes an expansive view of the emanation of the Bhakti element in vernacular poetry. The new developments in the already existing tradition of commentaries on religious texts bring about the emergence and spread of new religious commentaries by Shankaracharya, Ramanujacharya and Ramananda. From the South, the force of these commentaries travel to the North where the socio-political context is prepared for the rise of Bhakti. This Bhakti is reflected in the writings of various poets of the region.

Such an interpretation de-escalates our expectation of the impact that the other had on society. It probes into indigenous factors and broad developments to produce an extensive picture of the phenomenon. Instead of narrowing it to conflict only, it also highlights the possibilities of interactions, mutual influences and intermingling of cultures.

The sudden-ness and the strength of the other had led to a reaction of unity or uniform support from the native population in Shukla's presentation. It was depicted that the native masses transformed into uniform collectives that echoed their sentiments of defense. The bard poetry and the bhakti poetry were a result of this collective bugle raised against the oppressive other. The reader gets a sense of the presence of a community that projected the attributes of a national community via the history of Hindi literature. However, the alternative history of Hindi literature presented in Dwivedi's works disturbs that interpretation. It dissociates from the presence of any noteworthy collective voice that Hindi literature could point at. It casts a doubt on the definite presence of collective aspirations and their expressions via Hindi literature. The authorial voice in Hindi literary texts does not represent the uniformity of sentiments in the society. Such an interpretation downplays the influence of political motivations that could have transpired the emergence or turns of the themes in Hindi literature.

Further, this approach does not neglect or under-read the role played by Islam as a force in the Indian society. Islam figures in the history of Hindi literature in an emphatic manner. However, the study of its impact differs in Dwivedi's version of the history of

Hindi literature. The entry of Islam in Indian subcontinent was actualized with much martial force exerted against the ruling kingdoms. Its spread also accompanied various kinds of political maneuvering and physical attacks. However, overall Islam as a force had many more components than just the militaristic aspect. Dwivedi attempts to unpack all the elements of Islam that were unleashed on Indian society and traces their impact. In this interpretation, Islam as a religion goes beyond being a demonic force that unleashed religious and political violence on Indian society. The challenges posed by Islam were at the structural and philosophical levels. Surely, there was violence involved but Islam as a religion and as a way of organizing way of society posed more lasting questions for Indian society. The physical threat and violence, according to Dwivedi, called for responses in equivalent or appropriate language. However, the social and philosophical challenges posed by Islam required deeper probe and resolution by Indian society.

Dwivedi lists some of the key aspects in which Islam contrasted from the Indian society. He argues that for the first time, Indian society encountered an organised religious and social system in the form of Islam. The followers of Islam imbibed faith in one god and one book that regulated their personal and social conduct. The groups and individuals that are acquired in Islam or that accept Islam have their group particularities effaced and merged into a unifying religious system. These were in contrast to Indian Hindu society in which there was little binding control over individual faith. A good character was seen as the benchmark for a decent religious person in the Hindu society rather than the proper conduct and pursuit of religious beliefs as prescribed by the religious authority (Dwivedi 2013a, 307). What is noteworthy here is that such an approach attempts to present Islam as more than a martial and oppressive force that brought only violence to Indian society.

Further, according to Dwivedi, the reason, that the challenges posed by Islam to the Hindu society became important, had to do with the then existing conditions in the Indian society. The inexorable and rigid boundaries of the caste system of the Hindu society not just divided but also hierarchized groups and individuals. The caste rules governed important social matters of marriage, birth, education and even death. Any kind of defiance from caste rules brought ostracization and often new caste groups emerged

because of large scale ostracization. The oppression meted out by the caste system warranted the presence of apprehensive groups and disenchanted individuals whose faith towards the existing system was not free of doubt (Dwivedi 2013b, 55).

This can be confirmed by the presence and influence of Natha and Siddha sects who carried the legacy of Buddhist defiance of Brahmanical religion. These sects were severely critical of several practices and orthodox rituals of Brahmanical faith such as caste system, untouchability etc. Their poetry against the dominant faith can be found across the Northern plains. The rejection of the caste system and other central tenets of Hindu society point to the already existing grounds of challenges and threats within society. On another note, this further disrupts the imagination of a community of uniform interests that was depicted in Shukla's construction of history of Hindi literature.

With Islam, these challenges became severe and widespread. Islam presented the alternate way of expressing religiosity and organizing society. For the groups and individuals disillusioned from the Brahminical Hinduism, Islam provided a possibility of rejecting the given way of living and move to another. This threat only became more serious with the spread of Sufism. Several contemporary scholars have attempted to analyse the interactions between Bhakti movement and sufism (Lorenzen 2004; Aquil 2020).

In Dwivedi's understanding, Sufism is presented as a religious force that captured the hearts of the native masses. The sufi poets and religious leaders invoked local motifs, indigenous folk lores and spirit and essence of emotions from available sources that helped in reducing the gap between Islam of the book and Hindu society. It attempted to present Islam in a manner that came across as unopposed to the religiosity and faith available in Indian environment (ibid.,). The poetry and love ballads made the religious concepts in Islam legible to common masses. Thus, there was great attraction for embittered Hindu masses in Islam and Sufism. This became a point of concern for the Hindu society in general and religious thinkers in particular. This is the picture of Islam as a social, political and cultural force that emerges according to Dwivedi's version of the

history of Hindi literature. He recognized the importance of the advent of Islam in India, yet declines to narrow it to a villainous force. He writes,

“भारतीय इतिहास में इस्लाम का आगमन एक बहुत ही महत्वपूर्ण घटना थी। शुरू शुरू में ऐसा लगा कि उसकी मूल भावनाओं का मेल नहीं बैठगा। पर धीरे धीरे भारतीय मनीषा ने उसके साथ समझौता किया। दोनों धर्म के मूल तत्वों को खोज निकाला गया और मध्यकाल के संतों ने दोनों के भीतर सेतु निर्माण का कार्य किया” (Dwivedi 2013d, 288)।

Dwivedi's history of Hindi literature presents an alternate imagination of not just the external other in the form of Islam but also the internal other, the Nathpanth. Dwivedi argues that the Natha sect was the dominant sect prior to the Bhakti movement in large parts of the country. Several bhakti saints have addressed the teachings and practices of Nathpanthi yogis in their poetry (ibid., 56). In Shukla's construction of the history of Hindi literature, the Nathpanthi sects in their literature emerge as crude and unattached poets who employed a confusing concocted language. Their teachings failed to capture the attention of the masses because of their individualistic and metaphysical nature. Their way of living was removed from the daily experiences of the masses. This made their criticism of the Brahmanical faith unrelated and distant to have any large scale impact on the masses.

In his work, '*Nath Sampraday*', Dwivedi meticulously traces a long tradition of the Natha sects and their various popular leaders. The most popular and influential among them was Gorakhnath who according to Dwivedi was the foremost religious leader of his period equal to Shankaracharya in status (Dwivedi 2013c, 107). Dwivedi reverses the gaze from Natha perspective onto the then prevalent Brahminical society in its practices of *Brahmacharya* and *sattvik* life which he comments was in a very low phase. The Natha leader led an acerbic attack on the then prevalent Brahminic householder (*grihastha*) as well as the renouncer (*Sadhu*). Again, for Dwivedi, there was a chain of critical popular faith that continued from the Siddhas which was reinvigorated by Gorakhnath (ibid., 211). Dwivedi presents a depiction of Natha sects and their faith that was widely

available and popular among the people. It lacked the key force of Bhakti and its major elements. Once Natha faith is enriched with Bhakti, according to Dwivedi, it creates a magnificent impact in the form of Nirgun poetry of Kabir, Dadu and Raidas.

The above discussion is intended to argue that Dwivedi's presentation of the history of Hindi literature which is an alternative to Shukla's history of Hindi literature is able to reveal the vantage points that are fundamental in the latter's works. The vantage point from which Shukla's imagination of history is conducted is that of Brahmanical faith. Once those vantage points are shifted as in Dwivedi's alternate construction of this history, the story that emerges is different. It offers the possibility of viewing other religious and linguistic forces away from the shadow of the dominant faith. The Nathpanthi faith that features as the internal other in Shukla's description is different in Dwivedi. Nathpanthi offers the critique of Brahmanical religion from the outside. With Bhakti, it attempts to offer more composite possibilities of religious diversity in the form of *Nirgun* devotion.

Moving on, there is a difference in the way *nirgun* devotion is featured in Dwivedi's history of Hindi literature. *Nirgun* devotion in Dwivedi is treated at par with *sagun* form of devotion. As discussed in the previous section, Dwivedi focuses on the commonalities between the two forms of devotion as they both constitute Bhakti. The key element of the bond of love between the devotee and the god holds in both the forms of devotion. The significant difference lies in the imagination of God with attributes and without attributes. However, in Shukla, this was not the case. The *sagun* form of devotion stood at a distance from *nirgun* form. The most important arguments which Shukla employs to highlight the difference and prioritize one over the other was the expression of everyday living and experiences. *Sagun* form of devotion, according to Shukla, enabled the devotee to participate in religious practice while being embedded in the society in their various responsibilities as father, mother, wife, husband and son etc. It also enabled the devotee to interact and engage with other members of the society as part of their religious faith and its practice. *Nirgun* form of devotion did not engage with individuals as socially embedded beings. It lacked the sufficient grasp over the everyday lived experiences of

the people. Further, Shukla asserted that the *nirgun* form of devotion was dominated by the *gyan* (knowledge) aspect and was distant from the love and affection that was characterized by *sagun* form of devotion. As a result of this, according to Shukla, the *nirgun* form of bhakti was less popular as it did not capture the hearts of the masses.

Dwivedi moves away from this understanding of *nirgun*. He counters it by employing another approach by which to understand the two forms of devotion. According to him, the important aspect to be studied is the capacity of a literary and religious text to improve and empower human lives. A literary work that motivates to rise or reinvigorates human beings from their basic animal selves is deemed to be of great value. For Dwivedi, the value in *nirgun* poetry can be measured through this. Based on this, he asserts that the *nirgun* form of devotion allows individuals to participate in religious expression irrespective of their social embedded hierarchical positions. In a deeply hierarchized society, *nirgun* form of devotion treats the worth of all human beings as equal and mandates their equal participation. In such a reading of Hindi literature, there is also a widening of the *lok* or the popular as well. It moves away from caste and kinship based understanding of *lok* to include other religious groups and their practices to offer a view of the heterogeneous nature of the society. Since, the focus is not on the individual in their embedded form, i.e. in their various roles and responsibilities but rather as un-affiliated selves, their social location in the society does not merit their priority. Each individual is worthy of reverence irrespective of their position.

This alternate reading of Natha and *nirgun* poetry in Hindi literature allows Dwivedi to weave a new panel for the dominant Bhakti poets where the priority order can be seen to be altered. Unlike Shukla's prioritization of Tulsidas over Kabir, Dwivedi extols Kabir over Tulsidas. For Shukla, the important aspect which makes Tulsidas' work reign is the idea of *lok-sangrah*. The idea of the preservation and sustenance of the community is the prime concern in Tulsidas' *Ramcharitmanas* as discussed in the previous chapter. Dwivedi agrees with Shukla's reading of Tulsidas. He credits Tulsidas for creating the imagination of an ideal society which could leave a lasting effect on the future generations. Through the characters that Tulsidas weaves in his *Ramcharitmanas*, unlike

other poets of *sagun* tradition, the reader feels related, inspired and motivated to imbibe the attributes in various roles in their own lives (Dwivedi 2013a, 389).

Dwivedi, however, disagrees strongly with Shukla's interpretation of Kabir. One of the arguments that Shukla maintained about Kabir was the lack of sentimentality (*prem bhav*) in his poetry. Dwivedi disputes this and argues that love and emotionality are the centrality points in Kabir's bhakti poetry (Dwivedi 2013b, 340). Kabir rejects belief in shastras, vedas, temple visits, mantras and other such extrinsic practices in the favor of his firm belief in intense love and adoration for humanity (ibid., 368). This distinguishes him from poets of *sagun* tradition. Dwivedi disagrees with Shukla's contention that Kabir employed a largely illegible and twisted language. Instead Kabir emerges as a 'dictator of language' who could use it at his will without any limitation (ibid., 366). His use of language expresses the carefree, fearless and strong-willed nature of his personality.

Dwivedi is also critical of the insinuation that Kabir was influenced from Islam and Sufism in particular in his *nirgun* poetry. He argues that Kabir borrowed from several available traditions such as the Nathapanthi sects, Vaishnava tradition and was aware of Islam as well but he did not accept any of these wholeheartedly. He pitches Kabir as a forceful contender for the revered position that Shukla reserves for Tulsidas. Unlike the aspect of synthesis that is a dominant characteristic in Tulsidas's poetry, Dwivedi brings to the forefront Kabir's firm dismissal of any kind of compromise or synthesis. Kabir refuses to adjust with the shastras and the extrinsic religious practices prevalent in Hindu society then. He has no mercy towards other existing religious faiths as well. This standalone attitude and fearless personality makes him distinct from other medieval poets.

Dwivedi unambiguously reverses most of the arguments Shukla had placed in his discussion of Kabir. In this interpretation of Kabir, there is a move away from identifying the preservation of community and its ideals as the underlying principle for defining worth in religious poetry. This new reading of Kabir is significant because it allows us to discuss other ways in which religious ideals can be imagined in society. Shukla's history

of Hindi literature had sidelined Kabir because according to the former, Kabir was ill fit with the central essence of the tradition of Hindi literature. With this new importance attached to Kabir's poetry in Dwivedi's history of Hindi literature, the claimed essence of Hindi literature and the idea of Indian civilization is challenged. Dwivedi's reorganization of the panel of the prominent bhakti poets has powerful implications on the idea of language, religion and nation. The next section discusses the central tenet around which language and religion are configured in Dwivedi's works.

4.4 Human Being as the Anchor of Language and Religion

From the discussions above on the history of Hindi literature sketched out by Dwivedi and the major interventions that presented alternative ideas around questions of language and religion, there is a central framework that can be seen as emphatic in Dwivedi's analysis. This central idea has been a parallel theme in his commentaries on various texts and authors. In one of the sessions of Hindi Sahitya Sammelan at Karachi, Hazari Prasad Dwivedi announces in his speech that the concerns of human beings should be the driving force of literature. In his words,

“मैं साहित्य को मनुष्य की दृष्टि से देखने का पक्षपाती हूँ। जो वाज्जाल मनुष्य को दुर्गति, हीनता और परमुखापेक्षिता से बचा न सके, जो उसकी आत्मा को तेजोद्दीप्त न बना सके, जो उसके हृदय को परदुःखकातर और सर्वेदनशील न बना सके, उसे साहित्य कहने में मुझे संकोच होता है।... मनुष्य ही बड़ी चीज है, भाषा उसी की सेवा के लिए है। साहित्य-सृष्टि का भी यही अर्थ है”
(Dwivedi 2013, 24-25)।

The category of human beings and their progress comes forth as significant in Dwivedi's analysis. Previously, we have discussed that in Shukla, the paramount category which

influenced his understanding of language and religion was the interest of the community as it existed. The protection and preservation of status quo guided Shukla's analysis of various literary texts and authors, eventually impacting his understanding of Indian civilization. In Dwivedi, there is a shift away from Shukla. Instead of *lok-sangrah*, Dwivedi highlights the needs to enhance and empower human beings from their existing conditions of social, cultural and economic decay. According to him, language and literature are of fundamental value in contributing towards this goal. He writes,

“नगरों और गावों में फैला हुआ, सैकड़ों जातियों और सम्प्रदायों में विभक्त, अशिक्षा, दारिद्र्य और रोग से पीड़ित मानव- समाज आपके सामने उपस्थित है। भाषा और साहित्य की समस्या वस्तुतः उन्ही की समस्या है।.... शताब्दियों की सामाजिक, मानसिक और आध्यात्मिक गुलामी के भार से दबे हुए ये मनुष्य ही भाषा के प्रश्न हैं और संस्कृति तथा साहित्य की कसौटी हैं” (ibid.,)।

The consequence of this shift from community to the individual being is immense. The literature does not have to respond as the collective conscience of the society but work towards the well being of the human being. Dwivedi lists some of the main burdens that human beings must be freed from. These are lack of self- esteem, lack of knowledge, lack of self- reliance, lack of independent voice, hunger and disease etc. He also strongly recognizes the caste system and the communal tensions as issues that chain the human being. What emerges is that it is not so much an empty indicator of any human being that is of concern here, but the downtrodden and oppressed individual who is not prioritized according to her social location. Dwivedi, in several of his essays and speeches, clarifies this category. He distances this human being from dominating ideologies such as nationalism and communalism, economic systems such as capitalism and imperialism and social-political systems such as casteism and patriarchy. In a way, the literature is held responsible to help human beings resist these dominating systems and processes.

According to Dwivedi, actions motivated by self-interest that incite division, hatred and violence upon other communities, castes and nations by human beings are representative

of their brute tendencies. In his classic essay, *Nakhoon kyu bhadte hai?* (why do nails grow), the growth of nails is exhibited as analogous to the continuation of the brute and animal disposition internal to human beings. By clipping nails, it is the choice towards non-violence and humanitarian actions that is crucial to be preserved and promoted. This is the distance from brute leanings that Dwivedi urges that language and literature should widen. Human beings are to be motivated to imbibe more empathy which according to him is a characteristic of humanity.

The focus on the inspiration a literary and religious text renders on the human being, towards cultivating empathy, is the value that is implicit in his history of Hindi literature as well. In my reading, one of the key assertions where it can be noted is in his discussion of Surdas. In Dwivedi's analysis of Surdas, the analysis is not critical of Krishnabhakti literature for its lack of emphasis on a comprehensive imagination of Krishna as god embedded in the social reality of Hindu society. The discussion highlights the various characters who can be found in everyday world as occupying greatness in their routine life in Surdas poetry.

For Shukla, despite the lived experiences, the limit to Surdas' poetry was of socially incomplete imagination of the various roles and responsibilities occupied by Krishna, the god incarnate. It did not fully capture the essence of *lok-sangrah*. The reason for this difference that becomes apparent in Dwivedi's reading of Surdas is because of the shift in the central guiding category for both the thinkers. *Lok-sangrah* understood in terms of maintenance of various social roles and capabilities takes a backseat in front of the concerns of human beings. Surdas' poetry is valued because of the glory and magnificence attached to regular people engaged in their routine jobs. It is not important whether it presents a holistic ideal for the status quo in society as a whole or not. Similarly, since the role of literature is not to present the collective conscience of the society, the different eras of history of Hindi literature do not feature community action in the form of bhakti poetry and poetry of valour against invasions.

The vantage point of the human beings and their need for nurturing mutual affinity irrespective of community, caste and nation based divisions is the theme that Dwivedi harks back on from time to time. On the question of the role of language, it offers a different imagination from Shukla. According to Dwivedi, the words that we employ to denote specific meanings are representative of the intersubjective social culture cultivated by the people. Without the words and language, a society fails to exist. He argues that language in its communicative capacity can create experiences and sentiments among people that have a lasting impact (ibid., 87). A language must add to the efforts of generating higher ideals of humanity (empathy, compassion) in people. For him, the language of the people should reflect the movement towards affability. It is important to note that even though Dwivedi agrees with the role of language in creating a society, the desired goal has been shifted. The language impacts and represents the society; the ideals behind the making of the language guide the making of the society. These ideals for Dwivedi are that of the need for compassion and empathy among human beings.

Dwivedi refers to the language put to this use as '*sehaj bhasha*' (literally as spontaneous and easy). He believes that for nurturing human beings into better versions of themselves by imbibing empathy, mutual respect and compassion for each other, the language to be needed is an unassuming and innate, *sehaj*, language. According to Dwivedi,

“सहज भाषा मै उसे समझता हूँ जो सहज ही मनुष्य को आहार निद्रा आदि पशु सामान्य धरातल से ऊँचा उठा सके। सहज भाषा का अर्थ है, सहज ही महान बना देने वाली भाषा” (ibid., 270)।

The motivation behind the use of language should be based on the overall development of human beings. For him, questions about the source of a language, whether indigenous or foreign and the status of a language whether elite or market/layman's tongue are not important to guide the usage of the language employed by society. In his own words,

“भाषा तो साधनमात्र है। साध्य मनुष्य का सर्वांगीण विकास है। सड़क पर चलनेवाला आदमी क्या बोलता है यह बात भाषा का आदर्श नहीं होना

चाहिए। देखना चाहिए की क्या बोलने या न बोलने से मनुष्य उस उच्चतर आदर्श को प्राप्त कर सकता है जिसे संक्षेप में 'मनुष्यता' कहा जाता है। केवल संस्कृत या अरबी बोलने से यह उद्देश्य सिद्ध नहीं होगा और केवल अशिक्षित या अपढ़ लोगो की बोलियों से बटोरे हुए शब्दों से भी नहीं होगा" (ibid., 271)।

The words for the language can be incorporated from any source as long as it fulfills the ideal towards humanity. As it becomes clear, Dwivedi is also critical of the argument that everyday words of vernacular usage should guide the language of the literature. In my reading, the idea that the language can not be modeled on the basis of what is spoken on the street or by the pandit really defined the ideals in this conception. The Sanskritized language can be casteist and elitist and the street-tongue can be misogynistic and patriarchal. In these scenarios, the language inspired from the two cannot form the ideal as it negates the presence of lower castes, women and other genders.

Further, the territorial connection of the language to the people inhabiting the landscape is not of consideration as well. Since human beings and their dominating concerns are the focus of his ideas about language, the question of indigeneity does not have much emphasis. In Dwivedi's ideas, the role accorded to language is to empower the oppressed and the downtrodden masses. The communicative potential of the language is to be employed not just at sharing of lived experiences but also to add more meaningful sentiments that raise the speakers to a higher pedestal of human values. This is an alternate understanding of the function of the language and literature in the nation. This is a different perspective to understand the relationship between the language of the speakers and the nation. The language, in Dwivedi, is not burdened with responsibilities of unification and affirming the source of indigeneity among the speakers. In a way, it also implies that there may not be a need for a singular language but several languages that can live together without assimilating one into another.

Dwivedi envisages a similar role for religion as well but in a different way. It is important to note that in his works, there is a recognition of mutual inspiration, uniquenesses and

significance of a variety of religions that can be found in Indian society. The discussion of various religious faiths does not seemingly hang around the aspect of indigeneity of a faith. Further, Dwivedi does not endorse any idea of one dominant religion over others. Rather, the emphasis is on bringing to the forefront the uniquenesses as well as influences of different religious sects and faiths. From such a discussion of different religious texts, we get a sense of the priorities that Dwivedi highlights in a religious faith. This shall be helpful in understanding his idea of religion.

We have briefed above that one of the popular interventions made by Dwivedi was in the re-interpretation of Kabir. He attempts to prevent Kabir and Nathapanthi sects from falling to irrelevancy in Hindi literature in particular. Dwivedi based his reading of Kabir on the idea that human beings and their emancipation must be the concern for a literary and religious text. The *nirgun* bhakti poetry of Kabir not only clears this benchmark but establishes a milestone in the history of Hindi literature in particular and Indian society in general. The religious thought of Kabir is significant because it strongly supports the equality and dignity of all human beings. Dwivedi is convinced that a religious compromise which attempts to bring together diverse religious faiths and practices is bound to fail as long as it does not accept human beings at its center. The idea that a possible meeting ground where all religions realize their fundamental unity despite the explicit diversity of practices is a farout goal. The first step is the rejection of all extrinsic and superficial religious practices that do not treat human beings as their ends.

He voices his support in the religious thought of Kabir. The latter forcefully repudiates the multiple religious practices then prevalent in his society as emitted from followers of Puranas, Nathapanth and Islam. The bhakti of Kabir was *sehaj*, unassuming. Dwivedi writes,

“जिस दिन से महागुरु रामानंद ने कबीर को भक्ति रूपी रसायन दी, उस दिन से उन्होंने सहज समाधी ली, आँख मूंदने और कान रुंधने के टंटे को नमस्कार कर लिया, मुद्रा और आसन की गुलामी को सलामी दे दी। उनका चलना ही परिक्रमा हो गया, काम-काज ही सेवा हो गए, सोना ही प्रणाम

बन गया, बोलना ही राम-जप हो गया और खाने-पीने ने ही पूजा का स्थान ले लिया” (Dwivedi 2013b, 315)।

His rejection of the then existing religious orthodoxies was aimed at restoring a common human being at the center of devotion. Kabir held no consideration of caste, community, kinship and ritual based affinities. He did not associate any value in upholding them in the sphere of devotion. Human beings were entitled to respect and equality irrespective of these social markers. The individual who is stripped of his social identities of caste, community and kinship was the center of Kabir’s religious thought. Dwivedi expressed his contentment in Kabir’s ideas as ideals for the future society to adopt. In his own words,

“आज यह सत्य निबिड़ भाव से अनुभव किया जानेवाला है की सबकी विशेषताओं को रखकर मानव-मिलान की साधारण भूमिका तैयार नहीं की जा सकती। जातिगत, कुलगत, धर्मगत, संस्कारगत, विश्वासगत, शास्त्रगत, सम्प्रदायगत बहुतेरी विशेषताओं के जाल को छिन्न करके ही वह आसन तैयार किया जा सकता है जहाँ एक मनुष्य दूसरे से मनुष्य की हैसियत से मिले। जब तक यह नहीं होता तब तक अशांति रहेगी, मारामारी रहेगी, हिंसा-प्रतिस्पर्धा रहेगी। कबीरदास ने इस महती साधना का बीज बोया था” (ibid., 342)।

The idea of religion that emerges in Dwivedi’s work on Hindi literature is an alternative to Shukla’s perspective. We had discussed in the previous chapter that for Shukla *lok-sangrah* becomes the central theme around which language and religion are envisaged. He had found support in the works of *sagun* Ramabhakti poetry of Tulsidas. The religious thought therein called for the devotion of a socially embedded god who manifested grandeur in the various roles and responsibilities that are common to people in Indian society. The preservation of social hierarchies and maintenance of the code of conduct was the part of devotion towards god. For Shukla, this allowed people to connect with each other based on their lived experiences and be a part of a larger religious exercise by complying with this unity. Dwivedi disrupts this imagination. He offers an

alternate possibility of forming a religious way where human beings were not limited by their social locations. Such a conception rejected the futility of the social hierarchies in the devotion towards god. It expressed an apprehension in any religious faith that did not treat the emancipation of human beings irrespective of their status as the core of its belief.

In this alternative, aspiration for the welfare of the human being was the core of the religious ideal. Even the attempts for the Hindu-Muslim unity were futile if they were not driven from the aim of benefitting the human being. The unity of diverse religions cannot be the goal of the ideal of religious thought in India. He wrote,

“बहुत से लोग हिन्दू-मुस्लिम एकता को या हिन्दू-संघटन को ही लक्ष्य मानकर उपाय सोचने लगते हैं। वस्तुतः हिन्दू-मुस्लिम एकता भी साधन है, साध्य नहीं। साध्य है मनुष्य को पशु-सामान्य स्वार्थी धरातल से ऊपर उठाकर 'मनुष्यता' के आसन पर बैठाना। हिन्दू और मुस्लिम अगर मिलकर संसार में लूट-खसोट मचने के लिए साम्राज्य-स्थापन करने निकल पड़े तो उस हिन्दू-मुस्लिम मिलन से मनुष्यता काँप उठेगी; परन्तु हिन्दू-मुस्लिम मिलन का उद्देश्य है मनुष्य को दासता, जड़िमा, मोह, कुसंस्कार और परमुखापेक्षिता से बचाना...”(Dwivedi 2013d, 300)

The ethical ideal that Dwivedi establishes in his works allowed him to foreground a different imagination of the nation. The next section looks at the nitty gritty of this alternative idea of the nation that emerges in the works of Hazari Prasad Dwivedi.

4.5 Dwivedi's Idea of the Nation

Amidst the tussle with the Urdu and Hindustani languages for the status of the national language, the notion of Hindi language closely was associated with the question of

indigeneity. As already discussed in the ideas of Shukla, the notion of territory, physical habitat and cultural uniqueness came to guide the idea of Hindi language. Such an understanding of Hindi language allowed for an imagination of the nation that prioritized homogeneity as unity of the people. In that majoritarian view of the nation, the others who were identified as outsiders or as not abiding to the dominant sentiment, were excluded or neglected from associating with the identity of the nation. However, in Dwivedi's works, it becomes apparent that there is another way of imagining the nation from the vantage point of Hindi language without emphasizing the indigeneity as the filter or benchmark. Further, it does not dismiss the question of the *lok* or the social, rather widens the notion of it.

It is important to note that Dwivedi's emphasis on the welfare of the human being as the ethical ideal to guide the notion of language and religion can be strongly seen as emanating from Tagore's ideas. In chapter two of this thesis, we discussed that for Tagore, the uniqueness of Indian civilization was in its capacity to assimilate the myriad cultures and influences. It was a *dharmic* force that meted out empathy to strangers as part of its duty. Even in the heyday of criticism of colonial rule and the differences with the West, Tagore was careful that in attempts to draw out the uniqueness of the Indian civilization, it must not become a narrow straightjacketed force. Tagore was emphatic on realizing the common source of ideals in the whole of humanity irrespective of one's origin. The idea of highlighting the uniqueness of each other was to mutually benefit each other. Rather than building walls of separation, for Tagore it was important that the cultures must be ready to assimilate the best from each other. It was on these lines that we can understand Dwivedi's criticism of narrow dismissal of the internal and the external others of Nathpanth and Islam in Shukla's works. Dwivedi's notion of Indian civilization as '*Maha-Manav Samudra*' relies on the capacity of assimilation and creating new experiences from the varied influences.

Questioning the focus on the perimeter of natural habitat and territory of the country as defining for the culture of India, Dwivedi asserted the diversity of influences, interactions and intermingling in the natural and cultural habitat, rendering the quest for indigeneity

as redundant and undesirable. For him, it is the capacity of assimilation and intermingling that defines Indian civilization. He wrote,

“रवीन्द्रनाथ ने इस भारतवर्ष को 'महामानवसमुद्र' कहा है।... असुर आये, आर्य आये, शक आये, हूण आये, नाग आये, यक्ष आये, गन्धर्व आये- न जाने कितनी मानव- जातियाँ यहाँ आयी और आज के भारतवर्ष के बनाने में अपना हाथ लगा गयी। जिसे हम हिन्दू रीति-नीति कहते हैं, वह अनेक आर्य और आर्येतर उपादानों का अद्भुत मिश्रण है। एक एक पशु, एक-एक पक्षी न जाने कितनी स्मृतिओं का भर लेकर हमारे सामने उपस्थित है। अशोक की भी अपनी समृति-परम्परा है। आम की भी है, बकुल की भी है, चम्पे की भी है। सब क्या हमें मालूम है? जितना मालूम है, उसी का अर्थ क्या स्पष्ट हो सका है” (ibid., 20)?

Such a notion of Indian civilization does not dismiss the importance of unity. However, the idea of unity that emerges here is not based in opposition towards an enemy. The source of unity is not based on common territorial and cultural origins. Rather, unity is perpetually cultivated by identifying the common humanity of all beings irrespective of the difference¹⁰¹. Instead of focussing on the homogeneity of the people bound united, it emphasizes the value of heterogeneity within a united pool of people.

Dwivedi highlights the diversity within the categories of 'Hindu' and 'Muslim' (ibid., 440). He emphasizes the intermixing and multiplicity of influence on the 'Aryan' languages. Apart from Sanskrit, several other non-Aryan languages have left a lasting impression on Hindi and other Aryan languages (ibid., 175). Unlike the neatly categorized notions of indigenous languages of Hindi and other regional languages and religious categories of Hindu and Muslims, the emphasis on the heterogeneity within these categories highlight the irrelevance of the focus on insider and outsider divisions.

Tagore's criticism of nationalism was based on his apprehension that as an ideology, it created barriers between nations and their people. It narrowed the potential of the human

¹⁰¹ Dwivedi wrote, “असल बात यह है कि मनुष्य का मन सर्वत्र एक है। राजनितिक, आर्थिक आदि कारणों से उस एक मन के प्रकाशन का बाह्य आवरण चाहे जितना ही भिन्न क्यों न हो, भीतर से वह एक है” (Dwivedi 2013d, 219)।

beings and anchored them in exclusive, hegemonic and stifling notions of life and the world. Tagore, in his works, walked the thin line between the notions of the uniqueness of one-self and the nation, and the need to associate with the greater pool of humanity for mutual sharing and learning. Considering the diversity within Indian culture, Tagore also expressed his apprehension of any particular region, language and religion to assume hegemony over the whole of the heterogeneity of cultures. As argued in chapter two of this thesis, the need for a national language, for Tagore, was to be understood with the caution that the other languages must be accorded an equal or similar status of dignity and existence in the nation. That no culture, however much it may claim to be of pure indigenous roots, can assert their dominance over Indian culture and identity. Dwivedi endorsed this need for a culture to remain open for absorption and enrichment for diverse sources. In his own words,

“अगर हमने गाल्सवर्दी और बर्नार्ड शॉ को समझने के लिए पूर्व और पश्चिम के कृत्रिम विभाजन को अपने मन से निकाल न दिया, तो हम केवल दो साहित्यिकों को ही समझने में गलती नहीं करेंगे, बल्कि समूची जाति को गलत समझेंगे। कृत्रिम विभाजन कहने से मेरा मतलब यह है की हम व्यर्थ के पचड़े में न पड़ जाये की कोई चीज़ कहाँ तक भारतीय या अभारतीय, आध्यात्मिक या अनाध्यात्मिक है। चीज अगर अच्छी है, तो वह भारतीय हो या न हो, स्वीकार्य है...” (Dwivedi 2013d, 220).

In such a conception, the understanding of the difference with the other has only a limited role to play. The understanding of one’s uniqueness from the other is to enable better grasp of the self and the other. It is to provide intellectual tools to render the knowledge of the diversity of the traditions clear. Other than that, one’s uniqueness is not to prevent absorption or assimilation from various sources that cumulate towards the goal of the welfare of human beings. Dwivedi is emphatic that it this assimilationist aspect that is the highlight of Indian civilization¹⁰².

¹⁰² Dwivedi wrote, “भारतीय संस्कृति के प्राण में एकत्व है, उसके रक्त में सहानुभूति है। यही कारण है कि आज इस देश में सहस्राधिक समाज एक-दूसरे को बाधा न पहुँचाते हुए भी अपनी विशेषताओं के समेत जीवित है। भारतीय संस्कृति ने सदा-सर्वदा समन्वय के रूप में समस्या का समाधान किया है” (ibid., 199)।

However, the assimilationist aspect of Indian civilization is not without its own share of criticism. The caste system and untouchability represented two of the major ways in which the Indian culture and civilization practised inhuman segregation and inequality of human beings. The ineradicable boundaries drawn between human beings are the aspects of the same civilization that valued toleration and intermingling. He is acerbic in his attack against uncritical notions of a glorious Hindu past. Instead of a united Hindu community, Indian society and its history of civilization is marred by horrors of caste oppression. He wrote,

“यहाँ लोगों को कुत्ते-बिल्ली से भी बदतर माना जाता है, क्योंकि वे हिन्दू होते हैं। यहाँ विधवाओं को फुसलाया जाता है और गर्भपात भी कराया जाता है, क्योंकि वे हिन्दू हैं। यहाँ वेश्याओं को मंदिर में ले जाया जाता है, पर सती अन्त्यज- रमणियों को प्रवेश नहीं करने दिया जाता, क्योंकि वे हिन्दू हैं। यहाँ अन्याय को न्याय कहकर चला दिया जाता है। इस समाज के भीतर इतनी दुर्बलताएँ, इतनी अव्यवस्थाएँ, इतने मिथ्याचार हैं कि यह समाज मरने को बाध्य है” (ibid., 461)।

Based on these ideas of language, religion and notion of Indian civilization, Dwivedi foregrounds his idea of the nation. In this imagination of the Indian nation, while there is an idea of the Hindi language that forms the vantage point, it is different from the homogenous idea of Hindi in Shukla. The Hindi language, for this idea of the nation, is conscious of the diversity of influences and traditions it is inspired from. It is also conscious of an inseparable and equal sharing of tradition with several other languages such as Bengali, Marathi and Gujarati as well as the languages of the Dravidian family. Instead of filtering vocabulary on the basis of their territorial and cultural origins, the Hindi language is motivated by the concern of higher welfare of human beings for absorbing new words. In this understanding of Hindi language, the role of language is enlarged from representing a linguistic and national identity to inspiring the ethical ideals of kindness, mutual-respect and acceptance among human beings. Since it is the whole of humanity that is seen as united in its core, the specific indigeneity of the language and the nation is not of much consequence.

What emerges in this idea of the nation, especially with regard to language, is an idea of Hindi language which does not aim at hegemony over regional languages and dialects. This notion of Hindi language, further, is not motivated by concerns of bringing uniformity or homogeneity of identity. Therefore, while Hindi language is supported for the position of national language, the function and aspiration are radically changed. With the notion of Indian civilization, as a cumulative plethora of linguistic, religious and cultural traditions in the background, the national language in the form of Hindi, imagined here, is to inspire the cultivation of unity while keeping in mind the uniqueness of each and the value of diversity. It is this redefinition of Hindi language that founds the imagination of the nation in Dwivedi's ideas.

The toleration and mutual interaction between the diversity of religious faith is another important and constitutive feature of the idea of the nation. It believes in cultivating a religious unity in the nation not by conjoining the external or superficial aspects of dress code, form of devotion, vocabulary and customs. Instead, it focuses on the common humanity of all beings of the world that forms the foundational undercurrent of religious traditions. The nation is driven by keeping an eye on the common humanity and their well-being as the only crucial aspect. Against the orthodoxy and oppression of caste system meted out in specific religious traditions, such an idea of the nation espouses faith in a form of religiosity that values human beings and encourages their equal prosperity.

This is not to deny that the imagination of the nation that emerges here is a majoritarian construction as well. Dwivedi's idea of the nation is a majoritarian idea but not in the same vein as Shukla's. The idea of the other is not that of an antagonist that motivates the founding of a majority. Dwivedi's idea of the nation is majoritarian because it is still fixated on the idea of the Hindi language to offer an idea of the Indian nation. By relying on the dominant resource of Hindi language and its history, the vantage point is cemented in the majority community. The same could have been very different if viewed from the perspective of the Tamil language. This becomes apparent when one notes the absences in this idea of the nation. The diversity of ethnic groups (tribal groups) that are part of the

nation are not prioritized in the way the mainland religious and linguistic groups have been.

Yet, despite being a majoritarian idea, it does attempt to differentiate itself from the exclusivist and homogenous understanding of the nation that was attached with the Hindi language. By highlighting the continued influences of diverse traditions, the uniquenesses of a variety of linguistic and religious groups and the intermixing within the so-perceived definite categories of Hindi-Hindu, this idea allows in its comprehensive notion to impart a more inclusive idea of the Indian nation. The ethical ideal of the human being is placed at the helm of the guiding inspiration in such an idea of the nation which assures for prospects of dignity and equality of all the people irrespective of their religious, caste, linguistic and regional location.

The question that becomes important to understand here is with the pursuit of this notion of the Hindi language and the nation in the political sphere. Whether the diversity of the notions of Hindi language and the ideas of the Indian nation could be found outside the literary sphere onto the political space? The next chapter looks into this question by tracing the heterogeneity of positions among prominent politicians who supported a certain notion of Hindi language for national status.

Chapter 5

Heterogenous Imaginations of Hindi language and Nation in the Political Sphere

The question of language and religion have emerged central to the ideas about the nation in India, as we have noted in the previous chapters. Within the sphere of Hindi language, the disagreements about the history and the nature of the language revealed crucial differences in the imaginations of the nation. It was also brought out in the discussion so far that the perception regarding religious diversity in the country and the question of minority communities are mutually linked to the positions on language, at least in the case of Hindi language. In these conceptions of the nation, the ideas about religious diversity, the nature of the community and the identity of the nation reflect the multiple ways which the road/s from Hindi language could lead to. It also produced different interpretations of how the past was perceived and its relevance to the social and political reality of the then period and the future. Thus, far from a homogeneous and uniform straight way that links Hindi language and the nation, it has been argued that each of these categories undergo significant differences in terms of meanings, the values and the identity, even though on surface the common nomenclature (here, Hindi), that was employed, reflects similarity.

The question that now emerges is to investigate the plurality of notions of the Hindi language and their associated imaginations of the nation in the political sphere of Hindi speaking regions. It aims at probing the exchange of the heterogeneity that was fundamental in the literary sphere and its active articulation in the political sphere. Among the national leaders and thinkers discussed in the second chapter, Gandhi, Tagore

and Savarkar, there are significant differences, concerns and aspirations for the nation which were reflected in their positions about the national language. This chapter seeks to dissect the nuanced positions on Hindi language and the political-cultural imaginations of the Indian nation in the arguments of some key political leaders, from the Hindi speaking belt, of the twentieth century who endorsed Hindi as the national language for one reason or another. To quickly mention, these leaders were Madan Mohan Malaviya (1861-1946), Rajendra Prasad (1884-1963), Purushottamdas Tandon (1882-1962), Rammanohar Lohia (1910-1967) and Deen Dayal Upadhyay (1916-1968). Each of these political leaders have employed Hindi language as an essential part of their politics and in their ideas about the nation. Most of them were found to be supporting Hindi language from the beginning of their political life to its conclusion. Also, each of these political leaders cannot be found to be in agreement or overlap with each other when it comes to social and political ideologies while maintaining linkages and being contemporaries.

The first section of this chapter discusses the interactions between the various socio-religious organizations in the end of the nineteenth century and the Hindi language. It also looks at the interlinkages between the literary sphere of Hindi language and the political domain. It attempts to highlight the spread and popularity of Hindi language in the socio-political space of the end of nineteenth and the beginning of twentieth century India. The second section of this chapter discusses the speeches and writings of five political leaders- Madan Mohan Malaviya, Rajendra Prasad, Purushottamdas Tandon, Rammanohar Lohia and Deen Dayal Upadhyay. Within the corpus of their writings and speeches, the chapter focuses on those works that bring out their ideas about the Hindi language, their reasons for its endorsement and their aspirations with it. This section also sheds some light on their notions about the religious diversity and the position of minorities in the country. Together, it attempts to give a sense of the key characteristics that highlighted their ideas about the nation. The third section critically analyses the differences that emerge in the views about Hindi language and the imaginations of the nation that emerge in the political sphere of Hindi speaking belt.

5.1 The Interactions Between the Religious, Literary and Political Spheres

An interesting aspect that can be marked in the journey of Hindi language is that the agenda of its usage, spread and development found support in a variety of organizations across India from the end of the nineteenth century onwards. Very often, the spread of the Hindi language is traced to the founding of literary organizations such as the Nagari Pracharini Sabha and the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan (see Rai 2000; Orsini 2002). While there is no doubt that these organizations contributed to the spread of Hindi across India, there were other organizations, founded with primarily a religious agenda, that significantly influenced the spread of Hindi language beyond the United Provinces to other states. The two such organizations from the last two decades of the nineteenth century were Bharat Dharma Mahamandala and Arya Samaj. These religious organizations also enjoyed linkages with the eminent political leaders and literary figures.

The Bharat Dharma Mahamandala was founded in 1887 in Haridwar with the efforts of Pandit Din Dayal Sharma who was born in a village, Jhajjar, in Haryana. Even though the organization was founded to defend the Hindu orthodoxy from the opposition within Hinduism, such as from Arya Samaj, and outside of it, Sharma had initially started a religious organization with the thought to attract people from all religious faiths, including Muslims (Jones 1990, 76). This latter organization, 'Society Rafah-i-Am', had switched its name in 1883 from 'Panchayat Taraqqi Hunud' (The Council for the Advancement of Hindus) specifically to open it for all people. The society published its monthly paper '*Hariyana*' and the founder, Sharma, also edited two Urdu papers, a monthly '*Mathura Akhbar*' in 1885 and a weekly '*Koh-i-Nur*' from Lahore in 1886 (ibid.). Thus, even though beginning in stints with Urdu language papers and an organization for Hindus and Muslims, eventually Bharat Dharma Mahamandala was founded with the vision to unite the various Hindi religious societies that were spread across India.

Apart from various agendas such as cow-protection and preservation of Sanatana Dharma, one of the important needs of the organization expressed by its founder was to adopt Hindi language for education and in administration. In 1889, the Mahamandala published its proceedings and announcements in Hindi language according to a decision taken in their first meeting. It founded several Sanatana Dharma schools, colleges and a Hindu College in 1899 in Delhi (ibid., 77). The Sanatana Dharma schools and colleges were established across the states of Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. These educational institutions promoted the learning of Hindi language with emphasis on Sanskrit and the teaching of Hindu religious texts. The Sabha also published religious books and materials in Hindi language extensively in these states. Madan Mohan Malaviya was among the many political leaders who supported the Sabha, requesting to convene their meeting in Banaras in 1892. He was identified as a close friend of the founder, Din Dayal Sharma, uniting over the cause of preservation of Sanatana Dharma (Bihari 2016, 39). The Maharaja of Darbhanga sponsored the Sabha and became its secretary in 1900 (Patel 2009, 606). The popular writers and poets of Hindi language who endorsed the Sabha were, Ambikadutt Vyas, who spoke from Sabha's platform in 1889, and Ayodhya Singh 'Harioudh', who lamented the lack of financial support to Sabha in 1907 (ibid., 604-05). By 1930, the Mahamandala had 950 branches that adhered to common rules from Srinagar to Madras (Jones 1990, 81). Through its extensive organizational structure, Mahamandala was capable of implementing its programs including the spread of the Hindi language. The S.D. schools and colleges became popular educational institutions across the country known for imparting education in Hindi language and inculcating discipline among the pupils.

Another important organization that was founded to revive a specific version of Hinduism and eventually, contributed to the spread of Hindi language across parts of India, was the Arya Samaj. Founded by Dayananda Saraswati in 1875, who was born in Gujarat, as 'Bombay Arya Samaj', the latter spread its branches in many Indian regions in nineteenth century including North-western provinces, Punjab, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Bengal and Bihar and Vidarbha (Jones 1990, 98). Even though the fundamental thrust of Arya Samaj was to revive the 'pure' Hinduism filtered through the limited lens

of Vedas and the rejection of all other religious texts and rituals as superstition, a major demand and contribution of Arya Samaj was the usage and spread of Hindi language for education and administration purposes. In undivided Punjab, the promotion of Hindi language by the Arya Samaj became a major issue of contention against the supporters of Punjabi and Urdu languages (Tuteja 2019).

Dayananda Saraswati had propagated Hindi as the 'Arya Bhasha', as an offshoot of Sanskrit. In 1881, the Arya Samaj pleaded before the Hunter Commission to adopt Hindi as the vernacular language of Punjab to be employed for secondary education and administrative usage. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, Hindi language was aggressively promoted by the leaders and followers of Arya Samaj as part of their assertion of indigeneous and pure form of Hinduism (ibid., 42). Among the leadership of Arya Samaj in Punjab, Urdu language was seen as 'foreign to the soil' and Punjabi was a dialect of Hindi language. Among the popular political leaders who were members of the Arya Samaj in Punjab was Lala Lajpat Rai (ibid., 41). The organization went to establish many educational institutions such as the Dayananda Anglo Vedic schools and Colleges and Kanya Mahavidyalaya/s across parts of India. One of the followers of Arya Samaj, Swami Shraddhanand¹⁰³, also established Gurukul Kangri in Haridwar in 1902. These educational institutions widely publicized the usage of Hindi language in everyday routine, education and for official work as part of their duty towards the Hindu religion and the Indian nation.

Apart from these, the Lahore Brahmo Samaj, which was founded in 1836 by some Bengalis and Punjabis, also propagated the increased use of Hindi language (Jones 1990, 94). The Lahore Brahmo Samaj was visited multiple times by many leading figures such as Keshab Chandra Sen, Debendranath Tagore and Protap Chandra Majumdar. It recruited many Punjabis and Bengalis as its followers. Its leader Babu Novin Chandra Roy had especially worked for the promotion of Hindi language. He had met and

¹⁰³ Swami Shraddhanand (1856-1926), originally known as Lala Munshi Ram, was an ardent follower of Arya Samaj. He was an activist in the independence movement and in the various Hindu reform movements of the early twentieth century. He presided over the 1919 session of the Congress party in Amritsar organized in its criticism of the Jallianwala Massacre. In 1923, he worked in the *shuddhi* movement which aimed to 're-convert' non-Hindus into Hinduism. For more details, see Jordens 1981.

requested Dayanand Saraswati to spread the use of Hindi language (Tuteja 2019). In the twentieth century, the propagation of Hindi language, in its Sanskritized variety, was taken by religious organizations such as Hindu Mahasabha and the religio-cultural organization Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. As we have noted in the ideas of Savarkar previously and in the following sections, we shall note from the works of Madan Mohan Malaviya and Deen Dayal Upadhyay, the spread of Hindi language to different parts of the country became one of the key agendas of these organizations.

These organizations, although primarily beginning with a religious motivation, played a pivotal role in the spread of Hindi language beyond the territories of United provinces to other states such as that of Bengal, Bihar, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana and Delhi. Both the organizations, Bharat Dharma Mahamandala and Arya Samaj, propagated a version of Hindi that was highly Sanskritized in nature. It is interesting to note, however, in Punjab, the DAV schools continued to teach and publish their materials in Urdu language, as the latter was a necessary requirement for government jobs. Yet, their emphasis on imparting education in Hindi language remained undaunted. There were other religious organizations that did not emphasize on Sanskritized Hindi, rather published and delivered sermons in mixed Hindi, i.e Hindi language infused with words from Urdu and Punjabi. The Radhasoami Satsang that was established in 1861 was popular in the North Indian states of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. The *gurus* of the sect borrowed heavily from the poetry of Guru Nanak, Kabir and Tulsidas for their sermons (Jones 1990, 73). Their religious materials were published in Hindi, Urdu and English languages which helped them spread their ideas. Purushottamdas Tandon was a follower of the Radhasoami sect.

What emerges in the discussion of the variety of religious organizations established at the end of the nineteenth century is that, as part of their zeal to impart religious education and training to the younger generation, many of these organizations spearheaded the spread of Hindi language to the masses. They also published extensively which further uniformed the language. The schools and colleges established by Mahamandal and Arya Samaj continue to attract a large number of students even in the contemporary period. Another

major point that needs to be highlighted is the links that these organizations enjoyed with the prominent political leaders of the period. Some of the leaders who enjoyed massive popularity and influence at the regional level such as Lala Lajpat Rai, Madan Mohan Malaviya and Swami Shraddhanand were votaries of Hindi language in their politics. The promotion of Hindi language constituted one of the most important parts of their ideas about the nation. Through these interlinkages, Hindi language became a common and important indicator of social, cultural and political sphere.

In the twentieth century, the most significant momentum to the promotion of Hindi language for national status, i.e. for the national language, came from the rapidly expanding Hindi literary sphere from the 1910 onwards. The Hindi literary sphere, which consisted of literary organizations, publishing industries, newspaper, magazines and journals, conferences, meetings and more importantly the writers and poets, played an inviolable role in the promotion and eventual domination of Hindi language in Indian politics. To understand the latter, it is important to dissect the relationship between the Hindi literary sphere and the political sphere which was expanding in lieu of the anticolonial movement.

The writers, poets, editors and publishers in the Hindi literary sphere strongly identified their role as analogous to the leaders and supporters who were active in the nationalist movement (Orsini 2002, 309). Just as the leaders and activists who were fighting the colonial rule for independence in the public sphere through politics, the writers and other actors in the Hindi literary sphere treated their work as a service to the nation. The socio-political reality of the nationalist movement in particular and Indian society in general, formed the most important backdrop for the literary sphere in which through their works they sought to inspire, criticize, suggest and discuss the various aspects of the situation then. At the same time, several political leaders who operated at both national and regional level associated with the efforts for the development and spread of the Hindi language. They headed the literary organizations, edited journals and wrote frequently for popular papers. The Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, founded in 1910, saw many prominent political leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, Madan Mohan Malaviya, Purushottam Das

Tandon, Sampurnanand and Rajendra Prasad as its presidents. Similarly, there were writers, editors and poets who began from the literary sphere and eventually also became participants in the political sphere by contesting elections. These were Balkrishna Sharma, Rambriksh Benipuri and Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi¹⁰⁴.

The meetings and conferences of literary organizations such as Nagari Pracharini Sabha and Hindi Sahitya Sammelan were crucial meeting points for the exchange of ideas among the writers, publishers, editors and the politicians. The ready presence of political leaders at such events indicated another important implication. While for the literary figures, it ensured an ongoing dialogue with the political leaders and activists in the country; for the political leaders, the literary meetings provided them with a legitimacy for their ideas and actions from the writers and the intelligentsia (*ibid.*). For the people in the literary sphere, the support from political leaders also meant support for their agendas regarding script, education and language policy. The political leaders who were prominent at the national level such as Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Lala Lajpat Rai and Mahatma Gandhi impressed many writers and editors into following their political ideals. And, with the expansion of university education and publishing industry, the literary thinkers also continued to exert significant influence over the public opinion as well as the political leaders of the period through their writings. For the political leaders, the support from the literary sphere translated into supplemented help with mobilization and communication to the masses.

In the context of the debate between Hindi and Urdu languages and the anticolonial movement, the boundaries between the literary and the political sphere were porous. The interlinkages between the two spheres resulted in mutual exchange of ideas of the language, religious diversity and the nation. It has been argued by scholars that these interlinkages and connections between the literary sphere, socio-religious organizations and political sphere were reflected in the homogeneous or uniform cultural imagination

¹⁰⁴ Sharma, a poet, was a member in the UP Provincial Congress Committee and later in the Constituent Assembly. Benipuri, an editor, was the founding member of Bihar Socialist Party (1929) and was active in Bihar Provincial Kisan Sabha. Vidyarthi, an editor, took part in politics with Congress Party and later was the winning candidate for Swarajya Party in 1927-29 Legislative Council in United Provinces.

of the nation (Orsini 2002; Gould 2004). For Orsini, ‘Hindi Politicians’¹⁰⁵ formed an important category of regional political leaders who, while differentiating with each on their political ideologies ranging from conservative right to radical left, espoused a shared or common belief in cultural identity of the nation (Orsini 2002, 354). Gould employed the example of Sampurnanand, Purushottamdas Tandon and other key politicians who while, in principle, aligned with socialist ideology of different varieties and secularism often entangled in communal politics of Hindu nationalism through their support for Hindi language, cow-protection, *shuddhi* movements and endorsement of metaphors from Hindu mythology (Gould 2004, 133).

However, there emerges a question about these scholarly positions. Throughout the course of this thesis so far, we have noted the differences and the heterogeneity within the Hindi literary sphere about the notion of the Hindi language, the ideal form of religiosity and the identity of the Indian nation. The deep rooted intercommunication and linkages between the literary and the political sphere must be able to reveal the heterogeneity of the ideas about Hindi language and the nation among the political leaders too. By going beyond the common nomenclature of Hindi language (which was simultaneously being formed and debated) that is used by most political leaders, the crucial step is to understand the nature of the Hindi language endorsed and supported by these politicians. At the same time, their views about the religious diversity of the country and the position of the minorities reveal their ideas and aspirations of the Indian nation. Therefore, the next section moves on to discuss the heterogeneity of the ideas of Hindi language, views about religious diversity and the cultural-political imaginations of the nation among the prominent politicians from the Hindi speaking belt.

5.2 Language and Religion in the Political Sphere

¹⁰⁵ The political leaders identified as ‘Hindi Politicians’ by Orsini are Madan Mohan Malaviya, Purushottamdas Tandon, Rammanohar Lohia, Sampurnanand and Narender Dev (Orsini 2002, 341).

The questions of language and religion featured centrally in the ideas of most leaders in the Indian political domain of the first half of the twentieth century. Hindi language during this period especially generated a lot of political attention. With the simultaneous construction of the very nature of Hindi language, the understanding of what Hindi language meant differed among different thinkers. Another important debate that captured the minds of political leaders was the status of various religious communities in the country. The perspective about the position of Islam in Indian civilization and their contribution in the nation differed among leaders (Mishra 2004). The meaning of Hindu was being defined around the categories of caste and gender. Together, these ideas provide us with broad imaginations of the nation that these political leaders came to envisage. The five political leaders discussed in this section are Madan Mohan Malaviya, Rajendra Prasad, Purushottam Das Tandon, Rammanohar Lohia and Deen Dayal Upadhyay.

5.2.1 Madan Mohan Malaviya's Ideas of Hindi language and Sanatana Dharma

Madan Mohan Malaviya (1861-1946) rose to popularity early on in his public life with his memorandum for the introduction of Nagari characters in court in Northwestern provinces and Oudh. In 1900, the McDonnell order permitted the use of Nagari characters and Malaviya's memorandum is perceived as the final nail in the movement for Nagari script in the region. Born in 1861 in Allahabad, he was born in a scholarly family. His father was a reputed Sanskrit scholar of his time. This enabled him access to Sanskrit scriptures and learning (Bihari 2016, 26). He headed the *Hindu Samaj* in Prayag in 1880. His association with the efforts for promotion of Hindi language began at the age of 23 when he joined the newly founded *Hindi Uddharini Pratinidhi Madhya Sabha* at Prayag in 1884 and worked consistently for the cause of Nagari script. The Samaj sent memorials to the government of NWP&O and government of India, organized conferences in 1884 and 1889 to mobilize for the cause of Nagari and led agitations for

including Nagari in Allahabad University examinations (King 1994, 140). He wrote enthusiastically in support of Hindi language and was a regular contributor in the famous Hindi monthly *Hindi Pradeep*¹⁰⁶. He had also written in the magazine founded by Bharatendu Harishchandra, '*Harishchandrika*' (Bihari 2016, 31).

Malaviya came to political limelight with his speech at the Indian National Congress session in Calcutta in 1886. It is said that his speech was so impressive that it bagged him the editorship of *Hindustan*, a weekly paper run by Raja Rampal Singh of Kalakankar state (Allahabad) (ibid.,). After a successful editorship of the weekly for two years, he quit the job to study for the law degree. He started the popular nationalist weekly, *Abhyuday* in 1907 and remained its editor for two years. He also ran the famous English daily 'Leader' as its editor with support from Motilal Nehru. Later on, Malaviya founded a Hindi monthly titled *Maryada* in 1910 (ibid.,). In the same year, Hindi Sahitya Sammelan was established and the first session was conducted under the presidentship of Malaviya at Banaras. He also chaired the Bombay session of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan in 1919. Malaviya is renowned for his monumental role of founding the famous Banaras Hindu University whose bill was passed in 1915 and the first batch of examinees appeared in 1918. One of the large aims of the university was to impart education in Indian languages. Malaviya was instrumental in the founding of the Hindi department at BHU that began higher education in the language. He also pushed for the use of Hindi language in answering scripts of exams for technical and science education (ibid., 61).

His contribution was not limited to the sphere of Hindi language. He also worked towards consolidating and reforming the Hindu religion. In his lifetime, he founded many institutions for this purpose but he is most known for his role in the founding of Hindu Mahasabha. Many local and regional Hindu religious organizations were integrated into the *Akhil Bharatiya Hindu Mahasabha* and it convened its first session under the presidentship of Malaviya in 1923 at Benares (Chaturvedi 2014, 34). Malaviya also spoke

¹⁰⁶ *Hindi Pradeep* was founded by Balkrishna Bhatt, a notable member of the unofficial Bharatendu Harishchandra camp consisting of writers and poets who carried forward the latter's legacy after his death. The monthly was introduced by Harishchandra. Malaviya was a frequent contributor to it (Chaturvedi 2014, 55).

frequently about the need for protection of cows and mitigating the differences from the caste system among Hindus. With these agendas, he toured extensively to various other parts of the country. It can be gauged from his active social and political career that Malaviya was among the prominent politicians of this period who made immense contributions towards the Hindi language and the Hindu religion. He was a towering figure at the provincial and the national level who inspired many other politicians and scholars. His idea of language and religion and their importance in the nation represent an important segment of debate in the politics of North India.

In his speech at the first convention of Hindi Sahitya Sammelan in 1910, after lamenting about the then present condition of Hindi language, Malaviya pondered upon the widely available question of what really is 'Hindi'. He commented about his lack of expertise on the topic and insists that in such a dearth, he was to only present before the audience the provable information for the people to decide further. His response to the question is noteworthy. He says,

“चंद के काव्य में तुलसीदास की एक चौपाई को बीच में यदि मैं रख दूँ तो बहुत सज्जनों को यह न मालूम होगा कि दोनों के बीच कितना अंतर है। संवत् 1125 में चंद कवि ने इन को लिखा। उनकी भाषा में जितने रूप देखते हैं वह रूप इस भारतवर्ष की किसी दूसरी भाषा के रूप से नहीं मिलते। मिलते हैं, हिंदी से और उतने ही जितने आज की अंग्रेजी चौसर की अंग्रेजी से मिलती है। ऐसी दशा में यह कहना कि हिंदी भाषा क्या है, इसका उत्तर यह है कि हिंदी भाषा वह है जिसमें चंद कवि से लेकर आज तक हिंदी के ग्रंथ लिखे गए हैं। यह सही है कि पहले इसका नाम भाषा था, हिंदी भाषा या सूरसेनी” (Malaviya 1910)।

For Malaviya, the language that is found in Chand's (Chand Bardai) poetry to the then current period could be referred to as Hindi. He is firm that it is one language which is called by different names. The lack of consensus on a definite name for this Hindi language is similar to the common issue in the region where many people are unable to recall the name of their children or parents. The presence of multiple names for the same

language is analogous with the multiple names that people acquire during their lifetimes. Malaviya uses the example of Bhishma from Mahabharat who was also known as Devvrat¹⁰⁷. Therefore, the tradition of modern Hindi goes back to the twelfth century where it could have been referred to by a different name. It is this continuous language that is now called Hindi, according to him. In the hands of an expert political leader as Malaviya, the arguments presented by Shukla with support from several references¹⁰⁸, are slipped to the masses eloquently and clearly with analogies from myths and common practices. He shuns from identifying as an expert voice on language and presents the matter as that of common sense or logic.

The next issue is the question of the relationship between other regional languages and Hindi and the reason why Hindi assumes importance. Malaviya recognized that Bengali had achieved much advancement over other languages. There was a diversity of regional languages and dialects and the pronunciation of words changed as they moved from one region to another. He argues that all the regional languages that derive from Sanskrit are like sisters from a common mother (ibid.,). While all these regional languages belong to the people as their own, Hindi is the oldest among them. Malaviya cited *Prithvirajraso* and *Khumanraso* as some of the oldest popular works in Hindi. He says,

“चंद के समय तक मराठी में, न बंगला में, न गुजराती में, तीनों में इतना बड़ा काव्य नहीं मिलता जितना बड़ा काव्य चंद कवि का हिंदी में मिलता है” (ibid.,)।

¹⁰⁷ Malaviya mentions, “कितने ही लोगों को अपनी माँ का नाम नहीं मालूम। बहुत सी औरतें ऐसी हैं जिनको अपने लड़कों का नाम नहीं मालूम। प्रयाग और बनारस के कितने ही बालकों का नाम सिर्फ बच्चा है। पिता और दादा के नामों का पता लगाना और भी कठिन है। नाम रखते हैं किन्तु उसको याद नहीं रखते। अस्तु, देखना चाहिए कि चंद के समय से जो भाषा लिखी जाती है वह एक है, उसी को हम हिंदी भाषा कहते हैं। कभी-कभी लोग उसका नाम बदल देते हैं। भीष्म को लीजिये देवव्रत उनका नाम था।... इसी तरह भाषा का भी नाम बदलता है” (Malaviya 1910)।

¹⁰⁸ Shukla had also declared in one of his essays that whatever name this language had in the past, in the present, it was known as Hindi. See page number 110 of this thesis.

This is not the only reason because of which Hindi deserves greater recognition over other regional languages. Malaviya argues that even though Hindi is in a pitiable condition mainly because of the ignorance of its people, it still has been enriched over the years by works of many popular writers that provide it with a richer vocabulary and collection of words compared to other regional languages (ibid.,). Some of the writers and poets, listed were Lallu Lal, Kabirdas, Tulsidas, Guru Nanak, Malik Mohammed Jayasi, Bhimdev, Surdas, Ashtchhap, Keshavdas, Dadudas, Guru Gobind Singh and Biharilal, who have written in Hindi and enriched the language (ibid.,). With regard to the southern languages of Telugu and Tamil, he argues that even their lexicon contains vast numbers of Sanskrit words. With Sanskrit as the common bond, the southern languages share an affinity with Hindi. The long historical literary tradition of Hindi language establishes it as the most prominent 'daughter of Sanskrit' from all others. It is the oldest language and boasts of many reputed poets and writers. The literary traditions of Braj Bhasha, Awadhi and even Punjabi are included as part of Hindi language tradition (ibid.,).

Malaviya also discusses the state of Urdu in the country in his lecture. He asserts that the Urdu language was helped by many Hindus, especially Kashmiri Brahmins and Kayasthas, who employed the language in their official work and literary texts. However, Urdu could not be developed because of the large presence of Persian and Arabic vocabulary (ibid.,). He declares boldly that the elimination of Urdu is coterminous with elimination of Hindi language itself. And yet, the propagation of Urdu language created difficulties for the progress of Hindi. He says,

“आपके अंग्रेजी पढ़ने वालों में उर्दू का प्रचार अधिक है। अब मैं यह आशा करता और सोचता हूँ कि जब तक यह प्रचार रहेगा, तब तक हिंदी की उन्नति में बड़ी रुकावट रहेगी। उर्दू भाषा रहे, कोई बुद्धिमान यह नहीं कह सकता की उर्दू मिट जाये। यह अवश्य रहे और इसके मिटाने का विचार वैसा ही होगा, जैसा हिंदी भाषा के मिटाने का। दोनों भाषा अमित है, दोनों रहेगी” (ibid.,)।

Clearly, for Malaviya, Urdu devoid of Persian and Arabic vocabulary is the same as Hindi language. The difference is in that of the script. In his promotion of Hindi language, the implication is for a language that is both Hindi and Urdu but written in Nagari script. The death of Urdu language is the death of Hindi language because both are same except with the difference of the script and paramountcy of the source of vocabulary. Urdu is Hindi language written in Persian script and dominated by Persian-Arabic words. It becomes clearer from his assertions in the memorandum submitted to the lieutenant governor for the admission of Nagari script in court in NWP&O. He argued that Persian script makes it close to impossible for the use of vernacular language which is Hindi. It inadvertently admits a large number of Arabic words which are not just difficult to understand but also foreign to the common masses (Malaviya 1898). The Nagari script should be permitted in the court as it is friendlier towards the words from ‘common people’s language’ (ibid.,).

Further, the contribution made by Muslim writers towards the development of Hindi language is recognized by Malaviya, citing the example of Jayasi’s *Padmavat*. In the convention of Hindi Sahitya Sammelan at Bombay in 1919, Malaviya states in his presidential address that it is not new for Muslims to adapt Hindi language as many Muslim poets have written in Hindi language (Lal 2016, 145). Hindi written in Nagari script is to be the national language of the Indian nation. It is the only mass language that can be adopted by a large number of people as their own (ibid., 144).

Moving on, the issue of lack of unity among Hindus struck a chord with Malaviya. The caste system presented as one of the biggest causes that threatened the unity among Hindus¹⁰⁹. However, it also was foundational to the very definition of Hindu that Malaviya espoused his faith in. In his writings, speeches and practice, a major concern was to resolve the anomaly where the brutal and oppressive aspects of the caste system for the lower rungs of the society could be mitigated without dismantling the caste system as such. Malaviya organized the ‘Mantradeeksha’ ceremonies several times in his lifetime beginning in 1927. The idea behind the move was to initiate the lower castes hitherto

¹⁰⁹ In 1933, Malaviya became the president of Harijan Sevak Sangh.

deprived from the knowledge of Sanskrit into the Hindu fold. They were to chant mantras along with the three upper varnas to initiate their right to the reading of scriptures. Citations from *Puranas* were presented to argue that all men and women irrespective of their castes have the right to read scriptures (ibid., 139). On the question of temple entry to be allowed to the Shudras, Malaviya offered his reservations. He believed that upper caste Hindus could be persuaded to allow the entry of Shudras in temples. He writes,

“मै यह नहीं कहना चाहता हूँ कि भंगी और डोम आकर शिवजी की पूजा करें, यद्यपि इसका भी प्रमाण शास्त्र में है। मै तो कहता हूँ उन्हें दूर से दर्शन कर लेने दो” (ibid.,)।

He argued, citing scriptures, that good conduct can elevate the status of the lower castes equal to the three upper varnas. Religious myths were used to assert that those *Chandals* who are knowledgeable, intelligent and of good character are not to be treated with indignity rendered to the other untouchables. In the same breath, it was cautioned that these improvements in the status of the untouchables do not imply that they are to be treated as Brahmins. Malaviya warns that the marriage and dining relations cannot be maintained with the Shudras. He writes,

“कथाओं का यह अर्थ नहीं है कि हम अंत्यजो के साथ भोजन और विवाह का सम्बन्ध करें। भोजन और विवाह का सम्बन्ध तो शास्त्र लोकमर्यादा के अनुसार उन्ही बिरादरियों में हो सकता है जिनमे शास्त्र और लोकमर्यादा के अनुसार होता चला आया है। इसका यह भी अर्थ नहीं है कि जो धर्मव्याध और मूक चांडाल के समान धर्मज्ञ और सदाचारी हो उनके साथ हम सब विषयों में ब्राह्मणोचित व्यवहार करें” (Malaviya 1962, 208-209)।

Therefore, while Malaviya exhibited willingness to compromise with some rigidities of the caste system, he was firm in not establishing complete equality of all caste groups. The brahmanical idea of the superiority of the three upper varnas over the Shudras took priority above the need for unity among the Hindus. Further, Malaviya, in several of his speeches, espoused harmony between Hindus and Muslims. He believed that the Muslims

along with followers of other religious faiths existed in India for a long period of time and must be accepted as such (Lal 2016, 100). The espousal of Hindu religion did not seek to work against this religious diversity. However, he could often be found sympathizing with the weak Hindu brethren against Muslims in the situations of communal tensions. Impacted by the condition of Hindus that Malaviya witnessed in the aftermath of Moplah rebellion (1921) and Multan riots (1922), a clarion call was given for the strengthening of Hindu mobs and groups that could guard Hindu communities in communally tense areas (ibid, 319). Even though Hindu scriptures prescribe tolerance and non-violence, any attack on the religion must be retaliated. In the convention of Hindu Mahasabha¹¹⁰ at Gaya in 1922, he says,

“हमारा धर्म औरों के मतों का मान करना सिखाता है, सहनशील होना बताता है, और किसी पर आक्रमण करने की शिक्षा नहीं देता। साथ ही यह आदेश देता है कि यदि तुम्हारे धर्म पर कोई आक्रमण करे तो अपनी रक्षा के लिए प्राण तक न्योछावर करने में भी संकोच नहीं करना चाहिए” (cited in ibid., 307)।

The increased militant tone of Hindu Mahasabha from 1920 onwards is reflected in the above quote. The notions of Hindu weakness and Muslim threat to it were amplified in the Mahasabha that provoked Hindu animosity against the Muslims. Another issue that was aggravated as a matter of concern for the Hindus was the conversion to other religious faiths and the falling population of the community. Malaviya cautioned that with a population of 22 crores, Hindus were unable to protect themselves; how were they to survive with more dwindling numbers (Gupta 1978, 299). Thus, his role in contributing to the anti-Muslim rhetoric cannot be excused. In 1926, coming down heavily at the opposition from some Muslims in playing music before mosques, he advised against stopping the music arguing that such an opposition was not raised in the past (ibid., 301). He maintained that music was an intrinsic part of Hindu religious and social rituals, stating,

¹¹⁰ Until 1915, the Hindu Mahasabha closely functioned with Congress. Many congressmen were members of Mahasabha too. The distance between the two grew 1916 onwards in lieu of Lucknow pact signed between the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League.

“When they [Muslims] were in communion with their god, how can they be conscious of music?...Once the Muslims come to know that the Hindus would not stop music before mosques, they themselves would refrain from asking for stopping of music any further” (ibid.,).

Malaviya severed ties with Mahasabha in 1927 as the distance between Congress and Mahasabha began to widen. He also failed to contain the aggressive anti-Muslim rhetoric of the latter under new leaders, even though he had contributed to unleash the communal horse. Even though he contributed to the strengthening of fear and threat among the Hindus from the Muslim minorities, he did not agree with the ideas of physical extermination that became a part of political discourse at Hindu Mahasabha. Much like his views on Hindi language, the idea of attacking another religious community and language was against the spirit of tolerance and unity that he held close to. The others identified in the form of Urdu language and the Muslim community were not desired to be eliminated. Their presence and survival was closely tied to the survival of the Hindi language and the upper caste Hindu community in Malaviya's idea of the nation.

5.2.2 Rajendra Prasad's Ideas of Inclusive Hindi Language

The second political leader who was attached to the question of Hindi language and was involved in the national movement is Dr. Rajendra Prasad. Born and died two decades after Malaviya, Prasad became the first president of the independent India. His early education was at home in Hindi, Persian and Arithmetic, after which he went to Chhapra District School. Prasad studied initially science at the University of Calcutta; however, he changed the subject and post graduated in economics from the same university (Prasad 1947, 39-40). After teaching for less than two years, Prasad studied law and eventually achieved his doctorate in law from Allahabad University in 1937.

He hailed from Bihar and began his political association with Congress early on as a volunteer. He came in contact with Gandhi during the Champaran Satyagraha in 1916 and was deeply inspired by his ideas. Prasad was a key aide to Gandhi in his support for Hindi language. He was also the president of the Constituent Assembly. He founded and edited the Hindi weekly, *Desh*. He wrote frequently for the English weekly *Searchlight* (ibid., 139). He was the president of *Dakshin Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha* from 1948 to 1965 which was founded by Gandhi in 1918; the latter headed it till 1948. Prasad was among the founding members of *Rashtra Bhasha Prachar Samiti*. Both these institutions were intended to spread the use of Hindi language in non- Hindi speaking states.

With the active participation in the struggle for freedom from colonial rule, Prasad's belief in the use of the language of common people had strengthened. The idea that for education to be effective, complete and economical, it must be imparted through the language of the people received a decisive push in the post independence era. In his speech in Ernakulam in 1951, Prasad says,

“We have always felt that no nation can express its soul unless it speaks through its own language.. I believe it is equally necessary for us to realize that it is not possible for us to maintain our freedom through another language”
(Prasad 1993, 249).

The post-independence period witnessed massive opposition from the southern states of India in opposition to the imposition of Hindi as official language of the country¹¹¹. In such a situation, Prasad toured extensively in various parts of southern India arguing and urging for the acceptance of Hindi language. In one such instance, the history of Hindi literature, presenting the movement of Bhakti from south to the north of India, was

¹¹¹ The protests, most emphatically, in the Southern States, especially Tamil Nadu, were against the adoption of Hindi as the official language, as was being debated in the Constituent Assembly. The threat that was faced by non-Hindi speaking states was with regard to the advantage they were to face in government jobs, educational institutions and other public institutions in their lack of knowledge of Hindi language. Further, regional languages such Tamil, Telugu etc strongly identified a sense of regional consciousness with their languages. An imposition of Hindi language meant erasure of their regional identity (For more details, see Hardgrave 1965).

employed to emphasize that Hindi was a language that had strong relations with the Northern and the Southern part of the country. In 1960, while speaking at the *Hyderabad Hindi Prachar Sabha*, he says,

“the more I have tried to survey the history and evolution of the Hindi language, the more I have been convinced that during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries when Hindi was evolving from the dialect to language usage, the contribution of South Indian saints and bhikshus to its development was very prominent. Who does not know that the Rama and Krishna Bhakti movements led by saints played a great part in the development of Hindi and these bhakti movements spread from the South to the North? It was Shri Ramanuja and later Swami Ramananda, a disciple of his line, who brought the Rama bhakti movement to Kashi. It was owing to their inspiration that the Bhakti movement came to be propagated in the regional languages, besides Sanskrit. And, in this way, Awadhi, which was once a spoken language, only came on the scene as a literary language. On the other hand, Braja Bhasha owes much to Vallabhacharya and his followers who inundated Mathura with the Krishna Bhakti cult. The Krishna Bhakti movement has influenced deeply the Bengali language also. Thus, we see that the saints of South India have played a great role in the evolution of the Hindi language even though their main aim might have been to propagate the Bhakti movement” (Prasad 1993, 242).

It is not difficult to notice the reflection of Hazari Prasad Dwivedi’s ideas about the flow of Bhakti from South to the North upon Prasad’s beliefs. Dwivedi had been foundational

in foregrounding the idea of Bhakti as a movement that originated in the South and travelled to the North of India. The idea of Hindi literature and language linking the country is based on this information in Prasad's arguments. Moving on, it is also possible to dissect the nature of Hindi language in his views which can closely be identified with Dwivedi's position. Believing in the mixture of words from various sources, Prasad asserted,

“In the adoption of new words we must not show any hesitation or narrow consideration. In Hindi we find not Sanskrit words, but also words derived from foreign languages which have their origin in Arabic, Persian, Portuguese, English, Latin, French, Spanish, and Dutch, etc. As a result of its contact with other languages, Hindi took a few words from them all: a sure sign of the dynamic nature of language. This has only added to the richness of Hindi and thus, instead of giving up this practice, we should absorb words of foreign origin by giving them an indigenous form. I do not believe that Hindi will benefit by refusing to use words of foreign origin which we have already assimilated in Hindi, nor do I think it to be wise to refuse to absorb such non-hindi words which can be absorbed by the language” (Prasad 2017, 14).

There is a stark difference in the idea of the Hindi language that emerges in the two positions discussed so far. In this position, there is an emphasis on the mixing and mutual learning of cultures over and over than attempting to maintain an exclusionary or pure form of it. At the *Braj Sahitya Mandal* convention in 1952 in Hathras, Prasad argues, *“You are all aware that human emotions are at once regional and universal... it is absolutely necessary that every group based on language or religion should, while trying to maintain its peculiar identity, also be ready to operate and mingle with other groups of this world”* (Prasad 2017, 192). Such a view of language and culture recognizes the need

for ensuring mutual respect and learning among the diversity of cultures in the country. The focus or concern is not to establish a pure form of the indigeneous culture, rather to enrich it as a resource from as much diversity available in the world. Speaking at the convocation at University of Delhi in 1950, Prasad reiterated,

“The first step which we must immediately take is to establish complete harmony among the historic traditions of our country. It is quite evident to me that this can be brought about only by the mingling and merging of the European and Arab currents with the main traditional current of our land... the poetry of Ghalib and Shakespeare to become a property of as large a number of Indians as possible... I think that it should be the duty of every one living in this country not to have any contempt or indifference for the great artistic and literary creations of several cultural currents of our country” (ibid., 89).

It is important to note that in the aftermath of the partition of India in 1947, many leaders exhibited fears about further disintegration and violence in the country. The appeals made to the people to maintain peace and harmony were common in this period. It is interesting to see that Prasad is emphatic in his belief to incorporate the traditions of the colonial and the much- maligned ‘foreign’ in the Persian-Arabic tradition as was viewed by many leaders. In these ideas, it is clear that the cultural identity of the country cannot be seen in homogeneous and uniform terms. It is critical of an unchecked support for indigeneity and blind rejection of all cultural traditions as foreign. Here, it appears to be of utmost importance that the people in India cultivate respect for the various cultural currents as their own, without undermining the uniqueness of their own languages and culture.

Such support for Hindi as the national language emerges from Gandhian legacy. Prasad asserted that the Hindi language was recognized in the Constituent Assembly because it was the most widely spoken language in India (Prasad 1993, 244). In 1956, speaking at

the *Rashtra Bhasha Prachar Samiti* convention, he underlined that Hindi is not to be propagated in place of or at the expense of any regional language (ibid., 232). It is recognized here that the idea of the language of the people included the regional languages and the diversity of mother tongues. In order to wane off the fears of states about the status of their regional languages, it was emphasized that the Hindi language was not to undermine the identity and the importance of the regional language. It was to replace the English language for business and interstate communication. It did not need a space wider than this (ibid., 233). Regional languages were seen as crucial for ensuring a richer vocabulary of expressions and idioms. There must be greater mutual interactions between the literature of various languages in the country so that the ideals, hopes and inspiration of one group are made known to people outside it.

However, it is important to note that as reflected in Prasad's position on Hindi language, it was still to maintain the dominance of Hindi without excluding the diversity of linguistic and cultural traditions. Hindi language continued to dominate the idea of the national language, even though the meaning and the responsibilities associated in such a position are different from those expressed by an idea of Hindi that preserved an exclusionary and uniform imagination for it. Prasad refused to accept the accusations of 'Hindi Imperialism' hurled against the political leaders proposing Hindi language, citing the example of Gandhi and Dayanand Saraswati for men of eminence from non-Hindi speaking areas who supported the use of Hindi language (ibid., 263). What emerges from this discussion of Prasad's ideas is that while the belief in the use of Hindi for national status is firm, the reasoning espoused by him is different from other Hindi supporters. This notion of Hindi language does not seek to assimilate regional languages in a way that negates their unique identity. It is also not hesitant to absorb new words from a multitude of foreign sources.

5.2.3 Purushottamdas Tandon's Emphasis on Hindi as Central to the Idea of Nation

Moving on, the next leader who is known for his contribution to the cause of Hindi is Purshottamdas Tandon. Born in 1882 in a Khatri family, Tandon's education began in Hindi language. He completed his LLB degree in 1906 and masters in history in 1907. His affection for Hindi language brought him into politics via Congress¹¹². He was seen as the protege of Malaviya whose influence along with that of Balkrishna Bhatt loomed large over his views (Tandon 1970, 11). He was instrumental in the founding of Hindi Sahitya Sammelan and led its charge for the next four decades from its founding. He also edited the two journals *Abhyuday* and *Maryada* founded by Malaviya (ibid.,). He worked as the law minister in Nabha state from 1914 to 1918. He was an active participant in the Non Cooperation movement and the Civil Disobedience movement; for both he went to jail. He was influential in the founding of Prayag Mahila Vidyapeeth and the Hindi Vidyapeeth. In 1923, he presided over the thirteenth Hindi Sahitya Sammelan in Kanpur. Throughout his political career, Tandon sympathized with the cause of the agrarian situation in the country, apart from the issue of Hindi language (ibid., 12). He declined any association with the Hindu Mahasabha. At the personal level, he was affiliated with the religious sect of Radhasoami sect and was opposed to any kind of religious propagation and conversion.

Tandon committed to the concept of non-violence at both personal and political levels; he renounced the use of leather goods. He served as the speaker of the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly from 1937 to 1950 and was also the member of the Constituent Assembly (ibid., 13). In the latter, he was a vociferous supporter of Hindi language with the Nagari script. He was elected to the Lok Sabha in 1952 and was a member of the Rajya Sabha in 1956. During the controversy of Gandhi's opposition to the activities of

¹¹² In 1951, Tandon spoke at the 17th annual event of *Sahrid Sangh*, "हिन्दी के पक्ष को सबल करने के उद्देश्य से ही मैंने कांग्रेस जैसी संस्था में प्रवेश किया, क्योंकि मेरे हृदय पर हिन्दी का ही प्रभाव सबसे अधिक था और मैंने उसे ही अपने जीवन का सबसे महान व्रत बनाया" (Tandon, "Hindi Rashtrabhasha") ।

Hindi Sahitya Sammelan over the nature of the Hindi language propagated by the latter, Tandon mediated and responded to the charges levelled by Gandhi. Although he tried hard to keep Gandhi from dissociating, yet he maintained a strong foot in defending the use of Nagari script and the Hindi language over Hindustani; the latter allowed for the use of Persian script and words in common use as supported by Gandhi.

Tandon gave utmost importance to the role of language in the making of a nation. Like food and water, language was the significant 'nutrition' for the growth of the mental capacity of the nation's people. The language and the literature of the country were seen as the manifestation of the progress its people have made¹¹³. It was believed that with the use of foreign language in their social and cultural endeavours, the people can not benefit from the knowledge of their ancestral traditions. He writes,

“विचार, भाव और भाषा का अटूट सम्बन्ध जिसके द्वारा हम अपने पूर्वजों के साथ संलग्न हैं, और वर्तमान काल पूर्व काल से बद्ध है, उसी की समता से राष्ट्रीयता का निर्वाण हो सकता है, इसीलिए प्रत्येक राष्ट्र को अपने पूर्वजों की भाषा की जीवन में परम आवश्यकता है” (ibid., 119)।

Language, the mother tongue, is instrumental in the making of the nation and espousing nationalism among the people. There is a seamlessness between mother tongue and the national language. It is argued that the propagation of the mother tongue goes hand in hand with the spread of nationalism in every country. Further, constituting a nation implied an impeccable and perpetual bond of the present with the past in the form of cultural traditions, ideas, and inspirations. Describing the nature and the importance of mother tongue, Tandon writes,

“यह सजीव शब्दों का कोष है, यह सुहावने चिन्हों का भंडार है, यह राष्ट्र जीवन की साक्षात् मूर्ति है, यह राष्ट्रीय शक्ति की वह प्रतिमा जो राष्ट्र के विचारों और उसके हृदयस्थित भावों को सुरक्षित रख कर उन्हें दूसरों पर

¹¹³ In 1919, he writes in 'Prakash' an Urdu letter in Lahore, “हर मुल्क और हर सभ्यता का उसकी भाषा से उतना ही गहरा ताल्लुक है जितना उसकी आव व हवा से। मुल्क की भाषा और साहित्य ही हर मुल्क की तरक्की के गवाह हैं। भाषा ही वह खोराक और वह हवा है जिस पर देश के हर बच्चे की विचारशक्ति परवरिश पाती है” (Tandon 1970, 49)।

प्रकट करती है। हमारे इतिहास, विचार और प्राचीन साहित्य भण्डार की यह कुंजी है। ... हमारा भावी साहित्यिक और मानसिक गौरव इसी मातृभाषा के भविष्य पर निर्भर है” (ibid., 116)।

According to him, this language, which is the mother tongue as well as has the capacity to represent national glory, is the Hindi language written in Nagari script. Hindi should be the national language not because it is spoken in the areas of Prayag, Kashi, Lucknow, and Delhi but because it represents the undivided and united culture of India that comprises the culture of Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Madras (ibid.,). Therefore, Tandon firmly believed that to ensure the perpetuation of Hindi language in the country is to ensure nationalism among each and every person. “ जबतक हिंदी है तब तक हमारा हृदय और मर्म भी हिंदी है” (ibid., 119)। In the Constituent Assembly, he rejected the proposal to accommodate Roman numerals in the Nagari script (Tandon 1959, 25).

Tandon played an important role in widening the difference between the Hindi and Urdu languages. Even though he accepted that Urdu was not different from the Hindi language (ibid., 83),¹¹⁴ he declined to accept this in the definition of the Hindi language. The progress of Urdu and Hindi language could take place simultaneously. When Gandhi objected to the project of identifying Hindi language by excluding the popular Urdu words and the Persian script in the activities of Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, Tandon was determined to not alter his notion of Hindi. He responded that for the Sammelan, Urdu was a type or form of Hindi which was known among particular people unlike Hindi with Nagari script which was widely popular among the masses. For the national cause, it was appropriate that Sammelan only works with Hindi in Nagari script. On Gandhi’s insistence that Hindi Sahitya Sammelan refer to Hindi as Hindustani, Tandon vehemently opposed and rejected the proposal (Tandon 1981, 118).

With regard to other regional languages such as Marathi, Bengali and Gujarati, he argued that it was not very difficult for the speakers of these regional languages to adopt Hindi language (Tandon 1970, 53). Punjabi was perceived as a form of Hindi language (ibid.,).

¹¹⁴ In fact, Tandon wrote that there were links between the old Persian language and Sanskrit. The latter infiltrated the vocabulary of the former (Tandon 1970, 26).

Moreover, for the cause of the nation, Tamil and Telugu speakers should learn Hindi language (ibid., 54). The Muslim writers who use Persian script should switch to Nagari script, again for the cause of the nation. The regional languages could be taught as second languages in their regions but for the purpose of constituting the nation, the use of Hindi language in the Nagari script must be endorsed. It was believed and expected that gradually any difference between the Hindi language and other regional languages shall be diminished (ibid., 55).

Like Malaviya, Tandon believed that the minority had an equal role to play in maintaining the balance in the country by agreeing to the demands of the nation, which for Tandon easily translated into the demands of the majority. The Hindi language, here, aimed at assimilation of the identities of regional languages and the neglect of their respective specificity. It is not difficult to wonder that such ideas invited the fears of 'Hindi imperialism' from the members from Southern states of India and other non-Hindi speakers.

Tandon expressed his views and mobilized support for them in the Constituent Assembly as well. Apart from being instrumental in adding Hindi language as the official language along with English, with his efforts, the Hindustani language which allowed for the use of common words from Persian as well as other sources was defeated and replaced by the Hindi language and the Nagari script. In such an imagination of the nation, an essential role for Hindi language was perceived in maintaining the unity and conformity of the people who lived in the country.

Overall, this exclusionary idea of Hindi language focussed on ensuring the 'pure' form by rejecting mixing of words from diversity of sources. Unlike in Prasad's support for Hindi, regional languages and their specificity are not significant to the cause of the nation. The idea that the unity of the nation can be maintained by ensuring a uniform linguistic and cultural identity comes close to identifying with Shukla's ideas of the Hindi language and the nation. In such a position of language and nation, the focus is on the indigeneity and uniformity of culture which is seen as contributing to the uniforming of the nation. The

hegemonic notions of Hindi are imposed against the variety of languages reflecting a disregard for the diversity of cultures and their importance to the idea of the nation.

5.2.4 Lohia's Hindi as the Means Against Elite Domination

The fourth politician discussed here who was seen as supportive of Hindi language in the political sphere is Rammanohar Lohia. Lohia was born in 1910 and was an active participant in Indian political discourse in both pre and post independence period. He was known for developing an Indian version of socialism which he propagated throughout his political career. From his early days, Lohia began participating as an activist in the national movement and was much influenced by Gandhian politics. He was a polyglot and unlike other politicians discussed above his education took place in both Indian and Western universities. After attending the University of Calcutta for a bachelor's degree, he went to the University of Berlin to earn his doctorate degree. He wrote his thesis in German language on the issue of salt taxation in India (Guha 2011, 385).

Upon returning to India, Lohia actively participated with the Indian National Congress and was involved in the Congress Socialist Party (ibid., 386). The latter was founded in 1934; it countered the growing right wing influence within the Congress party. Lohia was a member of the executive committee of Congress Socialist Party and edited its weekly journal. In 1939-40, he strongly opposed the participation of Indians in World War II on the side of Great Britain. He was arrested and incarcerated for 18 months. In 1942, he mobilized support for the Quit India Movement launched by Gandhi and was jailed again (ibid.,). Post independence, Lohia emerged as one of the trenchant critics of Prime Minister Nehru. He left the Congress party to become the member of Praja Socialist Party in 1952. In 1955, he left the latter and founded a new socialist party. He was the chairman and the editor of its journal, *Mankind*. Lohia was elected to the Lok Sabha in 1963 where he played the role of a tough opposition to the government.

Throughout his political career, Lohia empathized with several social, political, and economic causes. He was opposed to the hegemony of the Congress party in Indian politics. He was known for his anti-caste stance and led several agitations against it. He vociferously argued for reservations for backward castes in parliament and in other public institutions. Lohia's political vision envisaged the dethronement of ruling elites and the upper castes in all spheres of public life. Lohia believed that the English language and its supremacy was a continuous source of maintaining power for the Indian elites. He is known for his efforts in the removal of the English language by organizing and mobilizing support for the 'Banish English' movement (ibid.,).

The removal of the English language from the public and political life of the country was the cause that Lohia struggled for throughout his political career. The English language was identified as a tool of oppression for the people of lower classes and marginalized castes at various levels. The harm committed by the English language was not so much because it is foreign but because "it is in the Indian context, feudal". He says about the ruling class in Indian context,

"... the daily repression is carried out with the weapon of the language. They speak in the language which the masses, keepers, clerks, and such other illiterate masses thereby develop an inferiority complex. This is the root cause of India's degeneration" (Lohia 1986, 29).

It was strongly believed that because of the dominance of the English language, the development of original thinking in philosophy, science, technology and other such fields remain stunted in India. Lohia was also critical of the blind fascination with the English language in Indian public life. The use of the English language represented 'one of the great tragedies' of his time. He says,

"the use of English as medium in the economy depresses work output, in education reduces learning and almost

nullifies research, in administration weakens efficiency and adds to inequality and corruption. That English is the foreign language and hurts national self respect is a minor point compared to its effect in depressing economy and causing inequality and its being used as a tool for minority rule” (ibid., 1).

Lohia questioned if the political system in India could be called as democracy when the proceedings of the government were not conducted in people’s language. Further, the argument that the Indian languages were underdeveloped was strongly dismissed. Instead, it was argued that the native languages possessed as much richness as compared to Western languages such as French and English. He asserted, *“Compared with French, Indian languages possess a treasure four or five times richer. The vocabulary of Hindi or Bengali is twice as rich as that of English. With the help of Sanskrit these languages yield an inexhaustible mine to coin new words”* (ibid., 12). It was demanded that the English language must be removed compulsorily as any choice between English and an Indian language will end up in the advantage of the former¹¹⁵. It was futile that the nation should wait for the appropriate advancement of an Indian language to adopt it for public and political usages. Lohia argued,

“Not through committees that fix upon technical terms or through the compilation of dictionaries and textbooks, does a language become adequate. It becomes efficient only through use at laboratories, courts, schools, and the like... the establishment of the language comes first and its evolution afterwards” (ibid., 60).

He called the opposition between the southern and the northern states of the country as a waste. According to him the upper classes of both the regions want the dominance of English. It was suggested that the geographical division according to the language use is

¹¹⁵ He argued, “As long as prestige and power and money go with the English education, it will be foolhardy to expect a parent who can afford it not to give his child an education” (ibid., 62).

between the coast and the midland. The coastal areas in the country had Bengali, Oriya, Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Marathi, and Gujarati. The region of mid-land was fluent in Hindustani. He said,

“the Indian people are caught in the grip of a scissors one of whose blades is the coastal cry of Hindi imperialism and the other the mid-land’s cry of the country’s disintegration”
(ibid., 61).

Such a position urged for Hindi language as well as the development of other Indian languages alongside. He recognized that Hindi as Hindustani was widely spoken among a large section of the masses. Several ways were suggested to arrange inter-state communication and the communication by the central government. The important idea is to get rid of the use of English language and replace it with an Indian language. Parliamentarians were encouraged to use their regional languages such as Tamil or Bengali in the house and translations be made available for other members. It was important for the coastal areas to abandon the use of English. At this point, Lohia invited the ire of many southern states as it was perceived as an imposition of Hindi on them. He tried to clarify that such pleas for giving up the English language for the coastal areas was based in anti-elitist and anti-imperial sentiments and not for a desire or superiority for Hindi language. He stated, *“The war of the Socialist Party on English is for the sake of the mother tongue, which means Oriya, Bengali, Tamil and Telugu as much as Hindi”* (ibid., 69). It was contemplated that the proceedings of the central government could be multilingual or be conducted in two departments of English and Hindi. The Hindi language department could be put to use by mid-lands. For the coastal areas, he suggested in his speech in 1960,

“The coastal states may have their choice from among three alternatives, multilingual centre, Hindi centre with safeguards and bifurcated centre. Let Hindi go to hell, I am not so much concerned with it. English must go” (ibid., 70)

Any forceful imposition of Hindi language upon the non-Hindi speaking states must be avoided as it will cause annoyance and irritation among the latter¹¹⁶. The non-Hindi speaking states must be provided the option to conduct their affairs in their own languages as long as they renounce the usage of English. Distancing himself from ‘Hindi fanatics’ in the Indian politics and organizations that promoted the spread of Hindi, Lohia argued that the ‘Hindi fanatics like Seth Govind Das and Mr. Ganga Saran Sinha as well as English fanatics like Mr. Nehru and Mr. Dahyabhai Patel’ fail to understand the language problem of the country equally. The supporters of Hindi who dismiss the other Indian languages and allow English alongside are ‘the part of the ruling feudal class’. The idea was to remove the use of English at once and support the usage of Indian languages, Hindi and others. In his last interview given before his death, Lohia said,

“The point is that there must be ‘people’s languages’...Why not a system of translations and the states will themselves adopt a common language” (“Interview with Paul Brass”, 10).

Such a position understood the need for a common language of communication between the states and the centre and the states. It was also understood that Hindi language in the form of Hindustani as endorsed by Gandhi had a better chance of emerging as the mass language. Here, the affinity with Hindi was less as compared to the detestment for the continuation of English language in public discourse. To persuade the Southern states to give up the English language, Lohia was ready to give up his claim for the Hindi language¹¹⁷. But, it was reiterated that Hindi as it was the language of the ‘mid-lands’

¹¹⁶ He says, “All arguments for gradual or ultimate acceptance of Hindi have been proved to be illusions or lies. The younger generation in Tamilnadu, Kerala, or Bengal, which was supposed to be learning Hindi, is more violently anti-Hindi than the older. It is no use, therefore, continuing with old practices. The compulsory study of Hindi must stop forthwith in the non-Hindi areas, For areas like Tamilnadu, that would mean nothing more than recognition of an existing fact. Similarly, the irritating presence of Hindi as a meaningless adjunct in any public activity must be removed” (ibid., 1).

¹¹⁷ He goes on to say, “I have not so far been a Hindi fanatic. In fact, I have gone so far as to accept Tamil as a central language however unwillingly, should the people of Tamilnadu in their error insist upon it” (ibid., 46).

possessed a strong chance of dethroning the English language. Lohia's politics that identified with anti-elitism, anti-Brahminism, anti-capitalism and anti-Congress inspired many influential political leaders and scholars who were referred to as 'Lohiaites'. Politicians such as Karpoori Thakur, George Fernandes, Mulayam Singh Yadav, Lalu Prasad Yadav and Nitish Kumar were self-acclaimed 'Lohiaites' who went on to found their own political parties, head ministries in the central government and form governments in different states. They claimed to take forward Lohia's legacy, whether or not they stood true to it is a question beyond the subject of this chapter.

As expressed in the above discussion, the Lohia-ite position on Hindi language is very different from the different ideas about Hindi discussed so far. Such a form of Hindi language is conscious that an exclusionary notion of Hindi could produce its own elites who are bent on ensuring indigeneity and uniformity in culture and nation. Instead, the only idea is to empower the vernacular masses for which it is deemed important that the language of power is the language spoken by the common people. Instead of a Sanskritized vocabulary or distancing of Urdu words, the debate in this position is shifted towards the language of the people and that of the elites. Both Sanskritized Hindi and English language are rejected as permeating inequality. Therefore, while the position discussed here supports Hindi, it is not similar to the ideas of other politicians of the Hindi-speaking belt.

5.2.5 Deen Dayal Upadhyay's Sanskritized Hindi and 'Pure' Hindu Nation

In 1963, in a by-election for the Jaunpur Loksabha seat, Lohia campaigned for the Jan Sangh president, Deen Dayal Upadhyay¹¹⁸. To look at another strong voice in support of

¹¹⁸ Deen Dayal Upadhyay could not win. He, however, reciprocated Lohia's favor by campaigning for him in Farukhabad by election in 1963, which the latter won.

the Hindi language but for varying reasons, Upadhyay is the next and final leader whose views we shall discuss. Deen Dayal Upadhyay was born in Mathura in 1916 and completed his bachelors degree from Kanpur in English language. Under the influence of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) leaders Nanaji Deshmukh and Bhau Jugade, he joined RSS as a full time volunteer (“Life in Outline”). He was the organiser of the RSS in Lakhimpur district of Uttar Pradesh. He was instrumental in founding a publication house, Rastra Dharma Prakashan in Lucknow and launched a magazine ‘Rastra Dharma’. He also launched and edited the contemporary mouthpiece of RSS, ‘Panchjanya’ and a daily paper ‘Swadesh’ (ibid., 9). In 1951, Syama Prasad Mukherjee started the Bhartiya Jan Sangh (BJS). Upadhyay joined the Bhartiya Jan Sangh following the advice of Golwalkar, the RSS chief at that time. He was appointed as the General Secretary of the Uttar Pradesh Branch of BJS and later became the all India General Secretary of the party. He held that position for the next fifteen years (ibid.,). In the general elections in 1967, the Jana Sangh won thirty-five seats and was the third largest party in Lok Sabha.

Upadhyay became the President of Jana Sangh in 1967 and headed it for a very brief period of two months ending because of his sudden death in 1968 (ibid.,). Upadhyay was foundational in setting the official doctrine of the Jan Sangh. The Jana Sangh that later became the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) acquired the inspiration and influence from Upadhyay’s writings and works apart from other ideologues. Unlike the other leaders discussed above, Upadhyay’s views bring to the focus the perspective of the political right wing on social and cultural matters and highlight their imagination of the nation. His views emerge in a series of lectures he delivered in Mumbai in 1967 and the Presidential speech at the Calicut session of Bharatiya Jana Sangh in 1968.

Upadhyay was well known for propounding the concept of ‘integral humanism’ which was adopted by the Bharatiya Janata Party as its official doctrine. If we read closely the key aspects of this idea, it helps us understand the imagination of the nation that he envisaged and which animates the current political forces inspired from him. The idea of Hindi language and the position of religious minorities are the two important questions that figure in his idea of the nation. He argues that the various ideologies that were going

around in the world such as socialism, communism and capitalism did not emphasize the cultural aspect of a society. In the Indian context, it was of utmost importance to prioritize the culture view point as the central lens to understand the society and its problems (Upadhyay 2014, 9). He states that those ideologies that are driven from the economic aspect drive the society with the notion of consumption. The ideologies that prioritize politics as the aspect to view a society, drive a rights dominant discourse. They lack an emphasis on the fundamental facet of life; instead it gets highlighted only in an ideology that places culture as the foremost value. He writes,

“संस्कृति प्रधान जीवन की यह विशेषता है कि इसमें जीवन के मौलिक तत्वों पर जोर दिया जाता है, पर शेष बाह्य बातों के सम्बन्ध में प्रत्येक को स्वतंत्रता रहती है। इसके अनुसार व्यक्ति की स्वतंत्रता का प्रत्येक क्षेत्र में विकास होता है। संस्कृति किसी काल विशेष अथवा व्यक्ति विशेष के बंधन से जकड़ी हुई नहीं है, अपितु यह तो स्वतंत्र एवं विकासशील जीवन की एक मौलिक प्रवृत्ति है। इस संस्कृति को ही हमने धर्म कहा है। अतः जब कहा जाता है कि भारतवर्ष धर्म-प्रधान देश है तो इसका अर्थ मजहब, मत या रिलिजन नहीं, किन्तु यह संस्कृति होता है” (ibid., 9)।

As is clear from the above quote, utmost importance is attached to the cultural lens in understanding Indian society and life. It is this cultural aspect which offers a wholesome view of Indian way of life which is referred to as *Dharma* (ibid., 10). Upadhyay draws a clear distinction in the western notion of religion, the Islamic notion of *majhab* and ideology. For him, *dharma* when used in the context of India means culture. That India is a dharma dominant country means that Indian society and life is dominated by the cultural aspect.

Once culture has been established as the important aspect in the Indian context, the second question is to understand the nature of this culture¹¹⁹. Upadhyay discussed and rejected three main kinds of supporters who employ culture in their propositions for the Indian nation (ibid., 10). The first kind is that of supporters of dual cultures

¹¹⁹ He argues, “आज भी भारत में प्रमुख समस्या सांस्कृतिक ही है। वह भी आज दो प्रकार से उपस्थित है, प्रथम तो संस्कृति को ही भारतीय जीवन का प्रथम तत्व मानना तथा दूसरा इसे मान लेने पर उस संस्कृति का रूप कौन सा हो” (ibid., 10)?

(*dwi-sanskritiwadi*); they understand that there exist two kinds of cultures in the Indian milieu that are different from each other. They emphasize the possibilities of living together with two cultures. Upadhyay states that the *dwi-sanskritiwadi* believe that the question of struggle between Hindi and Urdu is the contest between these two cultures. He dismisses the attempts at founding another culture by mixing the two such as the attempt at Hindustani language. The Muslim League and the Indian National Congress belong to this group of *dwi-sanskritiwadi*. He states,

“हिंदी-उर्दू का प्रश्न वे हिंदुस्तानी बनाकर हल करना चाहते हैं तथा अकबर को राष्ट्र-पुरुष मानकर अपने राष्ट्र के महापुरुषों के प्रश्न को हल करना चाहते हैं। 'नमस्ते' और 'सलामालेकुम' का काम ये 'आदाब-अर्ज़' से चला लेना चाहते हैं” (ibid., 11)।

The second kind is that of those believers who believe that there exists a specific cultural setting for each region and subscribe to that. These are ‘multi-culture’ (*bahu-sanskritiwadi*) supporters who are exemplified in supporters of the demand for linguistic states and communists. The group that Upadhyay subscribes to and endorses is that of ‘one-culture’ (*ek-sanskritiwadi*). They believe in the existence of only one culture that is indigenuous to the nation and the other cultures that exist in the country are foreign to it (ibid.,). The other cultures must be assimilated in the one Indian culture. The RSS and some leaders in Congress are identified as part of this set of proponents. This group of believers dismisses the idea that there is another culture in India manifested in the Islamic culture. There is one culture that exists and everything else is a collection of foreign elements that are not related to the Indian milieu. It is important to note that such a position takes a leap ahead by declining any recognition to the presence of Islam and its culture as adding any value or relevance to the Indian context. He asserts,

“दो संस्कृतियों को मिलाने के अब तक असफल प्रयत्न हुए हैं किन्तु परिणाम विघातक ही रहा है। मुख्य कारण यह है कि जिसको मुस्लिम संस्कृति के नाम से पुकारा जाता है वह किसी मजहब की संस्कृति न होकर अनेक अभारतीय संस्कृतियों का सम्मूचय मात्र है। फलतः उसमें विदेशीपन

है, जिसका मेल भारतीयत्व से बैठना कठिन नहीं असंभव भी है। इसलिए यदि भारत में एक संस्कृति और एक राष्ट्र को मानना है तो वह भारतीय संस्कृति एवं भारतीय हिन्दू राष्ट्र, जिसके अंतर्गत मुसलमान भी आ जाते हैं, के अतिरिक्त और कोई नहीं हो सकता” (ibid., 13)।

Once it is declared that it was impossible to incorporate foreign cultural elements in the Indian culture, it is maintained that there can only be one Indian culture and one Indian Hindu nation. It may assimilate Muslims but only as part of the Hindu culture. According to him, the biggest mistake committed by the political leaders under colonial rule as well as in the post independence period is to recognize the independent existence of various communities. The divisions of communities based on religion, language and class are not to be seen as coterminous with the idea of one nation. The linguistically drawn states and the existence of Pakistan are the results of such a flawed politics¹²⁰. Nationalism cannot prevail without giving up on ‘selfish’ and ‘arrogant’ demands of their own language, religion and economic status. He argues,

“राष्ट्रीयता यदि कोई शक्तिशाली प्रेरणा है तो उसके चेतना क्षेत्र में मजहब का प्रवेश नहीं होता किन्तु आज तक हमारा प्रयत्न यही रहा है कि इन वर्गों का स्वतंत्र अस्तित्व मानकर उनका एकीकरण करें, ऐसा एकीकरण जिसमें किसी को कुछ भी न छोड़ना पड़े” (ibid., 14)।

Upadhyay then goes on to explicate his understanding of what the idea of Indian culture and Indian nation espoused by him entails. Indian politics and nationalism cannot be independent of Indian culture. The idea of integral humanism becomes of significance here. Upadhyay argues that a nation is not a mere collective of its citizens. Instead, it is a living unit that is characterized by its specific ‘chiti’ (soul). The ‘chiti’ of the nation is a

¹²⁰ He states, “अभी तक हमने संख्या बल का आधार मन है तथा जिस जिस चीज को ये वर्ग अपना कह कर खड़े हुए हैं उनको मिलाने का प्रयत्न किया है। अंग्रेजों से होने वाले सभी समझौतों तथा उस काल के सभी आंदोलनों में वही प्रश्न मुख्य रहा है तथा उसका परिणाम ‘पाकिस्तान’ हुआ यह मानने में किसी समझदार व्यक्ति को आपत्ति न होगी।... आज के नेता यह मान कर चलते हैं कि प्रत्येक भाषा-भाषी वर्ग का एक स्वतंत्र अस्तित्व है तथा ऐसे अनेक स्वतंत्र वर्गों को मिलकर समुच्च्य भारत की रचना करनी चाहिए। इसी का परिणाम हमारी ‘इंडियन यूनियन’ तथा उसका प्रस्तुत विधान है। इस कल्पना ने ‘प्रांतीय स्वतंत्रता’ नाम के सिद्धांत को जन्म दिया है तथा आज जब प्रांतों का एक भी अधिकार केंद्र अपने हाथ में लेता है तो प्रान्त प्रतिनिधि प्रांतीय स्वतंत्रता की दुहाई देकर प्रांतों को म्युनिसिपैलिटी के समक्ष बनाने के प्रयत्नों की निंदा करने लगते हैं। साम्प्रदायिक स्वतंत्रता का परिणाम यदि पाकिस्तान हुआ है तो इस प्रांतीय स्वतंत्रता का परिणाम क्या होगा, यह तो भविष्य ही बतलाएगा” (ibid., 14-15)।

fundamental and essential feature that is not a result of social, historical and cultural endeavors, rather it is an intrinsic, indispensable and substrative to the nation. It is not derivative and remains unaltered (ibid., 47). It is this 'chiti' that guides the progress of the nation. It is only when the Indian nation is in sync with its fundamental trait or soul that it is possible to achieve collective prosperity for all its citizens. He said,

“चिति उसके विकास की दिशा निश्चित करती है। इसी मार्ग पर आगे बढ़कर राष्ट्र अपने जीवनोद्देश्य को सिद्ध करता हुआ मानव की एकता की अनुभूति और उसकी प्रगति में योगदान कर सकता है” (ibid.,)।

The core or the 'chiti' of the Indian culture is in 'integrity' or oneness referred as *ekaatmavad*. Unlike other cultural-political systems, where all divisions, such as between nature and man, individual and society, and rich and poor, are deformations (vikriti), the essence of Indian integrity is mutual dependence and support, complementarity and compatibility among various divisions. An individual cannot be separated from the social whole and it is in the mingling of the individual with the whole that the true development lies. He writes,

“भारतीय संस्कृति एकात्मवादी है। सृष्टि की विभिन्न सत्ताओं तथा जीवन के विभिन्न अंगों के दृश्य भेद स्वीकार करते हुए, वह उनके अंतर में एकता की खोज कर उनमें समन्वय की स्थापना करती है।... पुरुष प्रकृति के संघर्ष से नहीं अपितु उनकी परस्पराधीनता से सृष्टि बनती और चलती है। अतः वर्ग विरोध और संघर्ष के स्थान पर परस्परावलंबन, पूरकता, अनुकूलता और सहयोग के आधार पर ही समग्र क्रिया कलापों का विवेचन और उनकी भावात्मक दिशा का निर्धारण होना चाहिए” (ibid., 50)।

Since the individual interest is not against the society and that of its institutions, there is little need for state's intervention in social matters. If there is a disagreement between the individual's faith and society's principles, the state intervention in attempting reconciliation cannot help. Based on these ideas about Indian culture, Upadhyay envisages the nation as a unified body of united people. The Indian nation is analogous to

a living body. Just as all the organs of the body work for the overall function of the organism, similarly each part of the nation is to aim towards the functioning of the nation. The various communities and divisions based on language, religion and region must adapt to the purpose of the nation¹²¹.

In this idea of the nation, the diversity of interests, cultural identities and preferences are hindrances to the nation and its unified presence. Upadhyay was firm and determined in his views that Pakistan was the result of an ‘un-Indian’ and separatist feelings that pervaded India. These sentiments continued to prevail even in post-independence India and can only be eliminated only once the Muslims in the country are assimilated as ‘Indians’ which means as adherents of Hindu nationalism and culture (ibid., 15). The then prevalent measures for recognition of special rights and minority status are results of artificial and political strategies to merge them in Indian union¹²².

On the question of the language for the nation, Upadhyay decries the lack of efforts and the will of the government in power to establish the Hindi language as the national language. He is critical of the recommendation in the Constituent Assembly that for definitional terms, root words from Latin or other foreign sources could be acquired (ibid., 24). For any new words and terms, the singular reliance must be on Sanskrit language. Even though new terms derived from Sanskrit root words may appear cryptic in the beginning, they shall gradually become part of the everyday parlance. He asserts,

“‘पार्लियामेंट’ शब्द आज सरल और ज्ञेय हो सकता है, किन्तु संविधान में केवल पार्लियामेंट शब्द के प्रयोग मात्र से काम नहीं चलता।... उसका भारतीयकरण करने का यदि प्रयास किया गया तो शिवजी की बारात बन

¹²¹ He writes, “राष्ट्र के सभी अंगों को अपनी रूप-रेखा, राष्ट्रीय स्वरूप और हितों के अनुकूल बनाना चाहिए न कि राष्ट्र को ही इन अंगों के अनुसार कटा छांटा जाये। सम्प्रदायों, प्रांतों, भाषाओं और वर्गों का तभी तक मूल्य है जब तक वे राष्ट्र हित के अनुकूल हैं अन्यथा उनका बलिदान करके भी राष्ट्र की एकता की रक्षा करनी चाहिए” (ibid., 15)।

¹²² He says, “मुसलमानों के भारतीय बनाने के लिए हमें अपनी गत अर्द्ध शताब्दी पुरानी निति बदलनी पड़ेगी। कांग्रेस ने हिन्दू मुस्लिम ऐक्य के प्रयत्न गलत आधार पर किये। उसने राष्ट्र की और संस्कृति की सही एवं अनादि से चली आने वाली एकता का साक्षात्कार करने तथा सभी को उसका साक्षात्कार कराने के स्थान पर अनेकता का ही साक्षात्कार किया तथा अनेको को कृत्रिम तथा राजनैतिक सौदेबाजी के आधार पर एक करने का प्रयत्न किया। भाषा, रहन-सहन, रीति रिवाजों सभी की कृत्रिम ढंग से रचना की। यह प्रयत्न कभी सफल नहीं हो सकते थे। राष्ट्रीयता और अराष्ट्रीयता का समन्वय संभव नहीं” (ibid., 28)।

जाएगी, भाषा नहीं। ... संस्कृत धातु से बना हुआ शब्द आज चाहे कुछ अनजान सा और कठिन प्रतीत हो किन्तु थोड़े ही दिनों में यह स्पष्ट हो जायेगा की वह शब्द हमारे लिए अधिक सुलभ एवं प्रमाणित दृष्टि से सूक्ष्म एवं यथार्थ भाव को व्यक्त करने वाला होगा” (ibid.,)।

Ultimately, the idea of the Indian nation is that of ‘Akhand Bharat’ which imagines the territorial expansion of its territories to occupy all the countries of the Indian subcontinent. It is with the idea of ‘integral humanism’ or *ekaatm-manavaad*, that Deen Dayal Upadhyay believed that such a unity could be achieved. Anything that does not sit well this project is rejected as short of nationalism. Culture is central to this idea of the nation but it is not defined in the way as other political leaders considered above, discussed the nation. In the next section, these differences are analyzed to highlight the heterogeneity in the project of nation aimed by political leaders who supported the Hindi language.

5.3 Diversity of the Political-Cultural Imaginations of the Nation

The political leaders discussed above belonged from different parts of United provinces and Bihar and in their political career, they travelled extensively to various other parts of the country. From 1900 onwards, the support for Hindi language could be found among many politicians in North India. As we have seen so far, the very meaning of the Hindi language was under debate during this phase. There were various reasons that were prevalent in the political discourse regarding the sympathy for the Hindi language. The differences in these reasons range from practical ones i.e. Hindi being the most widely spoken language to the ideological ones i.e. Hindi as the representative of ancient tradition and knowledge. The common nomenclature of Hindi language clouded the differences in the nature of the language. While some leaders supported the use of common Urdu words in the Hindi language, others were against it and sought the singular reliance on Sanskrit as the source of its vocabulary. These differences are important to be

highlighted because they bring out the diversity of imaginations that were prevalent among the political supporters of Hindi language.

The political leaders discussed above were found to be supporting the Hindi language early on in their political career. For Malaviya and Tandon, especially, their entry in politics was marked through the struggles for recognition of the Hindi language. Unlike them, for Lohia, the support for Hindi language became important in the later part of his political life when the main political force was that of the post independence Congress elites. For Upadhyay, the support for the Hindi language was a part of the larger struggle for the installation of Hindu culture and nationalism in the Indian nation. Rajendra Prasad supported the Hindi language in his attempt at uniting the country without upsetting the democratic framework in the country.

Malaviya's position offers an important insight about the journey of Hindi language in the Indian political discourse. Covering the span of the end of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, Hindi language, in the ideas of Malaviya and many other leaders, was centered around the question of the script. It was the Nagari script with words from Sanskrit, Khari boli Hindi, other regional languages and common words of Urdu that was seen as the Hindi language. In the twentieth century, as the struggle for independent India intensifies, Malaviya represents the idea of India that is foregrounded in a Sanskritized Hindi and upper caste Hindu imagination of the nation; but it does not seek the elimination or assimilation of the other. Such an idea of the nation has the brahmanical Sanskritized lens of Indian society as the vantage point of understanding the Indian nation.

Within this framework, the other in the form of Muslims, Urdu language and even the 'threatening' lower ranks of caste are viewed and accommodated. The question of Urdu language is settled not by asking or urging the authors to change their language or switch to Hindi. Rather, they are to continue but accept the dominance of Sanskritized Hindi with words of common usage from Urdu. The opposition from Muslims is analyzed from the lens of Hindu religion. That what is a common practice or accepted in Hinduism (for

example, music in worship), is not to be perceived as inconvenience or objection as alleged by other faiths. Unlike the Gandhian emphasis on the duty of the majority community to ensure the minority community, for Malaviya, the minority community is to accept the domination of the majority community without needing to assimilate or move out.

The brahmanical vantage point comes out starkly in the position about the caste system. While there is a recognition of the oppression and extremities meted out by the upper castes against the people ascribed to lower castes, the focus is not on its elimination but alleviation of its impact. The changes in the caste orthodoxy in terms of temple entry and access to scriptures is conditional upon the good conduct of the lower castes. The equality of blood lines and relations of food sharing are absolutely rejected which indicate the acceptance and continuation of ideas of purity and pollution. This imagination of the nation has a decided hierarchy for all kinds of diversity, linguistic, religious and social. It recognizes their varied position and importance to the Indian nation but within the framework of Sanskritized brahmanical imagination of the nation.

Such an idea of the nation is to be distinguished from the position expressed by Tandon. In Tandon's idea, while the hegemony of Sanskritized Hindi is maintained, the others in the form of regional languages and Urdu-Persian language are to be assimilated. The distinctiveness or the specificity of the other is to be reduced in the favor of the hegemon. An important aspect of such a view is that Hindi language, here, foregrounds the idea of the nation. It forms the most essential aspect of actualizing the vision of the nation so envisaged. The common language of Hindi has the role and responsibility beyond ensuring intercommunication between diverse regions. It is to inspire and remind people of the glorious past of the country. The speakers of the language are united in their minds about the continued grandeur of their civilization and their responsibility towards it. Just like Shukla's ideas about the unity of the people as the uniformity of minds and beliefs, this position of the nation, best expressed in the ideas of Tandon, firmly asserts that the unity of the nation can be ensured by maintaining uniformity of the language. It is the language and Hindi language to be specific that is capable of foregrounding such an idea

of nation and nationalism. Hindi, in this idea of the nation, is the central feature. It becomes important to note that unlike his mentor, Malaviya, Tandon did not associate with the Hindu Mahasabha. If his membership of Radhasoami sect is considered, it is notable that the latter drew members from a diversity of religions - Hindus and Sikhs, and castes. This is not to deny Tandon lacked the idea of the domination of a particular religious identity. Surely, he relied on the metaphors from Hindu mythology and customs to spread his political messages. But unlike Malaviya, the idea of the Indian nation, here, was not based on the Hindu vantage point. It was the Hindi language that formed the core of the nation.

It becomes starkly clear when examined in lieu of the ideas of Deen Dayal Upadhyay. The nation in this sort of an understanding demands a complete re-interpretation and restructuring of Indian society, history and its ambitions. This idea of the nation represents the position of Hindu extremism. The difference is that, unlike the other two positions discussed above, the existence of the other is not even recognized to begin with. The past is reinterpreted to present an eternal sole ownership of Hindu religion or culture. The idea of Hindu is understood in the modern sense of the territory bound, culturally homogeneous and mentally-emotionally united mass of people. The organic core of the nation rejects the presence of any multicultural influence at all. The others are treated as 'foreign' subject to elimination or complete assimilation. The words in use and texts in Hindi language are to be subjected to sanskritization.

The fundamental thrust of such an idea of the nation is to project orthodox Hinduism as the 'pure' and 'indigenous' core of the nation. The function of the nation is the maintenance of this purity by dismissing all kinds of diversity which are perceived as separatist or anti-national. The nation form demands that the 'individualistic', 'selfish' and 'separatist' tendencies be compromised and given up for the greater whole. The greater whole of the nation is understood in terms of Hindu culture and religion. It is not difficult to follow that such an idea of the nation aims for complete annihilation and assimilation of diversity of ethnic groups, religious identities, linguistic differences and cultural influences. A highly Sanskritized Hindi language that does not adjust words of

common usage based on other languages is a part of this larger political project of establishing Hindu hegemony of the Indian nation.

The support for Hindi language does not translate into Hindu dominated or hegemonic ideas of the nation is manifested in the positions offered by Prasad and Lohia. Prasad's support for Hindi language was based in the ideals of 'unity in diversity'; the nation-state that celebrated the heterogeneity of the cultures without subjecting its uniqueness to a foreign domination. Gandhian belief in the importance of replacing the language of foreign rule and civilization with language of the people influenced the ideas of language and nation in Lohia and Prasad. For Prasad, it was translated into a form of nationalism that aimed for a common platform of communication to ensure unity without undermining the differences and the uniqueness of the other. Since the focus of this kind of nationalism is not in recovering a perceived form of ancient Indian past or preserving a 'pure', 'indigeneous' form, the emphasis is placed on ensuring the democratic recognition and existence of ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity in the country. Further, it does not indicate an insecure form of nationalism that is threatened by the foreign cultural inspirations.

It comes close to identifying with Dwivedi's ideas about the language and the nation. Just as Hazari Prasad Dwivedi, whose ideas found the notions of indigeneity as limiting and obstructing in the growth of the potential of human beings and culture, Prasad emphatically rejects that such filtration should be applicable when it comes to enriching the language and the culture. Moreover, unlike the notion of minority assimilated under the demands of the majority, Dwivedi and Prasad present an idea of the nation where the minority demands and their specificities are accommodated and communicated. Their fears are not dismissed, rather accounted as genuine concerns for a democratic government to probe into. No doubt such an idea of the nation employs from Hindu metaphors, but it does not envisage a Hindu political or cultural hegemony of the Indian nation.

Lohia's support for Hindi language sought to emphasize the Gandhian ideals, even further, by removing the English language and the power it ascribed to certain people. Such an idea of the nation was distant from both the Hindi extremists who focused on the ancient glorious past and the English elites who viewed the Indian masses to be underdeveloped. Such an idea of the nation believed in the power of the masses and their vernacular languages as the source of inspiration for the nation. Hindi language was seen not in its Sanskritized or forged-mixed variety, rather in the form that existed or spoken among the masses. The unity of the people was not envisaged in a common cultural identity rather in the unity of the popular masses against the elites. Hindi was envisaged here not as a marker of a cultural particularity but as a class particularity. The elites were recognized with English and Sanskrit. It is against the control of the elite forces over the nation that the Hindi vernacular speaking forces are united. Hindi language figures here in the class based understanding of Indian society and politics.

Far from indicating a homogeneity of ideas of the nation, it emerges in the discussion in this chapter that Hindi language is diversified, moulded and adapted into different political conceptions by different leaders. The notion of what constitutes Hindi language, the role and function it is ascribed with and the ambitions associated with it, highlight the multiple possibilities that Hindi language came to mean and open for different leaders and thinkers. This heterogeneity of the ideas of Hindi language and the nation was an important aspect of the literary sphere as well as the political sphere. Each of these leaders bring to the forefront the diversity of ways in which Hindi language was being imagined in the political sphere. The different positions and views about Hindi that are projected through the five politicians also confirm the idea about heterogeneity of imaginations of the Indian nation. Each of these leaders inspired a large number of people from the places of power they held, from their positions of decision making, through their protests and dissent and through their writings and works.

In the ideas of some of the politicians, there are direct linkages with the arguments from the Hindi literary sphere, specifically Ramchandra Shukla and Hazari Prasad Dwivedi. The history of Hindi literature played an important role in the arguments about

emphasizing the rich heritage and connections that the Hindi language possessed. Just as Shukla and Dwivedi differed on the issue of sources from which the Hindi language could borrow from, the leaders discussed in this chapter also reflected the disagreements about the issue based on their ideas of the nation. Further, while some leaders have foregrounded their ideas of the nation around the question of Hindi language, other leaders have utilized Hindi language as a key aide in their larger political imagination. Yet, each of these politicians highlight the centrality of Hindi language in the twentieth century to the imaginations of the nation.

Conclusion

In this work, it has been argued that there are varying ways in which the Hindi language and the imagination of the Indian nation has been envisaged. Let me highlight some of the key arguments that can be elaborated from this work. Firstly, in the beginning of the thesis, I had raised the argument that the theories of nation and nationalism focus on the functional role of language in the process of nation building. A common language was seen as crucial to achieve some kind of cultural homogeneity among the people (Balibar 1991; Gellner 1983). Apart from enabling greater mobility and communication among the people, a common language also renders the imagination of the community which is national in nature (Anderson 2016). In this functional understanding of the nation, there was little emphasis on the role of language in imparting a distinct identity or character to the nation. There was an even more limited role assigned to the impact of debates among and within the language/s on the nation so founded.

Through this thesis, I have attempted to highlight that the process of constructing a language has a significant impact on the imagination of the national community. By analyzing the works of the two literary critics and thinkers, it was noted that there were underlying processes of envisaging distinct national communities with their own respective linguistic and religious indicators. Each of these political communities reflected an awareness of their sense of history, the inclusion and exclusion criterias of the members, their nature and aspirations. In the context of India and the Hindi speaking belt in general, it can be seen that the issue of language became an important part of nationalist politics because of its capacity to give birth to a specific notion of the nation. The struggle among languages for the status of the nation was a struggle for defining the identity of the nation. Thus, the thesis has argued that the imaginations of the nation, that were based in language, were not hollow of content or key features; rather they were distinctive holistic ideas of the nation, with their own interpretations of past and the future.

Secondly, another argument, that was identified with the focus on Indian context especially in the end of nineteenth century, was with regard to the gap between the ideas of the importance of one's own native language for public usage and the diversity of languages that could be found in the country as mother-tongue/s. I had argued through the ideas of Bharatendu Harishchandra that, in the end of the nineteenth century, there was an emphasis on one's own native language as a common language for the usage in public and personal spheres. In the beginning of the twentieth century, as Hindi language was being geared up for a greater role as the national language, the conundrum that loomed large, especially reflected in writings of Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi, was with the well-established presence of regional languages and dialects that were not to accept Hindi as the common mother tongue. Thus, there was a need that was felt to build a connection between Hindi language and the variety of regional languages across the country.

The efforts of the two thinkers, Shukla and Dwivedi, in defining the idea of Hindi language and its relation to the nation is to be seen as responding to this conundrum. To bridge the gap between the number of regional languages and the Hindi language, the latter is redesigned and reconceptualized to include a variety of languages and linguistic traditions within its fold. In the case of Shukla, it is the category of territorially bound physical and cultural environment of the country that impacted the inclusion criteria of languages that were accepted within the fold of Hindi language. In the case of Dwivedi, territory was dismissed as irrelevant, and the criteria was shifted onto an ethical ideal of the improvement and well-being of the individual. While the former concept of Hindi language invited fears of assimilation of regional languages, hegemony of a North Indian Sanskritized form of Hindi and the negation of particularities of distinct dialects and linguistic traditions, in the latter concept, the attempt was to mould the understanding of Hindi language in a way that included regional as well as 'foreign' linguistic traditions without assimilating them in the hegemonic Sanskritized form. The 'foreign' here is to be read as from outside the territory of the country, in reference to Shukla's emphasis on geographical boundary.

Thirdly, the thesis analyzed the idea of the nation that emerges in the works of Ramchandra Shukla to highlight one of the dominant forms of linking Hindi language and Indian nation. I have argued that there emerges a distinctive idea of Hindi language in the works of Shukla. There is an indomitable link between the language- which is constituted of words and meanings, the physical-cultural habitat in which it originated and the speakers of the language. By establishing this link, the speakers and the languages that belong to the same physical and cultural environment, are said to share a common bond. They are said to form a lived community which is based on exchanging popular sentiments and expression. In this idea of the Hindi language, all the languages that originated in the territory of India are included within the former's fold.

Further, the community of the speakers of this Hindi language has its history of Indian civilization that can be traced through the history of Hindi literature. I have argued that through his 'History of Hindi Literature', Shukla established a distinctive and essential notion of Indian civilization which was based in language. It highlighted that throughout the history of Indian civilization, the community of the people were alert and united in defending their uniform interests. Guided by the ideal of *lok-sangrah*, the responses of the people were motivated by preserving and protecting the interests of the community. These interests were defined as uniform and shared in territorial, religious and linguistic terms.

While territory is an important filter of deciding the membership of the community, it is not the ultimate one. I have argued that those linguistic and religious forces that were seen as unabiding or threatening to the status-quo of society were excluded from the community. The linguistic status-quo was defined in terms of those languages and traditions that reflected the physical and cultural environment of the country. Therefore, Persian and Urdu languages were excluded. The religious status-quo was defined in the sagun (determinate) form of Bhakti especially idealized in the Ramabhakti tradition. The caste status-quo was seen as the preservation of caste orthodoxy and Brahmanical supremacy as manifested in Tulsidas' *Ramcharitmanas*. The gender roles were maintained according to the lines of Ramabhakti tradition. It is in the preservation of

these interests that the essence of *Lok-sangrah* is identified in Shukla's ideas. Those who threatened these interests were seen as hostile and un-Indian or not truly Indian in nature. These were the forces of Islam, Persian and Urdu languages and Natha and Siddha sects etc.

The imagination of nation that emerges from Shukla's ideas is based in a crafted idea of Indian indigeneity from the prism of Hindi language. It produces a homogeneous and uniform picture of Indian society. The hostility between caste groups and religious sects within Hinduism are undermined to depict a monolithic community as a national community. Envisaged from a Brahmanical and patriarchal view, it does not question the authority of the upper caste North Indian male by insisting that it represents the truly indigeneous character of Indian society. The oppositions to this view-point are negated as un-Indian.

Fourthly, let me reiterate an important difference that emerges by analyzing the particularities of the specific categories, as was one of the aims of this thesis. In the second chapter of the thesis, I had discussed the ideas about language, civilization and nation as they emerged in the responses of the native intelligentsia to colonial discourse. One of the thinkers who figured in the discussion was Gandhi who had presented the idea of non-violence as crucial to the idea of Indian civilization. Non-violence was subsequently an important means of struggle and protest in the anticolonial movement. Both Shukla and Gandhi rely on the resources offered by Hinduism, especially revered Ramcharitmanas by Tulsidas, to present some of their ideas. Yet, there emerges a vast difference in their politics.

Shukla was critical of the idea of non-violence and satyagraha as a tool in the struggle for independence brought in by Gandhi. Now, this is not a difference in approach to politics; rather it reflects deeper differences in the socio-political ideologies of each thinker. For Shukla, violence constituted an essential aspect of Indian society. Within the Hindu caste orthodoxy, manifested in the role and function of the *Kshatriya* varna, violence maintained the balance that was needed to preserve the status-quo. The oppressor and

dissent were to be punished. After all, Ravana was not brought to transform by Rama but was killed for his transgression. Therefore, an abhorrence of violence, against the transgressor, was not supported in Shukla's ideas. His support for *Ramabhakti* tradition via Tulsidas included violence as an important means of achieving ends.

This disagreement with Gandhi over the issue of violence is related to another key argument that emerges in Shukla. It is my contention that despite the dominance of various forms of Krishnabhakti tradition of Vaishnava religion among the major writers of the nineteenth century (both Bankim and Harishchandra idealized the character of Krishna), there is a major shift that takes place in Shukla. Even though the character of Krishna had its own bouts of reference to violence as duty, the centuries of literature had undermined that aspect in favor of beauty, romance and aesthetics as key components of Krishnabhakti. The lament for the period of *ritikaal* is to be seen in this context. The needs of the modern nation, according to Shukla, demanded that Krishna be taken out of such limited aspects to emphasize his role as a king and a Kshatriya. However, that did not happen and as a consequence, it is the Ramabhakti tradition that is to be idealized in the Indian nation. I have argued that it is in lieu of his understanding of the modern nation, that was committed to maintaining the *lok-sangrah*, that Shukla prioritized a specific form of religiosity in his works.

Fifthly, the thesis argued that Shukla's ideas presented only one of the imaginations of the nation based in Hindi language. Another important alternative that emerged was in Hazari Prasad Dwivedi's ideas about language, religion and the nation. In Dwivedi's works, there emerges a redefinition of Hindi language that shifted the focus away from territory and the physical cultural boundaries to a notion of *sehaj* (unassuming) *bhasha* that focussed on enrichment and elevation of the human being. The important struggle and opposition in such a conception of language and the nation is not between the indigeneous and 'foreign'. The goal is not to establish a 'purity' of language and nation. Rather, the essential struggle that is highlighted is between the animalistic, base or brute tendencies of human beings and their capacity to rise above them. In lieu of this tussle that is identified by Dwivedi as of prime concern, it is the latter, i.e. the tendency to shun

the brute in favor of human values such as kindness, toleration and mutual learning that the language, religion and the nation must aspire for. With this focus on the greater humanity as the ethical ideal, Dwivedi defined the Hindi language. Such a notion of Hindi language is not dependent on the language of the priests (which can be casteist and elitist) or on the language of the street (which can be patriarchal¹²³) as the source to be followed. Rather, the focus is on cultivating a language that borrows from all available resources filtering on the basis that it empowers the higher ideals of human beings.

The idea of Indian civilization derived from the history of Hindi language that emerges in such a notion is very different from the picture drawn by Shukla. Islam, for example, is not reduced to a hostile aggressor, rather as a social, religious, philosophical and political challenge to then existing Indian society. The latter is not perceived as an ideal, uniform and homogeneous community of people. Rather, they are characterized by their own diversity and dissent of linguistic and religious traditions. Indian civilization represented the assimilation and adoption of these various diversifying tendencies in the form of Islam, Natha and Siddha sects (which contained remnants of Buddhism) and Brahmanical orthodoxy into a collective stream.

Further, against the ideal of Ramabhakti tradition, it is the figure of Kabir who is highlighted in Dwivedi's ideas about religious identity. Kabir rejected any pandering of dominant religious forms such as Brahmanical Hinduism, Islam and even Natha-Siddha sects. The focus in Kabir's religiosity is on establishing the well-being of the individual. The individual is worthy not because of or according to their socially-embedded caste and gender based roles; rather it is in their identification as unaffiliated human beings, without any social indicators, that they must be recognized as deserving respecting respect and equality. In the idea of the nation that emerged in this understanding, the idea of unity is not seen as that of a homogeneous and uniform given. Instead the focus is on cultivating a unity through an acknowledgement of the diversity of resources and

¹²³ To briefly explain, Badri Raina had noted (rightly so, in my opinion) the misogynistic and patriarchal nature of the vernacular languages especially in the Indian context (Raina 1994). The streets being the public sphere dominated by men can also be seen as manifesting the language of men, which could be offensive or demeaning to women. Many educated women revert to English language from the vernaculars in order to avoid any unlikable situation.

identities. All forms of linguistic and religious traditions are to be scanned through a critical scrutiny from the perspective of the individual. It is the aspiration of the achievement of this ethical ideal, that is the well-being of the human being, that forms the basis of the nation.

Finally, I have argued in the thesis that the differences in the idea of Hindi language and the Indian nation moved between the literary and political spheres. The resonance of these debates could be found in the then contemporary political sphere. I have argued that among the political leaders who supported the Hindi language for the status of national language, there were wide differences in their perception of its nature and definition. Such differences highlight the diversity of views under the common term 'Hindi' that became popular from the 1940 onwards. Further, these differences also reflected the heterogeneity in their ideas about the nation as well. I have argued that the support for Hindi language cannot be interpreted towards a shared view of the nation. Through the analysis of writings and speeches of Madan Mohan Malaviya, Rajendra Prasad, Purushottamdas Tandon, Rammanohar Lohia and Deen Dayal Upadhyay, it emerged that while each of the leader prescribed huge importance to Hindi language, there was difference in how their respective ideas about Hindi came to play a role in their political imagination of the nation.

For Malaviya, the question of Hindi language was closer to the question of Nagari script. The others in the form of Urdu language were inseparable from Hindi. Further, even though the vantage point for viewing the religious and caste question in Malaviya's case was based in Brahmanical Hinduism, his idea of the nation did not aspire for the annihilation or elimination of the other. It aimed at mitigating the differences, whether of caste oppression or religious faiths. Unlike Malaviya, Tandon and Upadhyay hinged towards redefinition of Indian nation. For Tandon, it was through Hindi language that the Indian nation was to be imagined. In Upadhyay's ideas, the focus was on orthodox Hinduism that defined the essential Indian identity. His idea of Hindi language rejected any scope for words from sources other than Sanskrit. A highly Sanskritised Hindi language was an essential cultural aspect in his idea of nation.

Contrasted with the three are Prasad and Lohia as supporters of different and more accommodating ideas of Hindi language. For Prasad, Hindi language was to be open to sources from all languages- regional as well as foreign. In his idea of nation, the emphasis was not on founding a 'pure' indigeneity as the basis, but on the enrichment of the people from the diversity of cultures irrespective of their geographical location. For Lohia, Hindi language was to be seen as a challenge and opposition to the power bestowed in upper caste, upper class and English language dominated politics. In his idea of the nation, Hindi language was an important medium to democratize the nation by opening the identification of power from elite to the lower class, marginalized and lower caste people.

I have argued that while Prasad's ideas about Hindi language and nation can be seen as closer to Dwivedi's ideas, Tandon's views emerge closer to Shukla's position on Hindi language and the Indian nation. The mutual interactions between the literary and political sphere of the early twentieth century affirm the exchange and influence of ideas among different thinkers and leaders. I have presented in the thesis that through the analysis of specific meanings and connotations that are attached to different categories, here identities, it is possible to highlight the heterogeneity of ideas. The varying ideas about Hindi language, the particularities about Hindu faith and the notions about the other have been employed to argue plural ideas of nation and nationalism within majoritarianism.

If we look at the contemporary period, there are different kinds of narratives around Hindi language that can be found in Indian politics. In the year 2021, some of these were rampant in various headlines from across the country. One set of arguments allege and criticize the fears of the imposition of Hindi language. The states of Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Karnataka reacted strongly to the insistence of Hindi language in various mediums¹²⁴. Another set of arguments acknowledged that because of the expansive use of

¹²⁴ <https://www.telegraphindia.com/india/tamil-nadu-boycotts-meet-over-hindi/cid/1815906>;
<https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/karnataka/2020/dec/08/oppn-alleges-nep-being-used-to-impose-hindi-says-mother-tongue-must-be-priority-2233194.html>;
<https://theprint.in/india/no-hindi-imposition-kolkata-institute-students-protest-over-notice-to-meet-hindi-targets/628612/>

Hindi language, there is greater exchange of knowledge from literature and cultural resources from different languages in the country¹²⁵. In its first kind of avatar, Hindi language in regions where it is not the primary language spoken by the people; it has invited fears of wiping out the regional languages and mother tongues. In the July 25, 2021 edition of 'The Arunachal Times', writer M Panging Pao noted the massive expanse of Hindi language in the state as can be found in the proceedings in the state assembly, election campaigns, in public spaces like schools, transport and hospitals and the popularity of Hindi cinema. The writer notes two tendencies that have risen with the spread of Hindi language. While it has led to a greater sense of nationalism among the people, at the same time, it has also led to the decline in native languages¹²⁶. Apart from highlighting the continued importance of Hindi language in Indian politics, such dual tendency also brings out the continued debate around the acceptance or adoption of Hindi language.

Through the heterogeneity of ideas about Hindi language discussed in the thesis, it is possible to approach the subject for different possibilities. If the imposition of Hindi language is identified with Sanskritized, Uttar Pradesh dominated and Brahmanical Hindu cultural-religious identity in Indian politics, it is to invite opposition from other states such as mentioned in the above instance. With other imaginations of Hindi language that could accommodate diverse religious, folk and linguistic traditions without attacking their particularity, the question is if it is possible to replace English language as a common medium of communication across the country.

In my reading, a detailed research about the post-independence experience with the question of language and nation along with the heterogeneity of ideas about Hindi language expressed in this thesis could reveal more democratic possibilities. In the discussion around the question of language politics in the post-independence Indian state, it is helpful to not obliterate and rather take into emphasis the heterogeneity of the ideas

¹²⁵<https://www.thehindu.com/society/history-and-culture/how-hindi-helped-to-build-a-bridge-to-manipur-i-language-and-culture/article35282002.ece>

¹²⁶ See <https://arunachaltimes.in/index.php/2021/07/25/hindi-arunachals-new-mother-tongue-2/>

of Hindi language. The contestations and debates within the Hindi literary sphere, as shown in this thesis, can be utilized for opening more democratic discussions in post-independence Indian politics. Another important direction that can motivate further research is by including the discussion of more thinkers from various spheres for political analysis. In my thesis, I was restricted to two such figures because of the limitations of space. But from the results and experience of this work, it can be safely argued that the inclusion of diverse thinkers from different spheres of public expression into political thought and analysis can lead to more possibilities of exploration towards democratic resolution of political conflicts.

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