

# 'Janak Dulari Collection' in the National Archives of India

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It is well known that National Archives of India is the custodian of permanent records of the Government of India and the premier archival institution in the country. Set up at Calcutta in 1891 as *the Imperial Records Department*, it shifted to Delhi in 1911 and was rechristened **National Archives** in 1947. The millions of records housed here depict the evolution of India from a British colony to a free modern nation. In addition, the rich collection of Private Papers and Oriental records provides valuable supplementary source material to the information contained in the records and official documents. Small wonder that the possessions of the Department have been described as the richest source-for the study of British India.

What is, however, relatively unknown are the priceless treasures in the **National Archives Library** which are still shrouded in obscurity and anonymity since most of these have not yet been adequately explored or made known to scholars. Although the Library has a rich collection of over 1,70,000 rare books, Volumes, Gazettes, Travel Accounts, Reports, Parliamentary Debates, Native Newspapers etc. the focus of attention has been primarily on Gazettes, Reports and books which are frequently consulted by scholars and individuals apart from Government agencies. An attempt is being made here to introduce one such Collection of documents known as the **Janak Dulari Collection** which was received in the Department Library in 1972.

The *Janak Dulari Collection* is the brainchild of the late Shri Annapurnanad, a resident of Varanasi. A keen enthusiast of journalism with an interest in philately and numismatics, he developed a passion for journals which led him to acquire the Inaugural Issues of as many as 300 magazines and journals going back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Published from different places, which includes Delhi, Bombay, Lahore, Varanasi, Allahabad, Calcutta, Patna etc., these are primarily in Hindi with a few being in Sanskrit and Urdu. The Collection was given to the National Archives by his wife Smt. Janak Dulari.

A unique characteristic of the Collection is the wide variety of subjects and issues covered in the articles, as well as the high level of awareness and candor expressed therein. The titles of the journals themselves indicate their flavor. *Naar, Agrasar, Achoot, Janmat, Rashtrapati, Asha, Hans, Tapohhoomi, Hunter*, are titles which evoke one's interest and it is interesting to find articles and features on issues like social ills, women emancipation, world history, national movement, patriotism, politics, at a time when the country was engaged in the

Freedom Struggle against the British on one the hand, yet combating social evils and problems of illiteracy on the other.



It is equally interesting to note that several leading lights were associated with these magazines in some or other capacity. Among them were Munshi Premchand, D. P. Mishra, Banarasidas Chaturvedi, Subhadra Kumari Chauhan who were editors of some of these journals while others like Vijaylakshmi Pandit, Madan Mohan Malaviya, Mira Behn, Madame Cama contributed by way of their inspiring articles.

The earliest journals in the Collection belong to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The first one titled *Brahmasammelan* is in Sanskrit and was published in 1850 from Benaras. Another journal, also published from Benaras in 1873, is titled *Harish Chandra* and is bilingual. Two interesting articles in this journal, both in English deserve mention. One is an article titled 'Hindee Bhasha' in which the author writes:

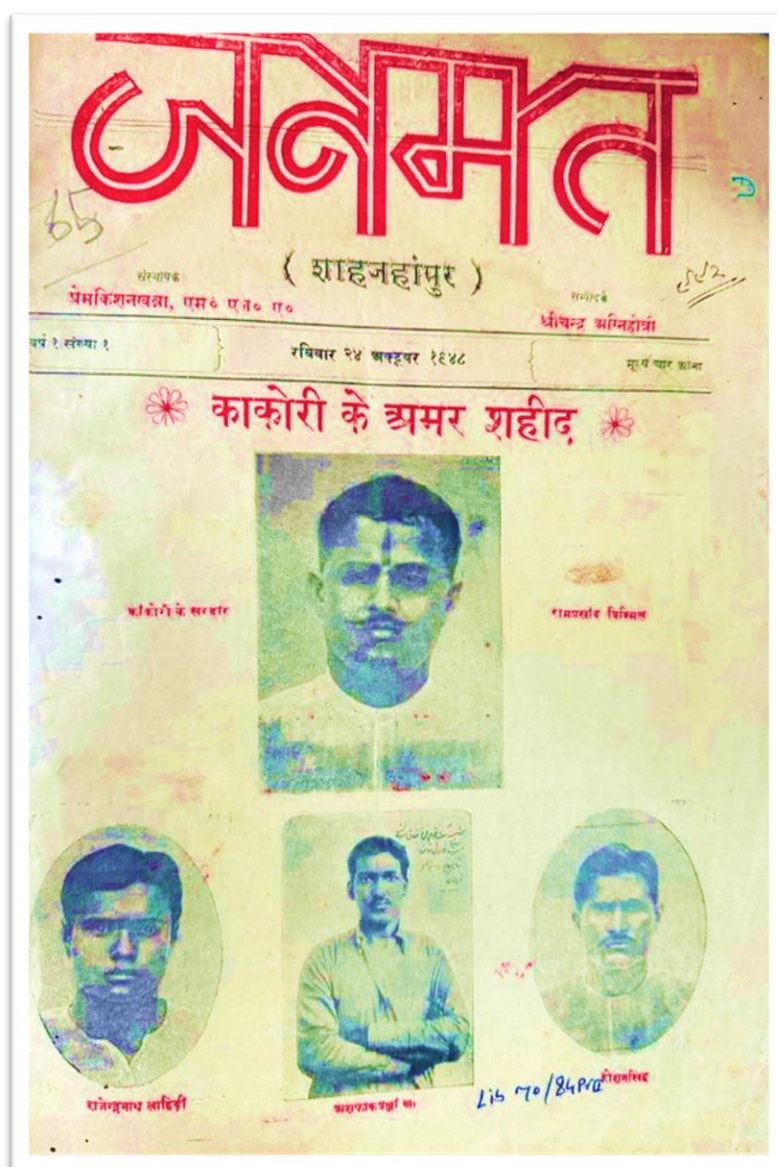
"the principle which ought to guide us in our exertions should be such as is calculated to render our vernacular by whatever name you may call it useful and

intelligible to all. But do not - *while pretending to guard against the introduction of foreign words* - fill the language with obsolete Sanskrit idioms. One is as distasteful as the other”.

The comments articulated in the second article titled ‘The Present State of the Middle-Class Men in Northwestern Provinces’ are no less striking and prophetic in today's context, as is evident from the following lines:

"The people of the Northwestern Provinces are conservative and are quite against the innovation of anything, whether social, moral or intellectual reform and hence the progress is slow."

The most popular subjects found among the articles in these journals relate to nationalism and political and social awareness. Perhaps the most fascinating issue is *Janmat* published in October 1947 from Shahjahanabad (Delhi).



Featuring the ‘Kakori Conspiracy Case’, it has on its cover page, photographs of the four heroes of the Case namely Ramprasad Bismil, Ashfaqullah Khan(hailed as the first Muslim to be hanged

for conspiring and revolting against the State), Rajendranath Lahiri and Roshan Singh while the inner title page carries pictures of members of the Defense Committee including Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi and Gobind Ballabh Pant.

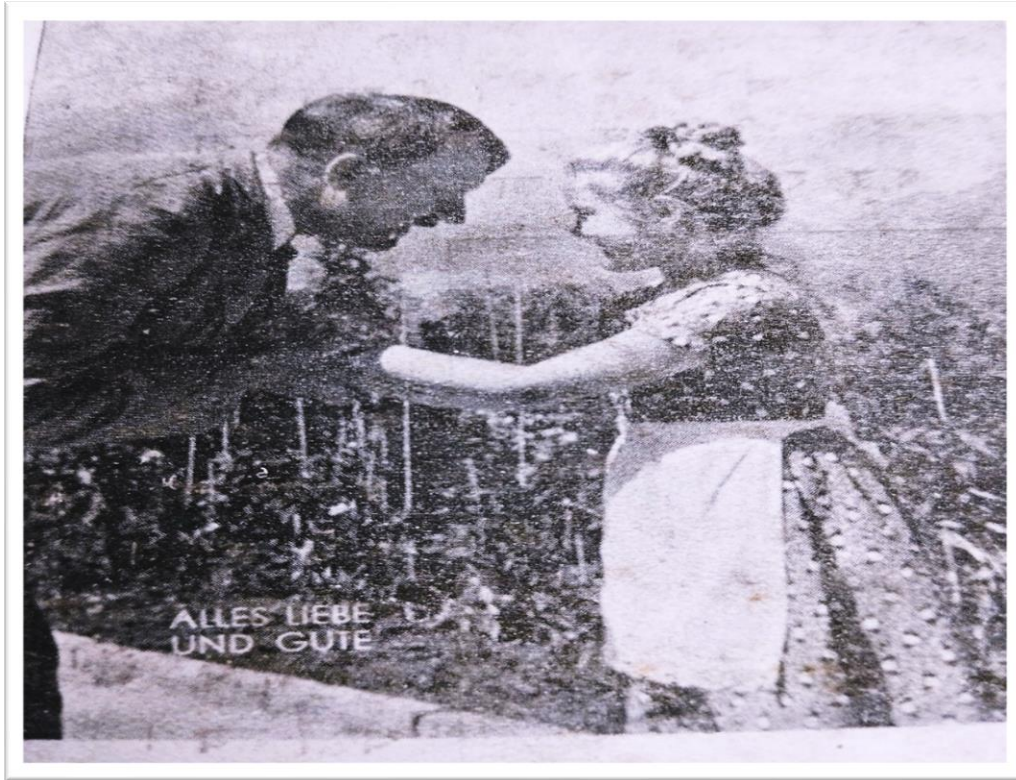
Inside the journal, one comes across pictures of some other unsung heroes like Manmanthnath Gupta, Sachindranath Bakshi, Manmohan Gupta and Shivendranath Sanyal. Bismil's favourite poem "*Sarfaroosh ki Tamanna*" (made famous by the film 'Shaheed') as well as Ashfaquallah Khan's pet verse called "*Maut*" are also reproduced here. Adding to this are poignant articles recounting the beliefs, philosophy and patriotic deeds of the four heroes.

Many other journals are replete with similar articles. The *Rashtrapati* of September 1937, published from Sitapur, carries a feature which has been debated for decades and is relevant even today. It is titled 'Vandematram aur Muslim Sanskriti' and highlights the various problems confronting the Congress led ministries in the post-election scenario (1937). It then offers a very simple solution to this issue, namely, constitution of a Sub Committee to examine all such anthems/songs while taking care to accommodate Muslim sentiments and their culture.

Another journal *Agrasar*, published from Delhi in July 1938 features a poem titled 'Aage Badhe Challenge' by Jawaharlal Nehru on its cover page as well as an article by the well-known revolutionary Viren Chattopadhyaya. Rabindranath Tagore's 'Ekla Chal Re' has also been reproduced along with its summary in Hindi. Another article 'Ekta Ke Natak ka Pratham Patakshep' analyses the essence of Gandhi-Jinnah correspondence on Hindu-Muslim relations.

Similarly, *Adarsh Bharat* published from Lahore in April 1934, carries an informative article 'Bharatiya Sabhyata Ka Prasar' highlighting the salient features of Indian culture and its influence in other countries while *Asha* published from Kashi in 1937, contains two interesting articles: 'Civil War in Spain and its International Ramifications' (by an unknown student of politics), and 'Bharatiya Itihas ka Adhyayan' which discusses various theories on Indian historiography.

Another eye-opening feature can be found in *Janmabhoomi* of March 1938 in which Prof. Janardhan Mishra has written about his visit to Germany in 1934 at the height of Hitler's reign. Recounting his experience of German life the author refers to his conversation with an ordinary hotel employee and is surprised to find the level of his political maturity.



Hitler patting a little girl

While admitting that Hitler has generally done good work, the employee castigates him for creating a one-party rule which in his opinion is dangerous for the welfare of the common man since it offers no mechanism to check arbitrariness and salvage the fate of the people. It is, therefore, always good to have an opposition in politics. Hitler seems to have destroyed this. In some manner, the author feels it compares very well with the situation in India under the British, and the Congress: both holding the position of eminence, one as the supreme Imperial power and the other as the leading political party. Interestingly the article carries a telling picture of Hitler patting a little girl. Another very enlightening article is titled 'Bhartiya Jeevan mein Buddhivad' by Pandit Rahul Sankritayan .

Another Daily *Lokmat* dated 25 February 1930 and edited by Dr. D. P. Mishra carries a message by Motilal Nehru in his own handwriting lauding the vision of the paper and hoping that '*Lokmat, kabliyat aur himmat se desh ki khidmat karega*'. There is also a column by Bipin Chandra Pal titled '*Mahatma Gandhi aur Gambhir Rajniti*' as well as a news feature on the **Khalsa College Bomb Case** in which five students were arrested. For students of economics, there is detailed information on the share market.

The welfare of the poor, the under-privileged and depressed sections of society also figure prominently in these articles. *Hans*, edited by Munshi Premchand which appeared in March 1930, carries a very interesting editorial 'Dominion aur Swarajya' in which he makes a bold comment:

"It is possible that today England does not heed the voice of the poor...but the day the poor rise and realize that England is their enemy, England will have to suffer. It cannot suppress them for long".

Similar sentiments about the under-privileged and depressed classes come across in *Achoot* published in August 1947 from Lucknow. Edited by Niranjanlal Kureel, it carries a frank editorial urging upon the Congress to prove its mettle and "*ensure that Indian independence meant freedom for the common man*". It should lead to emancipation of the depressed classes, of women and salvation of the Hindu religion from the clutches of unscrupulous elements.

The journal also carries news items about the appointment of Dr. Ambedkar as the Union Law Minister and of Yogendra Nath Mandal as Protem Speaker of Pakistan Assembly. An interesting item is the declaration of three days full paid leave (August 14-16) to all workers by the U.P. Mill Owners Federation for the celebration of the Independence Day. There is also a special feature on the need for reservations in Government jobs.

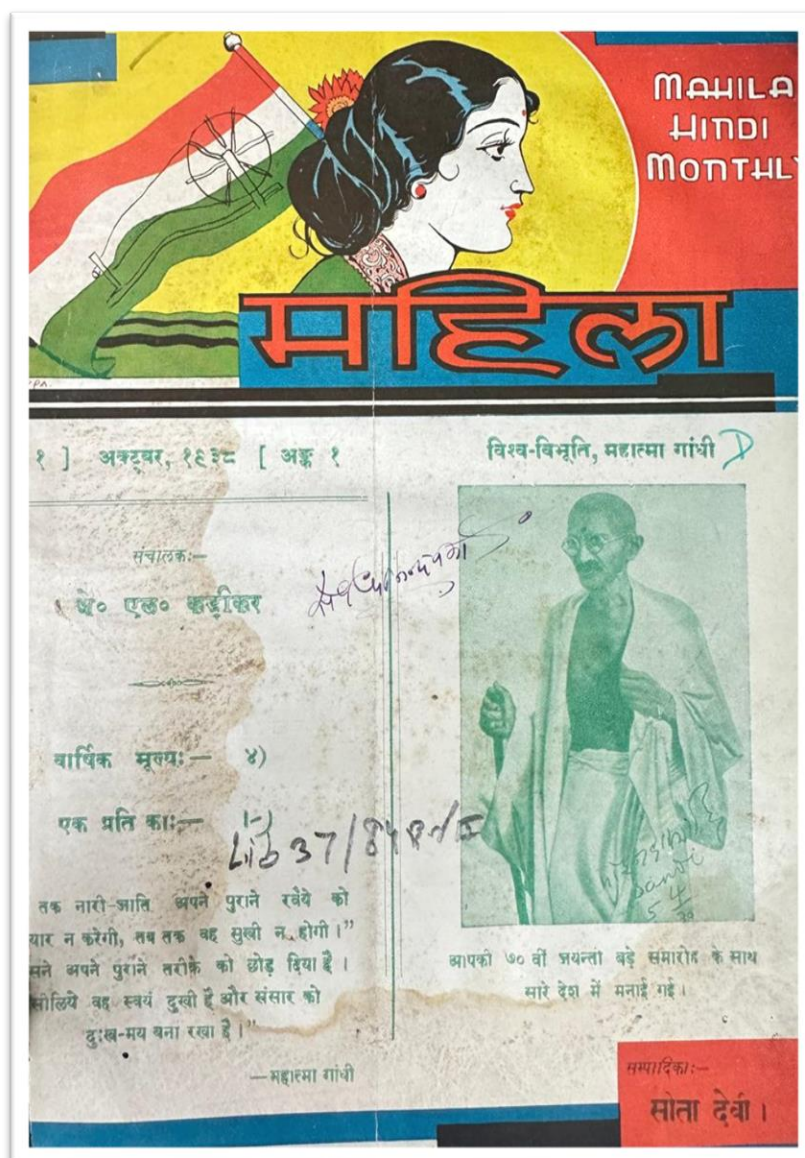
Similarly, *Janmat* carries the first part of the series on 'Our Villages' highlighting the problems faced by the poor due to unemployment, exploitation, illiteracy etc. Women and women studies have also been covered extensively in the journals. *Naari*, published from Delhi in September, 1947 stands out in this respect. Patronized by Vilaylakshmi Pandit and edited by Subhadra Kumari Chauhan, this issue represents a bold effort to champion the cause of women emancipation, women rights and other social problems concerning women. On its cover page is a verse from "**Kamayani**" entitled 'Naari'. While its introduction carries a philosophical treatise on 'Ishwar mein Vishwas' by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, this issue also has inspiring articles about the changing role of women.

The article '*Women in Foreign countries*' is an attempt to analyze the status of women in England and an appeal to Indian women to take note of the situation there. 'Mahilaon ke Adhikar: Rajniti mein Noon' and 'Aaj ki Naari' emphasize the need to respect the rights and responsibilities of women in keeping with the demands of the times and to urge upon the need to recognize the merits of women emancipation.

Another hard-hitting article 'Naari - Pati ki Sampatti' by B. B. Pararkar castigates the existing social values and argues that unless we rid ourselves of the feeling that women are nothing but private properties of men and have no rights of their own, there can be no reform in our society. Mira Behn has also contributed a note on the National Flag there while another column entitled 'Hamara Ghar' lays down recipes for some mouthwatering dishes like 'Lauki ka kofta', 'Mysore Pak', 'Chane ki Kheer'.

Likewise, *Asha* published in 1927 carries an article examining the position of women in early Hindu society, while another article in *Adarsh Bharat* titled 'Respected position of Women in Ancient India' narrates the kind of freedom enjoyed by women in those days, which were more than what most men enjoyed in the Twentieth century. Another journal *Mahila* published from Ajmer in 1931 and edited by Rampyari Devi Chandrika carries a series of articles about women and woman welfare.

Some of these articles are 'Mahila Samaj aour Maryada Purushottam Shri Ram Chandra', 'Bharat mein vartman Mahila Andolan'. 'Vir Kshtrani Jaya' being the deeds of valour by the daughter of the Raja of Chittor. 'Women of Iran', on the other hand, depicted the changing role and character of women reform in Iran. It mentions the gesture of one of their Cabinet Ministers who freed his daughter from the ritual of Purdah. There is also a news item about the 'Awadh Mahila Sammelan' held in March 1931 where one of the recommendations made was to constitute **Sharda Committees** in every province to keep a check on child marriage.



*Bhartendu* published in October 1928, contains a special feature on Women Education highlighting the academic achievements of some brilliant women like Sheila Roy, Manisha Sen, Sarla Ghosh, Sharda Devi Naidu, among others. The Collection is equally a delight for lovers of literature, and one comes across several stories and features on literature and literary activities. *Adarsh Bharat* (1934) contains the first part of a series entitled 'Jiwan our Sahitya' by Jagdish Lal Sharma which is an analysis of the salient features of contemporary literature. *Janmabhoomi* (1938), includes two heart wrenching stories 'Garib ki Beti' and 'Aadmi ka Maans' in addition to an analytical feature entitled 'Impact of Sufism on Indian Poetry' by K. L. Mukhopadhyay.

Mr. Gappilal Sharma, MA, B.Sc., L.L.B., MRSA' by Shriyut Shriday and 'Banphool Ban Mein Bhi Sookha' are two delightful pieces in *Asha* (1927); while the other *Asha* (1937) contains two interesting features, namely 'Kabir Sahitya ka Adhyayan' and 'Maithili Aur Vidyapati' as well as a short story 'Anant' by V. P. Verma. It also pays an obituary to Premchand recalling his contribution to social values through his memorable stories.

In fact, *Hans* edited by Premchand carries delightful stories and spoofs like 'Madhu' by Jaishankar Prasad, 'Photography' by Jainendra Kumar, 'Do Parmeshwar' by S.L. Sudarshan followed by 'Juloos' by Premchand himself. Similarly, *Nirala* edited by Benarsidas Chaturvedi (published in October 1947) contains a translation of a well-known story by the famous Russian author Gogol titled 'Naak kho Gayee'. A striking characteristic of these stories is not only their clarity and lucidity but also the strong social message contained therein.

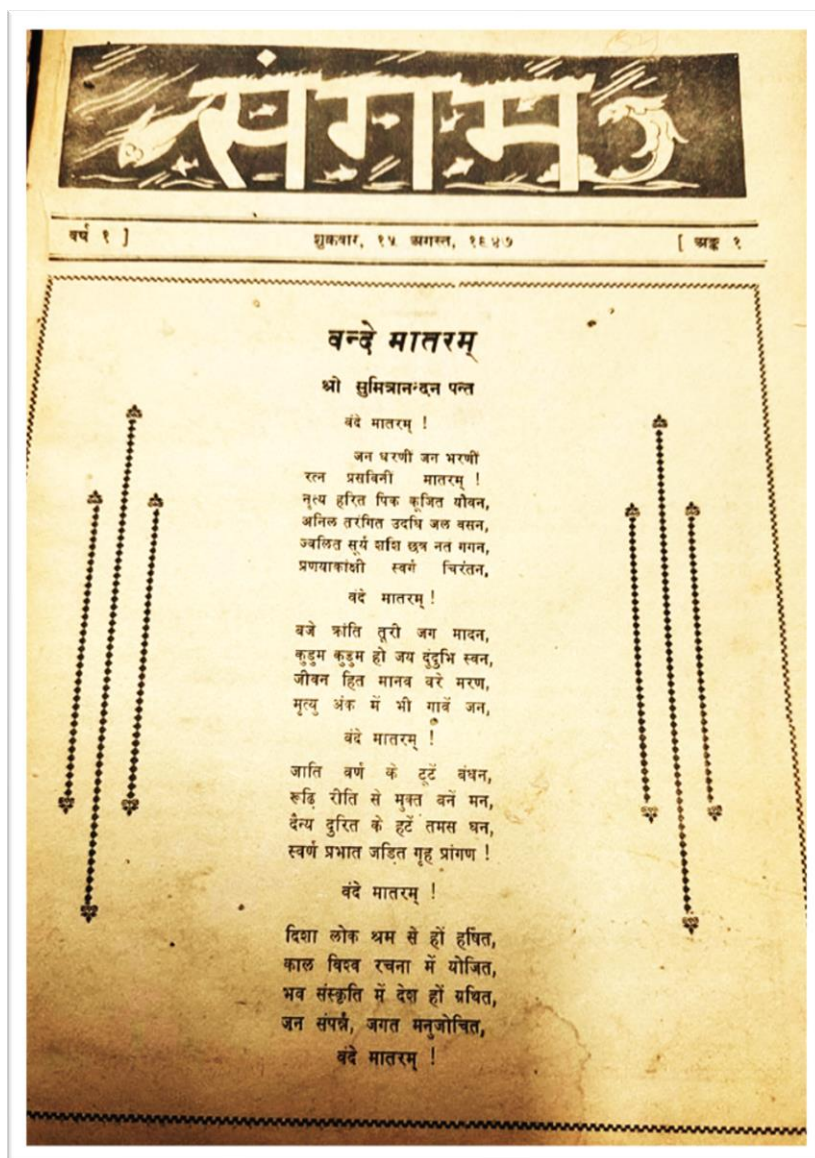
*Manorama* (1924) edited by Mahavir Prasad Malaviya and published from Prayag carries several interesting features. Noteworthy among these, is a feature on 'Bhaktamal', an epic in Hindi Vaishnav literature penned by Nabhadass and Priyadas. There is also an article called "Sahitya aur Chandra" highlighting the symbolism of the moon in literature. It draws profusely from the works of Homer, Keats, and Shelly, who have used this symbolism very effectively. The following lines from **Homer** stand out.:

"As when the moon refulgent lamp of night-  
O'er heaven's clear azure spreads her sacred light  
When not a breath disturbs the sleep serene.  
A burst of glory bursts from all the skies" .

'Kala aur Sahitya' deals with the relationship between literature and the arts while 'Urdu Ke Kuchh Vartman Kavi' examines the works of some leading contemporary Urdu poets



like Mohd. Hadi Aziz, Maulana Safi, Zakir Husain Sakib, Hasrat Mohani, Maulana Mehdi Nasiri, Braj Narain Chakbast and Syed Majid Ali.



*Bhartendu* similarly carries an exclusive analysis of Bhartendu Harishchandra's famous work 'Mudrarakshas' besides book reviews and virtual tour of the British Museum (London). An exclusive source of pure humour can be found in 'Sanishchar' edited by Shyamvijay Pandey and published from Kanpur (1938). It contains a poem by Anathnath titled 'Main Kaun Hoon', which is very humorous. The other stories and poems have their titles as 'Mundan mein Kavi Sammelan', 'Cinema Malikon ki Ajeeb Kahaniyan', 'Leaderane Kaun' etc.

*Pranishastra*, a journal devoted to dissemination of literature on zoological matters in Hindi, offers fascinating material for those interested in animal, marine and insect life. First published in 1948, the Journal was patronized by several leading personalities including Pandit Ravi Shankar Shukla, Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, Padmaja Naidu, Dr. Sampurnanand, Dr. P. D. Tandon. Its first issue carries a message from Dr. Radhakrishnan as follows:

*"I hope your enterprise of publishing literature in Hindi on zoological issues will prove a great success."*

Apart from carrying information about researches on animal and insect life, one can find here well researched and profusely illustrated articles on a variety of subjects like 'Study of Fishes in Ancient Hindu Society', 'Migration of Birds', 'Parasitic Worms', 'Monarchy and Democracy among Insects with special reference to Bees', 'Problems of locusts and their Remedies', 'Insect society and Human World'. There is also a feature by Dr. N. G. Bahl, Head of the Department of Zoology, Lucknow University about his research on 'Earthworms'.

Another article by Sh. Madan Mohan Nagar takes the reader on a tour of the Zoological Section of the State Museum Lucknow and provides a detailed analysis of various exhibits featuring a host of animals such as Lion, Hippopotamus, Giraffe, Kangaroo, Antelope etc.

(Note: The aforesaid description is intended to provide an overview of the rich material available in the **Janak Dulari Collection**, which has something for both the serious as well as the average reader. A number of other Collections of documents are still awaiting examination and their study may well reveal more fascinating aspects of our glorious past.)

Weblink to **National Archives of India**: [www.nationalarchives.nic.in](http://www.nationalarchives.nic.in)

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