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### TOWARDS A HISTORIOGRAPHY OF MAITHILI LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

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#### 1. Maithili: Speech Area

Grierson (1908) had described the speech area of Maithili to be the entire districts of Darbhanga and Bhagalpur of Bihar in the early 20th century. In addition, he had enlisted Maithili as a language spoken by the majority of people living in the districts of Muzaffarpur, Monghyr, Purnea and Santhal Parganas, although his population estimates based on his survey done in 1891 were not agreed upon by all. Grierson (1909) also wrote in his 'Introduction to Maithili' that Mithila has always been distinguished in common parlance as a distinct "country with its own traditions, its own poets, and its own pride in everything belonging to itself". During the Moghul period, a part of the northern speech area was permanently annexed by the Kingdom of Nepal. Therefore, at present, a large tract of the Terai region of Nepal is to be taken as a part of the Maithili speech area, as according to the official figures, about 13% population of Nepal—mostly living in this region, have returned Maithili as their mother tongue in Nepal.

During the Moghul era, the region was called 'Tirhut' (cf. 'Tirhuta' was the name of the writing system employed by Maithili), and it formed a *sarkaar* (= division) of the *subah* (= province) of Bihar. Even in the early British period, as the District Gazetteer of Muzaffarpur says, there indeed was a large geographical space under the 'Tirhut division' bound on the north by Hajipur, Monghyr and Purnea divisions. The British used 'Tirhut' to designate a revenue division spreading over the districts of Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga, Champaran and Saharsa. Jayakanta Mishra (1976: 2) describes its area to be spreading over the following districts: "[this comprises roughly the districts of] Muzaffarpur, Sitamarhi, Vaishah, Darbhanga, Madhubani, Samastipur, Saharsa, North Monghyr, North Bhagalpur and a part of Purnea in the Indian republic and those of Rautahat, Saralahi, Saptari, Mohatari and Morang in the Kingdom of Nepal".

According to the Census of India 1901 (cf. Vol. VI, Pt 1; ch 10, pp. 32), at the turn of the present century Maithili was spoken in the following regions:

- i. all Darbhanga and Bhagalpur,
- ii. 6/7th of Muzaffarpur,
- iii. 1/2 of Monghyr,
- iv. 2/3rd of Purnea, and

- v. 4/5 of the so-called 'Hindi' speakers (enumerated in the Census) under the Santhal Parganas.

It may be worth mentioning here that the earliest reference to the geographical space called 'Mithila' is found in 'Alphabeticum Brammhanicum' (published in 1771, vol. 5.1; pp. 23, as reported in Subhadra Jha 1958). The name used then was 'Touritiana'. The references to 'Mithila' in the RaamaayaNa and Yajnavalkasmruti are too well known to be mentioned. According to 'Mithilaa Maahaatmya', a Sanskrit work, "Mithila is the country bounded on the north by the Himalaya mountains, on the south by the Ganges, on the west by the river Gandak, and on the east by the river Koshi". The trouble with this definition is that the river Koshi as well as the other two changed their course so much that Shillingford (1895) had shown how the river shifted nine times between 1600 A.D. and 1893 A.D. The maps prepared by Grierson (1908:12) in his Linguistic Survey of India, Vol. V, pt. 2 show a number of differences in comparison to another map, made out by some Maithili organizations, following the description of the speech area in Subhadra Jha's (1958).

Finally, it should be mentioned that before the recent reorganization of the state, only 5 out of 17 districts (viz., Bhagalpur, Purnea, Saharsa, Darbhanga and Muzaffarpur) were generally taken as Maithili-speaking districts of Bihar. Paul Brass (1974) in his detailed study of the Maithili movement in his 'Language, religion and politics in North India' had taken these as broadly defining the geographical space of Mithila. After Bihar was split up into 31 districts in early 1980s, in a project report (entitled 'The Maithili language movement in North Bihar: a sociolinguistic investigation') prepared by me jointly with N. Rajaram and Pradip Kumar Bose, we had taken the position that 10 out of 31 districts should be considered as Maithili speech area: Bhagalpur, Katihar, Purnea, Saharsa, Madhubani, Darbhanga, Samastipur, Sitamarhi. Muzaffarpur and Vaishali.

## **2. Standard Literary Dialect**

The speech variety based on the dialects spoken in and around Darbhanga-Shmastipur has come to be regarded as the standard literary medium, although the variety based on the Saharsa dialect has also been used by certain writers. The standardization had been accomplished quite some time back, particularly after 1940s. But the question of whether one should have unitary literary standard is still an open question.

In this context, it will probably be appropriate to mention the position of Grierson in the beginning of this century. In his *Linguistic Survey of India*, Grierson (1908: 13—4; Vol. V. ii) states that "Maithili is spoken in its greatest purity (Standard Maithili) by the Brahmanas of the north of the Darbhanga and Bhagalpur districts and by those of Western Purnea... It is also spoken with some purity, but with more signs of the wearing away of inflexions in the south of Darbhanga district, and in those portions of the Monghyr and Bhagalpur districts which lie on the northern bank of the Ganges. This may be called *Southern Standard Maithili*. "He then goes on to mention its other varieties: *Chhikaa-Chhikii* born out of contact between Maithili and Magahi in the south, Western Maithili (which has a lot of Bhojpuri element in it), and the *Jolahaa bolii* (also known as the Shekhai or Musalmani, and has traits of Awadhi)—which is basically a cover term used for Muslim speech variety in Mithila. It must be borne in mind that by the name 'Standard', Grierson was referring to mainly accepted spoken standards.

### 3. Other Languages Spoken in the Region

The other languages spoken around Mithila are the languages also found within the Maithili-speaking districts for obvious reasons. Bihar being a multilingual state with great internal as well as external mobility, there can be found a number of Bhojpuri, Magahi, Nepali and Bengali speakers in the area where Maithils live predominantly. In addition, since Maithili speakers are found in good numbers in the Jharkhand region too, one has to take it that Oraon, Mundari, Ho, Birhar, Dhangar, Santali and a number of the smaller Austric language speakers too co-exist with the Maithils. Particularly among the non-Brahmin castes among the Maithils, the contact with Bhojpuri and Magahi speakers are also established through inter-marriages. And, of course, Hindi being the language of education and instruction and Urdu being the language of a sizable population are also available.

### 4. Linguistic Tensions

As I have mentioned, there are at least three major speech forms in Bihar, viz., Maithili, Magahi and Bhojpuri—all of which are usually described as dialects of Hindi. This seems to be the first source of tension which get manifested badly particularly during the decennial census enumeration work when the enumerators try recording the name of the 'language' (= Hindi) of which these are 'dialects'. These three speech varieties show varying degrees of structural differences with respect to Hindi, although it has been demonstrated by several linguists that among them Maithili is closer to the eastern NIA languages—Bengali, Assamese and Oriya rather than to Hindi. These three speech varieties of Bihar are regarded as L - -

varieties vis-a-vis Hindi occupying an H-position in a Fishman-type of diglossic situation by some sociologists. Grierson had long back branded them together as 'Bihari', and that name continued for quite some time.

There is no doubt that Hindi was first introduced in Mithila as a language of convenience, or one that can be used for administrative purposes in place of the traditional Persian language which was the language of the court earlier. Later, once Hindi entered into the educational arena, it gradually assumed the status of a superordinate language. In the 'Distribution of, languages in India in States and Union Territories' published by the CIIL, Mysore (1973: 9—11), we are told that 56.86% population of Bihar speak the language(s) recognized in the 8th schedule of the Constitution.

It has already been stated that Maithili is now found spread over Nepal too. In Nepal, it has Newari and Nepali as its immediately neighbouring speech communities. These are also spoken to a large extent, with varying degrees of competence, by the speakers of Maithili themselves (Cf. Yadav 1991 for a profile of multilingualism in the Maithili-speaking region of Nepal).

One should not forget that the fourth important socio-cultural region of Bihar is the Jharkhand region in South Bihar where too a large number of Maithili speakers live. According to the 1981 statistics prepared by Narottam Shah of the CMIE, Bombay ('Basic Statistics relating to the Indian Economy', table 19.3—1), the following is the distribution of space among different regions of Bihar:

<i>REGION</i>	<i>AREA in 1000 sq. km.</i>	<i>Population in lakhs</i>	<i>Density: persons per km.</i>
Mithila	33.4	163.7	490
Bhojpur	56.1	231.4	412
Magadh	44.7	179.4	401
Jharkhand	79.6	142.3	179

Finally, the administration quite often played the Urdu card to curb the movement for Maithili on which there are detailed studies. What is significant for us to know is that in 1980, through an amendment to the Official Language Act, the Bihar government decided to announce Urdu as the second official language of the state (the first being Hindi), and that in the first phase the decision was to be implemented in those six districts of Bihar (Sitamarhi, Madhubani, Darbhanga, Katihar, Purnea and Bhagalpur; cf. The Statesman, Calcutta, June 12, pp. 10) that have the maximum speakers of Maithili. This is attempted to dissociate the Muslims

living in Mithila for centuries from supporting the cause of Maithili. However, the Muslim-Urdu identification in Mithila is far from being complete. In the Census enumerations, the high returns for Maithili could be explained only by the fact that although 46.84% people living in the Maithili-speaking districts are Muslims, as against 31.06% Hindus in Mithila, there could not have been an overwhelming support for Maithili unless a good number of them returned Maithili as their mother tongue.

## 5. Population Figures

As far back as in 1891, Grierson (1908) had estimated the number of speakers of Maithili as 9,289,376. As against this, Census 1961 figures showed 4,982,615. This only confirms the allegations made by the Maithili enthusiasts that the pronounced official figures are unreliable. We see that there have been tremendous fluctuations in the decennial estimates of Maithili speakers as can be shown from a comparison of all Census figures since 1891 base:

1901—11:	+3.120/o	
1911—21:	-0.77%	
1921—31:	+7.68%	
1931—41:	+9.13%	
1941—51:	Not	conducted.
1951—61:	±	22.35%
1961—71:	+20.89%	
1971—81:	+24.19%	

Paul Brass (1974: 64—6) uses Gait's computation (cf. Census 1901) based on various documents available through 1885, and arrives at the figure of 16,565,477. The calculation here is based on Grierson's estimates plus the growth of overall population for Bihar over these 8 decades. On the basis of 1981 figures, and considering the figure of scattered Maithils outside the Mithila area, and considering the population in the 10 districts (out of 31), Singh, Rajaram & Bose arrives at the figure of 22,972,807.

## 6. Literacy Rate

If we take the predominantly Maithili-speaking districts of Bihar as the area

for Mithila, and if we do not include the Maithils living outside Mithila—particularly those in different states, the figures for 1971 and 1981 show 17.54% and 22.71% people to be literate, respectively, as against an all-Bihar figure of 19.94% and 26.01% respectively. But then these figures include the population in the age-group of 0—4 year old too. But if we take up literacy figures in different age-groups as per 1981 records, the picture is very distressing:

<i>Age-group</i>	<i>% of literates in the group</i>
5—14	9.17%
15—24	7.98%
25—34	6.92%

What is more alarming is that before independence, Bihar was educationally the most backward state. It is also true that at the time (by the end of the period consideration—around early 1950s), when the language movement was launched only less than 7% people in Bihar could sign their names. And even in 1971, for every 1,000 literates, only 9 males and 1 female were above the graduation level and only 51 out of every 1,000 literates passed the School leaving examination. But it is also true that a large number of these literates possessed reasonably good reading and fair amount of writing skills because they were educated informally. Even if one looked as far back as in 1931, the all-Bihar showed 1,853,094 people out of 42,329,583, i.e., 4.37% were literate, although only 178,701, i.e., 0.42% were literate in English. If we add up the figures for the four Maithili-speaking districts, in 1931 out of 8,540,009 Hindus and 1,966,932 Muslims, only 4.008% and 3.854%, respectively, were literate and only 27,966 Hindus and 6,432 Muslims in Mithila had received English education. Most of the literate Hindus belonged to the upper strata of the society, as according to one calculation, in 1931, only 1.22% of the lower castes and tribes in Bihar were literate and only 0.02% of them were literate in English. 1931 Census data gave us caste-wise literacy figure, which is difficult to ascertain now. For instance, it is interesting to note that even then 37.2% Kayasthas were literate as against 18.48% Brahmins, 13.56% Bhumihars, and 12.05% Rajputs. It should not be surprising if the leadership of the Maithili language movement were drawn mainly from Brahmin and Kayasthas.

## **7. Language in Education**

The State Government of Bihar had long back recognized the following as the

media for primary education: Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, Oriya, Maithili, Santali, Oraon, Ho and Mundari, and of course, English for the Anglo-Indian schools. This decision was a result of the 1949 Provincial Education Ministers' Conference on the basis of which the article 350 A was prepared. The 17th Report of the Coin-missioner of Linguistic Minorities in India informs us that in pursuance of the provisions given in the article 350 A, there were about 358 separate classes or sections (as against 283 for Bengali, 317 schools and 78 sections for Santhali, nil for Oriya and 2,471 for Urdu) where instruction was imparted through Maithili. About 358 teachers were employed (as against 915 for Bengali, 398 for Santhali, and 6,466 for Urdu) for teaching Maithili in the primary sections for 2,937 students had opted for the Maithili medium. At the secondary level, there were 186 sections with 2,888 students taught by 186 teachers as in 1975—76.

It is possible to study Maithili in the honours as well as in the pass course at the B.A. level in various constituent and affiliated colleges under the following universities: Patna, Mithila (at Darbhanga), Bihar (at Muzaffarpur), Bhagalpur and Magadh (at Gaya). It is also possible to do MA. and Ph.D. in Maithili—for which there are reasonably good number of students—from these and from Ranchi. At Calcutta, the provision to do M.A. in Maithili exists but it has to be a private M.A. because there is no core faculty in Maithili at present.

It is also possible to take up Maithili as a subject in the Bihar Public Service Examination, and this provision makes this option attractive to those who hail from Mithila.

## **8. Introduction of Maithili in Education**

1860 marked the establishment of a good number of schools in the province of Darbhanga by the British administration. It was at the same time that the period of Maharaja Lakshmishwarsimha began after the death of Maharaja Maheshwarsimha. Maharaja Lakshmishwarsimha himself had given a tremendous boost to English education in Mithila by establishing a school in 1880 in Darbhanga. As a consequence, by 1895, there were 9 High Schools, and 11 Middle Schools with English medium, 17 Middle Schools using the vernacular medium, besides 1,405 primary schools in the region within the old boundaries of Darbhanga and Muzaffarpur. The scholarly atmosphere created by the Maharaja permeated into all spheres of knowledge and creativity. Maithili found itself being used not only for softer arts and literature, but also for history, geography, philosophy, ethics, mathematics, grammar, rhetoric and prosody.

Already, Maithili was put in the map of higher education and learning by a few scholars and patrons from both Bengal and Mithila. In 1917, a chair for Maithili was established by Sir Asutosh Mookerji in the University of Calcutta as a part of the Modern Indian Languages studies, thanks to the contribution of Raja Tankanath Choudhuri of Purnea and due to the efforts of Kumar Gangananda Sinha, Babu Gangapati Singha, Brajmohan Thakur and others besides the Bengali Scholars including Nagendranath Gupta and Sharadacharan Mitter. By 1919, Maithili was recognized as an independent subject for examination.

In 1931, the then Maharaja of Darbhanga, Kameshwarsimha made an endowment of Rs. One lakh to the University of Patna to create a Maithili development fund. These had the desired result of spurt in literary activities and publication, and ultimately in 1937, the language came to be recognized in the field of higher education. However, in 1941 the cause for spreading education in Maithili suffered a setback because the Bihar Primary Education Reorganization Committee rescinded its earlier decision to use Maithili as a medium of instruction at the primary level. After 1947, the Tribhuvan University also gave a place to Maithili studies in Nepal, recognizing it as an important vernacular of that country. And in 1949, the government accepted the demand to use Maithiti from the primary level upto the seventh standard. The newer University in Bihar—Bihar University (1952—), Bhagalpur University (1960—), Ranchi University (1960—) and Magadh University (1962—), introduced Maithili at the highest level almost since their inception.

## **9. Number of Newspapers and Literary Journals**

Around the time the printing establishments came up in Mithila, a number of literary magazines like 'Mithila Hita Saadhana', Jaipur (1905), 'Mithila moda', Benares (1906) or 'Mithila Mihir', Darbhanga (1908) were begun.

In 'Maithili patraakaaritaak itihaas' (1981: Patna: Maithili Academy), Chandranath Mishra 'Amar' discusses in detail the successes and failures of Maithili periodical publications—journalistic as well as literary. One can also find some of these references in Jayakanta Mishra (1956; 1976) and Radhakrishna Chaudhury's (1976) literary historiographies. Until 1980s, one finds 78 literary journals and magazines, 11 of them being weeklies, 5 fortnightlies, 31 monthlies, 8 quarterlies. 2 half-yearlies, and 21 others with unpredictable periodicities.

## **10. State of Printing and Publishing**

The oldest among the periodicals was 'Maithilii hita saadhan' which began in 1905 and lasted only for three years. It aimed at publishing classics and other valuable works in different fields. 'Mithilaa moda' (1906—) from Benares, first under the editorship of M.M. Muralidhar Jha for 14 years, and then under others 'until it ceased publication in 1941, published creative pieces of different types and shaped many writers. The best known among these early magazines turned out to be 'mithilaa mihir' which began publication since 1980 under the patronage of the Maharaja of Darbhanga. For a brief period, it was bilingual, and even trilingual in Maithili, Hindi and English. It started from Darbhanga, but the new series began from 1960 from Patna published by the Indian Nation group of newspapers. After 1920s, a number of other serious magazines came out, including 'Maithila prabhaa'. Ajmer (1920—24), Agra (1924—26), Maithili prabhaakara, Aligarh (1929—30), which were meant for maintaining contact among the Maithils living outside Mithila and 'Shrii Maithilii (1925—27) and 'Mithilaa' (1929—31) from within Mithila. Among them, 'Mithilaa mitra' (1931—32) which initially started as a fortnightly, and later turned into a monthly, stands out in its effort to bring out the best among the contemporary writers. In the next phase appeared 'Maithila bandhu' (1935—43) and 'Maithil yuvak' (1938—41), both from the far away Ajmer and 'Jiivan prabhaa' (1940—50) from Agra, which were again organs of sociocultural organizations. Among the purely literary journals that made their mark during this period included 'Mithilaa moda', new series (1936—). 'Bhaaratii' (1937—), and 'Vibhuuti' (1937—). These were all serious literary endeavours. But the magazine that truly shaped up the prose-writing of the modern era, and one which was responsible for the language standardization was 'Maithilii saahitya patra' (1937—39), a quarterly under the editorship of Pt. Ramanath Jha. After 1947, many magazines appeared, and some of them lasted very long too. The ones that continued for very long and had long lasting effect on creative writing were 'Vaidehii' (1950—continuing) from Sitamarhi and Darbhanga, 'BaTuk' (1950—) from Allahabad, and 'Mithilaa darshan' (1953—1988, continues sporadically) from Calcutta.

In the first half of the present century, the following magazines were published:

#### *Weeklies*

1. Mithilaa mihir, Patna (1908—)
2. NirmaaNa, Laheriasarai (1941—)
3. Mithilaa, Darbhanga (1952—)
4. Mithilaa sevak, Calcutta (1954—)

### *Fortnightlies*

5. Mithilaa mitra, Bareilly (1931—; later a monthly)

### *Monthlies*

6. Maithilii hita saadhan, Jaipur (1905—)
7. Mithilaa moda, Benares (1905—)
8. Maithil prabhaa, Aligarh/ Agra/ Mathura (1920—)
9. Mithilaa, Laheriasarai (1921—)
10. Shrii Maithilii, Darbhanga (1925—)
11. Maithilii yuvak, Ajmer (1930s?—; later renamed 'Jiivan prabhaa')
12. Mithilaa bandhu, Ajmer (1935—)
13. Bhaaratii, Darbhanga (1937—)
14. Saahitya Patra, Darbhanga (1937—)
15. Vibhuuti, Muzaffarpur (1937—)
16. Svadesh, Darbhanga (1948—)
17. Mithilaa jyoti, Patna (1948—)
18. Pallav, Nehra (1948—)
19. BaTuk, Allahabad (1949—)
20. Vaidehii, Sitamarhi / Darbhanga (1950-)
21. CaupaaRi, Patna (1952—)
22. Mithilaa Darshan/Maithilii Darshan, Calcutta (1953—)
23. Mithilaa duut, Kanpur (1955—)

As far as publication of book-length material is concerned, the situation was far from satisfactory in the first three decades of the century. Right from the end of the 19th century attempts were on to have printing presses in Mithila. That was how several such establishments sprang up: Union Press 1880; Shri Rameshwar Press 1901; Maithila Printing Works, Madhubani 1905; Kameshwar Press or the Raj Press 1908. But Maithili was yet to resolve its problem of script, that of standardization, and Maithils still had the confusing priorities as the literate and educated ones did not know if they should concentrate more on Maithili, their mother tongue, or Hindi—the language of administration and national awakening, English—the language of higher education, or Sanskrit—the language of traditional learning which still had a place of pride in Mithila. It was only after 1930s, the situation improved with many of these uncertainties having been removed. The establishment of special endowment funds, availability of more printing presses, use of Nagari writing system, and emergence of certain very powerful creative writers—all these had their desired effect in the field of publication. It was comparable with the surge

of publication after 1960s.

## **11. Manuscript/Scribal Tradition**

Even after the establishment of Maithili Academy in 1970s, it was discovered that a large number of manuscripts in Maithili produced in this century were lying uncared for and unpublished. A good number of them have now appeared in print. During the period 1901 — 1951), there surely was a tradition of manuscripts, and in certain cases, the knowledge in different fields, particularly in philosophy and grammar, were preserved and transmitted through the scribes. The most important of all, one must mention the tradition on 'panjiikaara's, i.e., the clan of record-keepers who preserve the lineage and family histories—and who have often been helpful in establishing/finding out the authorship of certain manuscripts or personal/familial histories of authors, or even in locating manuscripts of important but undiscovered works,

## **12. Oral Transmission of Written Literature**

The tradition of poetry that is possible to be rendered into songs—evidenced in the lyrics of bhajan or various forms of songs—was firmly established by the great Maithili poets of earlier centuries including Vidyapati, Umapati, Govindadas, Mahesh Thakur, Chaturbhuji, Lochana, the Malla kings (Jagajjiyotirmalla, Yoganarendramalla, Jagatprakashamalla, Bhupatindramalla or Ranajitamalla), and Chanda Jha continued further in the modern era. By then, the immortal songs of the poets of yester-years had entered into the repertoire of daily life of the common man and women—educated or illiterate. This surely was the test of the power of their pen. The 'Maithili Chrestomathy' (1882) of George Grierson or his '21 Vaishnava Hymns' (1884) as well as two other collections published in the '20s—Bhola Jha's compilation: 'Mithilaa-giita-sangrah' in 4 parts (1917) and Laliteshwarsimha's edited collection 'Maithila bhaktaprakaasha' (1920)), all prove this point once again that the written literature was indeed finding their way into oral traditions, The tradition was continued by the later lyrical poets of Maithili in the '30s and '40s, and even beyond the '60s.

## **13. Literary Achievements and Awareness of the Illiterate class**

Although the illiterate class was aware of the names of some great poets of different ages, and although through songs and readable poems the poets did retain contact with the masses, it is difficult to expect that the illiterate classes would be aware of the achievements of the creative writers of Maithili contributing and

enriching in different genres. However, Maithili drama—yet another area of literature with performance application could have attracted the uneducated masses. But modern Maithili dramatic traditions during 1911 and 1950s did not have the width or range of coverage as either the earlier 'ankiyaa naaT' had or the developments in the recent decades had.

#### **14. Condition of Writers**

The general economic condition of the writer is not very favourable. But nobody hopes to be able to live on one's writing in Maithili. It is a different matter that certain writers have been extremely popular, and their books have seen several editions or reprints. But most of them have other professions to fall back upon. Only one magazine, 'Mithilaa mihir' has a provision to pay for nominal remuneration for different kind of writing. In general, the publishers do not pay royalty, barring a few exceptions. They usually give a number of copies of books of the author. Some have been bilingual writers writing in both Hindi and Maithili, and making a livelihood on the basis of their publication in other languages. In general, the majority of writers are teachers in schools, colleges and Universities. Some of course were traditional pundits in different centres of oriental learning. A few have also been journalists and editors. Some are government servants at different levels. But very few have come from other professions such as doctor, lawyer, engineer, research scientist, managers or political administrators.

#### **15. Public Stages**

Although the number of performances of plays of various kinds may only be an indicator of popularity of performing arts, it alone will not show the development of Maithili theatre. The public stages are almost non-existent in Maithila. But the folk-theatre tradition continues. However, the amateur theatre groups in big cities within or outside Mithila have been very active since the publication and staging of 'ciniik laDDu' (1948). There are theatre festivals every year. A lot of plays that were performed in the initial phases of the amateur theatre movement, i.e., in the early '50s were translations or adaptations. Most of them came from Bengali, English and Sanskrit, and a few from Hindi.

#### **16. Major Writers**

The important poets who published during the period 1901— 1950 included: Kalikumar Das (1902—48), Raghunandan Das (1860—1945), Gananath Jha (1869—1914; but his padaavali appeared in 1938), Jivan Jha (1848—1912),

Jivanath Jha (1910—1977). Riddhinath Jha (1891—1977), Sitaram Jha (1881—1975), Surendra Jha 'Suman' (1910—), Shyamanand Jha (1906—1949), Tantranath Jha (1906—1984), Upendranath Jha 'Vyas' (1917—). Vedanand Jha (1916—1980). Kedarnath Labh (1934—), Laldas (1856—1911), Baidyanath Mishra 'Yatri' (1911—), Kashikant Mishra 'Madhup' (1906—1987), Srikrishna Mishra (1918—), Raghavacharya (1918—1961), Arsi Prasad Singha (1911—), Buddhidhari Simha 'Ramakar' (1919—), and Upendra Thakur 'Mohan' (1913—1980).

To my mind, the most outstanding poets, comparable to the best in other major literary languages were only the following: Laldas, Jivan Jha, Sitaram Jha, Suman, Vyas, Yatri, and Madhup.

The only playwrights worth mentioning were Munshi Raghunandan Das (1860—1945), Anand Jha (1914—1988), Damodar Jha (1925?-), Harischandra Jha 'Harish' (1920s-), Ishnath Jha (1907—1965), Jivan Jha (1848—1912), Jivanath Jha (1910—1977), Sharadanand Jha (1920s-), Suryanarayan Jha (1906?-?), Yoganand Jha (1922—1986), Laldas (1856—1911), Chandranath Mishra 'Amar' (1925—), Kashinath Mishra (1921—), Triloknath Mishra (1900—1960), and Yadunath Thakur 'Yadav'. Among them, Jivan Jha, Ishnath Jha, Jivanath Jha, and Yoganand Jha have been reasonably more successful as dramatists.

In the field of essays which took several forms in Maithili—serious, satirical and humorous, the following major writers could be named: M.M. Muralidhar Jha, Ramabhadra Jha, Kumar Ganganand Sinha, Bhuvaneshwar Singha 'Bhuvan', Baldev Mishra, Bholalal Das, M.M. Dr. Umesh Mishra, Ishanath Jha, Tantranath Jha, Sudhanshu Shekhar Chowdhury, and again, Harimohan Jha.

The literary historiographers and critics during the period 1901 — 1950 included the following: Chanda Jha, Sitarain Jha, Damodar Jha, Vedanand Jha, Ramachandra Mishra, Riddhinath Jha, Umanath Jha, Durganath Jha 'Sreesh', M.M. Dr. Umesh Mishra, Ramanath Jha, Srikrishna Mishra, and Babua Mishra.

Although the beginning novelists in Maithili—Jibach Mishra and Srikrishna Thakur made their mark as early as in 1915, and although even before 1920s there were a few other published novels including Rasbiharilal Das's 'Sumati' (1918) and Punyananda Jha's 'Mithilaadarpana' (1923), it was surely Harimohan Jha who revolutionized the scene of fiction writing in Maithili with his novels and short stories. Harimohan Jha and his father Janardan Jha 'Jansidan' were regarded as the

harbinger of modernity. The best among the next generation was Baidyanath Mishra 'Yatri'. The period under consideration saw the emergence of many other fiction writers of great calibre who included Kumar Ganganand Singh (of the 'Agilahi' fame; the book in parts was published in 1935 but a complete edition was brought Out in 1964), Upendra Jha 'Vyas', Yoganand iha. Shailendra Mohan Jha, and Brajakishor Verma 'Manipadma' (emerged mainly as a story writer then but later, after 1956, turned into by far the best-known novelist; b. 1918, d. 1986).

What Yatri was to novel, Rajkamal Chowdhury (1929—1967) occupied a similar position of prestige in the arena of short stories. Like Yatri, Rajkamal too was well-known to the Hindi-reading public. Although until 1930s there were many short story writers, the following were prominent among who were Kalikumar Das and Harinandan Thakur 'Saroj'. After 1940, Maithili literature gained some great short writers including Surendra Jha 'Suman', Prabodhnarayan Chaudhury, Upendra Jha 'Vyas', Manmohan Jha, Buddhidhari Simha 'Ramakar', and of course. Harimohan Jha.

## 17. Women Writers

There were a number of women writers and researchers after 1956. They include the following: Kameshwari Devi b. 1928—: 'Maithilii samskaar-giit'; Anima Singh b. 1924— with a number of studies on Maithili folk songs, Chandrapriya Dcvi:

'Srikrishna bhajanaavali' published in 1965, or Usha Chaudurani: Shrii Raama-kathaa (BaalakaaNDa)', Shyam Jha: 'Giitasangraha bhaj anamaalaa', 'Binu maayak beTii' 1967, and 'Paschaataap' 1980, Kalindi Devi: 'Kalindii-giitaavali', Medheshwari: 'Giitaanjalii' 1967, Ilarani Siogh b. 1945—: 'Vindantii' 1972 and a number of translations as well as research work, Shyama Devi: 'Kaamanaa' 1959, Shephalika Verma b. 1943— both poet and fiction writer: 'Vipralabdhaa' 1978, and other fiction writers including Shakuntala Chauclhury: 'Aashaak ant' 1978, Chitralkha Dcvi: 'Ubaait aakhar' 1976, Jayanti Dcvi h. 1944—: 'Anupamaa', Adya Jha b. 1924—: 'Videshii kathaamruta', and a hook for children 'Maithilii paaTha-maalaa' 1970, Gauri Mishra b. 1934—: 'Thehiyael mon shiital chaahari', and biographists like Tulika Jha b. 1924—: 'Raajalakshmi: ek bhaavacitra' and other miscellaneous works like Rajlikshmiji's (1915—1976) religious discourses later brought out as 'Shrimad Bhaagavat prakaash' 1969, or 'gruha vijnaan' 1971 by Aparajita Devi. It is also true that even in early or middle Maithili, there have been women writers (e.g. Chandrakala—described as the daughter-in-law of Vidyapati by Lochana). But there have not been much published hook-length work by women writers during the period under consideration. One does find a few stories or poems

published by Shyama Devi, Prabba Devi, Kamakhya Devi, Lakshmiwati 'Lila', Shambhavi Devi, and others but these are not exceptional literary creations.

## 18. Most Popular Form of Literature

There have been more successful poets than fiction writers. The drama surely lags behind. But the immense popularity of some of the novelists and short story writers makes one believe that 1901—1950 was the period when fiction was slowly taking over the popular appreciation from poetry.

## 19. Literary Translations into Maithili

One way of judging the popularity of writers from other languages is to see who and from which languages have been translated the most. In that respect, among the other Indian languages, Sanskrit and Bengali have been the major source languages for translations. There are however, a few translations from Assamese, Gujarati and Hindi too. It is needless to say that a number of translations from English have also been made.

There are at least six translations of Bhagavadgita, just as there were renderings of classical critical texts such as Lochana's (1625—1685) 'Raagata—rangini' by Baldev Mishra in 1934, Mukund iha's 1924 translation of 'Amarakosha Mithilaa bhaashaa vivruti', or Ramachandra Jha 'Chandra's translation of the Sanskrit work on prosody 'Shrutabodha' said to have been written by Kalidasa. There are three renderings of Bhartrihari's poems: Yageshwar Jha's 'Aarya-shatakattray' (1961), Buddhidhari Simba 'Ramakar's 'Bhartruhari—trishatii' (1969). and Krishnanandan Si mba's 'Bhaavabhartruhari' (1973). Kalidasa's 'Kumaar-sam-hava' (tr. by Ramachandra Jha 'Chandra'), 'Raghuvamsba' (two translations—by Achyutananda Datta 1937, and by Surendra Jha 'Suman' 1970), ~Meghaduuta (four translations—Paramanand Datta 1937, Ramachandra Jha 'Chandra' 1971, Jayakant Jha 'Srutadhar' 1973, and Arsi Prasad Singh 1976), 'Shrungaaratilaka' (Surendra Jha ~Suman', two edn, 2nd t969), 'Maalavikaagnimitra' (Govind Jha 1947), 'Shakuntalaa naaTak' (Ishanth Jha 1939, and 'Vikrmorvashiiya' (Bhavanath Jha 1957), 'Ritushringaar' from his 'ritusamhaara' (tr. by Surendra Jha 'Suman' 1964) as well as 'Maithilii shrutabodha' (Ramachandra Jha 'Chandra. 1964) were also quite popular. Jayadeva's 'Giitagovinda' has been translated as under the title 'Kumudaprabhaa' (1967) translated Kumudnath Mishra 'Kumud' (1967). Shankaracharya's 'Aananda laharii' and 'Saundarya laharii (both translated by Surendra Jha 'Suman' 1969 and 1972, respectively) as well as Bana's play 'Paarvatii pariNay' Tr. by Paramanand Jha 1956) also found their way into Maithili. Bhasa's plays were translated, edited and published in four volumes by Jivananda Thakur in 1945, 1947, 1948 and 1967,

Bhavabhuti's 'Uttara-raamacarita' (Rajkumar Mishra 1954), Sriharsha's 'Ratnaavali' (Paramanand Jha 1956), Shudraka's 'MrucchakaTika' (Ishanath Jha 1955) and Vishakhadatta's 'Mudraraakshasa' (Sudhakar Jha Shastri 1970, 2nd edn.) were received well in Maithili. For children Tantranath Jha's 'Hitopadeshasaar' (1954), Surendra Jha 'Suman's 'Hitopadeshikaa' (1970s?) and Rudrakant Mishra's 'Pancatantra' (1968) are also important. Vidyapati's Sanskrit works—'BhuuparikramaN' (tr. by Munishwar Iha 1976), 'Kiirtipataakaa' (Umesh Mishra 1970) and his Apabhramsha text 'Kiirtilataa' (tr. by Umesh Mishra 1970s?) deserve special mention. Also important are his 'PuruSapariikSaa' translated and edited by four different scholars: Chanda Jha (1888), Ramanath Jha (1960) Tej Nath Jha (1961), and Surendra Jha 'Suman' (197t)), and 'Likhanaavali' (translated by Indrakant Jha 1969).

From Bengali, we find Michael Madhusudan Datta's 'Meghanaadabadha' translated by Gauri Shankar Jha (1942), 'Virahinii Brajaanganaa' by Bhuvaneshwar Simba 'Bhuvan' (1944), and Tagore's 'Giitaanjalii' translated by Jayakant Jha 'Srutadhar' as well as by Surendra Jha 'Suman' 1969. The novelists who were popular in almost all contemporary Indian Languages were acceptable here too. They included Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay and Sharatchandra Chattopadhyay. Bankim's 'KapaalakuNDalaa' (tr. by Shivanand Chaudhury with two editions 1960/1963) and 'ViSa-vruk-Sa' (Iharani Singh 1968), Sharatchandra's 'BaRkii didi' (Surendra Jha 'Suman' 1969), ~Baabhanak beTii' (Upendranath Jha 'Vyas' 1967) and 'Vipradaas' (Upendranath Jha 'Vyas' 1977), and Bibhutibhushan Mukhopadhyay's novel translated as 'Koshii praangaNak ciTThii' (Brajakishor Verma 'Manipadma' 1979) were extremely popular. The translated plays included D.L. Ray's 'Chandragupta' (adapted by Mohan Chaudhury 1974). Narayan Gangopadhyay's 'Aagantuk' (Dinanath Jha 1967).

From Hindi, one can find Bharatendu Harischandra's 'Anher nagarii' (Prabodh Narayan Singh 1965). Since Hindi does not pose any intelligibility problem even for ordinary readers of Mithila, it is not surprising not to find any major translation attempts from Hindi.

From Assamese, Shankaradeva's (1449— 1558) plays were translated and edited: 'PaarijaataharaNa naaT' (Tarakant iha 1975), and 'Raamavijay' (translated twice: Prem Shankar Singh 1967 and Ramdev Jha 1967). From Gujarati, we have only Shivakumar Joshi's novel 'Sonal Chaayaa' (Anima Singh 1965?) translated.

As far as the translation scene from foreign languages is concerned, we get, from or through English, Aesop's fables 'Isop katha-shatak' (tr. by Vaidyanath

Chaudhury 1967), Henrik Ibsen's 'Bhuutak chaayaa' (= Ghosts) translated by Damodar Jha 1965, Shakespeare's 'Kumaar HemleT' (Nisbikant Mishra 1973), 'DeshamaNi' (Rajendra Jha 'Swatantra' 1957) and 'RajarnaNi' (also by Rajendra Jha 'Swatantra' 1960's?), Molliere's adaptation 'Premak mg' (Prabodh Narayan Singh 1968), Oscar Wilde's 'Salomaa' (Iharani Singh 1965), oliver Goldsmith's Vicar of Wakefield translated as 'VekphilDak paadrii' (Dinanath Jba 1939), and Samuel Johnson's 'Rasselas' (Dinanath Jha 1959).

## 20. Literary Achievements

### 20.1. The background

In the 308-page history of Maithili literature (cf. Jayakant Mishra 1976), the Modern Maithili period received very little attention (only 88 pages) considering the volume of creative writing that have come to light in this period (1901—195t). Moreover, the 'Modern' according to N4ishra (1976:221) covered the period 1860—1970 A.D. The periodization of Maithili literature thus differs from the conceptualization of time fragments for identification of literary movements as has been done by Sisir Kumar Das (1991). While detailing the tentative periodization offered by him, Das (1991:352) labelled the period of 1800 A.D. onwards (until at least 1910 A.D., if not later too) the period of 'Western impact: Indian response', although the first significant stirrings of contact with the West was felt in the Mithila only after 1860. That makes sense as to why most historians of Maithili literature identified this moment as historically significant time for Maithili literature.

In 1860, when the period of Maharaja Lakshmeshwarsimha began after the death of Maharaja Maheshwarsimha, the Maharaja was a minor, and it was thought both necessary and possible to influence the mind of the young prince under the Court of Wards, so that when he was reinstated he was encouraged to spread the cause of western education at the school level. At the level of administration, he was advised to adopt Hindi, rather than Persian or Urdu—the twin languages which were introduced by the Court of Wards by abolishing the use of Maithili for administrative purposes. This move of delinking Maithili, the language of the area from the domain of workplace and attempts to confine it to the home alone obviously had a devastating effect on the development of Maithili literature—a curse from which Maithili could be freed only in the beginning of the 20th century. The movement to re-establish the language and culture of Mithila, or the search for its independent identity culminated into the creation of Mithila Mahasabha in 1910. To that extent, 1910 becomes an important year for Mithila and Maithili, too.

The other important literary events during the period under consideration, i.e., 1860—1910, included death of three important writers—Lakshminath Gosain (b. 1787, d. 1872), Gopinah (b. 1788, d. 1881), and Chanda Jha (b. 1831, d. 1907)—all three being poets of distinction. Although we find records of birth of about 20 important creative writers during this period in Das (1991: 519—765), most of them made positive contributions only during 1911—1956. I should like to mention the following under this category: Bhuvaneshwar Jha 'Bhuvan' (b. 1874, d. 1966), Ramlochan Sharan (b. 1877, d. 1968), Dinabandhu Jha (b. 1878, d. 1955), Trilochan Jha (b. 1878, d. 1938), Haimavati Devi (b. 1880, d. 1940), Rasbiharilal Das (b. 1885, d. 1941), Ishanath Jha (b. 1907, d. 1965), Kashinath Mishra 'Madhup' (b. 1907, d. 1908) as well as the living geniuses—Suman (b. 1907) and Yatri (b. 1907).

This means that during 1860—1910, there were five major writers in Maithili including Raghunandana Das (b. 1860, d. 1938)—the author of plays such as 'Mithilaa NaaTak' and 'Duutaangada viyog' as well as a collection of narrative poems, Jivacha Jha (b. 1863, d. 1923) who wrote the first novel in Maithili—'Raameshwar' as well as published a collection of essays under the title 'Ankur'. Tejnath Jha (b. 1868, d. 1919) who wrote devotional songs ('Bhakti ratnaavali'), narrative poem ('Raamajanama'), and a religious play ('Gauriishankara vinoda naaaTaka'), Muralidhar Jha (b. 1869, d. 1929) who was also a novelist ('Arjun tapasyaa') and travelogue writer ('Kashmir yatra') besides editing the literary magazine 'Mithilaa moda', and Janardan Jha 'Jansidan' who is still considered to be the first modern prose-writer of Maithili because of his three novels: 'Nirdayii saasu', 'Shashikalaa' and 'Punarvivaah', although he also published many poems. Besides the five above, there were others who were also well-known historians (M.M. Mukund Jha 'Bakshi'), philosophers (M.M. Ganganath Jha) and other scholars writing in Maithili.

It is my reading (and not many may fully agree with it) that Tagore's publication of 'Bhanusimha Thakurer Padavali' had a positive effect in the form of spurt in literary activities in Maithili. We will, of course, have to leave out Chanda Jha from it because he was independently creating a field for himself at the same time with his 'Vaataahavaana' (1883). Mithilaa Bhaashaa RaamaayaNa' (1886/ publ. 1891), 'Lakshmiishwara vilaas' (1888) or by translating Vidyapati's Sanskrit work: 'PuruSa pariikSaa' (1888). The establishment of printing presses in Maithila or creation of literary and cultural organizations (Mithila Viddvajjan Samiti, Benares 1896; Maithili Hitasadhan Sainiti, Jaipur 1904 or Mithila Rgsearch Society, Darbhanga 1905) culminated into the establishment of Maithili Mahasabha in 1910. It was at this time that major periodical publications ('Mithila Hita Saadhana', 'Mithila moda', 'Mithila Mihir') were started, or classical works like the saTTaka

plays ('Maithilii saTTaka' 1906 and 'Narmadaa saTTaka' 1906) as well as the drama entitled 'Saamavatii punarjanma' (1908) by Jivan Jha were created. This is the background against which we have to view the literary developments after 1910. All these I believe were necessary to state as to why the literary historians of Maithili find the development after 1911) to be a cosequence of the activities after 1860.

## 20.2. The Age of Reawakening and the New Registers

The establishment of Maithila Mahasabha (or 'Maithili Conference' as it was known to some) saw a further spurt in the debates on the education that was best suited for Mithila, particularly for the preservation of her rich cultural heritage. Stipends were made available to numerous capable students to pursue higher education. Several research societies came up. A number of literary and cultural organizations were established—both within and outside Mithila. As a result, it clearly dawned upon the new generation that was taking the lead in the beginning of the 20th century that the future for Mithila lay in what steps they would take. A beginning was made by study and publication of the classics in Maithili in the 1910s. Besides Vidyapati, they concentrated on Umapati (of the 'PaarijaataharaNa' fame), Ramadasa and Bhanunath Jha's works. This was also the time when MM. Haraprasad Shastri was to discover the Caryaa texts, one of the most important works in the Eastern NIA languages. The influence of Grierson's work on Bihar in general, and Mithila in particular, must be also recalled here. His studies on the Bihar Peasant Life, folklore of Mithila. Maithili grammar besides his niagnuni opus—the Linguistic Survey of India, had tremendous effect on this work of regeneration and re-evaluation of the past heritage.

1911—1956 marks the beginning of serious Maithili prose writing. And this was possible only because a number of literary magazines flourished during the early period and with them flourished the journalistic register in Maithili. The Hita-sadhana from Jaipur published essays on a number of topics: grammar, philosophy, geography, mathematics or even hygiene besides those on current political affairs. The Moda published longish translations, poems, stories, and essays on current affairs. The Mihir, which is still surviving, and which initially had both English and Hindi editions too, has been the backbone of Maithili journalism. There were other significant magazines too during this time: 'Maithila Prabhaa' from Ajmer first (August 1920 until the end of 1924) and later from Agra (only for a year) and 'Maithila Prabhaakara' from Aligarh (1929—30) which mainly aimed at maintaining the contacts among those outside Mithila, although these too created several important writers. Their efforts were revived later once again through the publication of 'Maithila bandhu' from Ajmer (1935—43), 'Maithila Yuvak' (1938—

41), and 'Jiivan prabhaa' (1940—50). Then there were 'Shrii Maithilii' (1925—27), 'Mithilaa' (1929—31) and 'Mithilaa mitra' (1931—32) which maintained very high standard as literary magazines, even though they were all short lived. 'Maithilaa Moda' started once again in 1936. and so were begun a few other secular literary magazines including 'Vibhuuti' (1937—38) from Muzaffarpur under the editorship of Bhuvaneshwar Simba 'Bhuvan' and 'Bhaarati' (1937) from Darbhanga under the editorship of Babu Bholalal Das, the latter publication being the organ of the Maithila Sahitya Parishad which was established in 1931. The Sahitya Parishad provided the creative writers, grammarians, philosophers and critics with a common meeting ground besides giving encouragement to the publishing activities.

Already, Maithili was put in the map of higher education and learning by a few scholars and patrons from both Bengal and Mithila. By 1919, Maithili was recognized as an independent subject for examination and there was naturally a need for organizing the Maithili studies in 1920s, in which Suniti Kumar Chatterjee was a great help. His close association with Pt. Babua Mishra resulted in the detailed study of the first prose piece in Maithili as well as in the eastern NIA—Jyotirishwara's 'VarNaratnaakara'. In this respect, Maithili was fortunate enough to have been studied in the beginning of the century by George Grierson whose works had a tremendous effect on the effort that went into promoting the study of Maithili.

By 1930s another important decision was taken. Gandhiji gave a call to the protagonists of different Indian languages to give up their scripts in favour of Devanagari to achieve one more step in the direction of national integration. Maithili reacted positively to the call because it was soon realized that if Maithili printing and publishing were to grow, the on-again and off-again attempts to revive the Tirhuta writing system had to be disposed off once for all. The change over to the Nagari already had a positive effect of allowing the language and literature to be used in writing by the other castes in the society who knew English and Nagari but who did not use the Tirhuta system which was restricted to the Brahmins and certain Kayasthas. Moreover, it had to grow up as the literary language for the whole Mithila rather than being restricted to a few geographic pockets. Consequently, there was also a realization that Maithili must undergo the processes of standardization now that the language was being used in so many registers and over such vast geographic areas. The net result was that by 1936, a Shailii NirdhaaraN Samiti had gone through a questionnaire-based survey of the problems of spelling and style, under the direction of MM. Dr. Umesh Mishra, and decisions were taken on the standardization of Maithili. In implementing these decisions, the role of the most important serious literary journal of the time— 'Maithilii Saahitya Patra', under the editorship of critic and grammarian Pt. Ramanath Jha is worthy of special mention.

All these surely made printing and publishing in Maithili and reaching a wider reading public (thanks to Devanagari) easier and the cumulative effect of all these steps was predictable: a tremendous boost to the literary publication in Maithili.

### 20.3. The Rise of the Prose Genre

Maithili did not have to prove its credentials of producing great poetry. Starting from Vidyapati, it already had a great tradition of poems and poetic plays. But considering the fact that most Modern Indian languages could already boast of a rich prose tradition by 1920s and '30s, Maithili still was to establish itself in this new genre which already had a history of hundred years in other sister languages. Although the first novel(s) in Maithili ('Raameshwar' 1915 by Jibach Mishra according to Jayakanta Mishra 1976, and 'Candraprabhaa' 1909 by Srikrishna Thakur according to the bibliography of Dutt (1990: 114)) appeared before 1915, even before 1920s there were a few other published novels including Rasbiharilal Das's 'Sumati' (1918) and Punyananda Jha's 'MithilaadarpaNa' (1923). But it was Harimohan Jha with whom the fiction writing in Maithili changed dramatically. Harimohan Jha was himself a product of a family of scholars and litterateurs. His father, Janardan Jha 'Jansidan' was regarded as the first modern fiction writer. His didactic fictions included: 'Nirdayii Saasu' and 'Punarvivaah'. Harimohan Jha, himself a Professor of Philosophy, but better known to the common man for his humor and satire, particularly for his memorable character, KhaTTar Kaakaa, raised the novel to a new height. He made his entry through 'Kanyaadaan' (1933) which later ran into six editions, and which projected the importance of introducing a much-needed (but resented by orthodoxy) social reform and emphasized on the spread of education among women. 'Dviraagaman' (1942) came as a sequel to it. This period saw many serious novelists, the most well-known among whom was Baidyanath Mishra 'Yatri' whose works achieved great sophistication and raised a lot of debates and discussions. His 'Paro' (1933 with several editions), 'Navturiaa' (1954) and 'Balchanmaa' (1967) established him as a progressive novelist who writes in an inimitable style that marks his poetry a different entity in comparison to his fiction. The period under consideration saw the emergence of many other great fiction writers: Kumar Ganganand Singh, Upendra Jha 'Vyas', Yoganand Jha, Shailendra Mohan Jha, and Brajakishor Verma 'Manipadma'. Rajkamal Chowdhury (b. 1929, d. 1967) was another established name of that period. Although his famous novel, 'Adikathaa' (1958) appeared almost at the fag end of this period, his stories began appearing in print much earlier some of which were published in the form of an anthology 'Kathaa paraag' (1958). His other well received works—'Lalkaa paag' (1968), 'Nirmohii baalam hammar' (1970s), 'Paa— tharphuul' (1967), etc., were published posthumously but these too were written earlier. Although until 1930s

there were many short story writers, prominent among whom were Kalikumar Das and Harinandan Thakur 'Saroj' (book-length work: 'Maadhav Maadhavii' 1937), most of them made use of stock emotions. It was only after 1940s that Maithili literature witnessed the emergence of some great short story writers including Surendra Jha 'Suman' (collection: 'Kathaamukhii' 1940), Prabodhnarayan Chaudhury (collection: 'Bichal phuul' 1940), Upendra Jha 'Vyas' ('ViDambanna' 1952), Manmohan Jha ('AshrukaN' 1948: 'Sanchayitaa' 1953), Buddhidhari Simha 'Ramakar' ('Prayaas' 1946; 'Vardaan' 1947) and a number of others. Besides them, there was of course Harimohan Jha's good number of collections including 'Rangashaalaa' 1949, 'Tiirtha yaatraa' 1953, 'Gappak phoRan' 1954, 'Carcarii' 1960 and 'Ekaadashii' 1971. His best known collections of stories and ones that are still popular are: 'PraNamya devataa' (1933/ 1949) and 'KhaTTar Kaakaak tarang' (1967).

## 21. Where it Lacks: Limitations and Deficiencies

There are several genres where there had not been much development during the period under consideration (i.e., 1901—1950) in the otherwise rich field of Maithili literature. The prominent among them are Essays, Literary Criticism and Plays.

This is not to say that there had not been powerful essayists at all. M.M. Muralidhar Jha (1869—1929) was the first major essayist whose prose and style have remained exemplary for the later generation. His satire and irony are still unparalleled. Although many tried following his footsteps, only a few made their mark independently. They included Ramabhadra Jha, Kumar Gangananda Sinha, Bhuvaneshwar Singh 'Bhuvan', Baldev Mishra and Babu Bholalal Das who made noteworthy contributions. Most of them showed social concerns and need to work for all round development and cultural re-awakening. Among the next generation of essay writers including M.M. Dr. Umesh Mishra, Ramanath Jha and Dmabandhu Jha, there was a tendency to write in argumentative and expository style, and their contribution to the field of criticism, aesthetics, philosophy and language studies must be underscored. But once again, the more successful of the later generation essayists were those who made humour their weapon. They included Harimohan Jha, Ishanath Jha, and Tantranath Jha, although there were a few earlier essayists writing in this form. But travelogue and related writing did not attain much significance during this period.

In the area of literary theory, the Maithili critics have mostly been derivative. Sitaram Jha ('AlankaaradarpaNa' 1934), Vedananda Jha ('Alankrti-bodha' 1933) or Ramachandra Mishra 'Chandra's monumental work on rhetorics ('candraabbaraN'

1938), or even in the unpublished major work ('Shabda-shakti-triveNikaa') by Riddhinath Jha (as well as in his published book on poetics, 'VishwabhuuSaNa' 1944) have all been modelling their work after the Sanskrit classics. A few other scholars who began making impact during this period, but whose major books on literary theory appeared after 1956, viz. Durganath Jha 'Sreesh' ('Saahitya vimarsha' 1959), Umanath Jha ('Aalocanaa:samakaaliin pravrtti') and Damodar Jha (When he analysed the Bhakti movement) merely reproduced the arguments of the traditional western scholars and views of the Marxist critics. Some critics have been more innovative (e.g., Jayadhari Singh in his essays and in two volume 'Kaavyamiimaansaa' published in 1962) but then he was a lone exception. There have rather been better analyses of Maithili works by critics such as Chanda Jha, Umesh Mishra, Ramanath Jha and Srikrishna Mishra, but by and large, the field of criticism and appreciation have not progressed satisfactorily.

Although there have been a large number of translations and adaptations (A four-volume transhition of Bhasa's plays by Jivananda Thakur brought out between 1945 and 1948. only the fourth volume appearing later in 1967; Bhavabhuti's 'Uttar-raamacarita' 1954; Bana's 'Paarvatii pariNay' by Paramananda Jha 1956; Ananda Jha's 'Siita-swayamvar' 1938; Sriharsha's 'Ratnaavali' by Paramanand Jha in 1956; Shudraka's 'MrcchakaTika' by Ishanath Jha in 1955; Krishnamishra's 'Prahodh-candrodaya' by Ananda Jha in 1941; or Kalidasa's three plays published by different translators in 1939, 1947 and 1956—57 are but some examples), there have been only a few original plays worth mentioning during this period, particularly in the early phase. They included Jivan Jha in the early phase who is not only well known for his SaTTaka-plays (1906—8), but also for other dramas— 'Saainavatii punarjanma' 192(1 and 'Sundar samyoga' 1906, and Raghunandan Das Munshi with his ~Mithilaa naaTak' (1933) and 'Duutaangadaviyog' (1933), Suryanarayan iha's 'Jaanakii naaTak' (1931) or his later play 'Graduate girl'. Towards the end of the period, coming to 1950s we find a renewed interest in play-writing. It was at this time that many good plays were written and produced. They included Ishanath Jha's 'Ciiniik laDDu' (1947), Yadunath Thakur's 'Dahej' (1948), Sharadananda Jha's 'Phearaar' (1950), Parameshwar Mishra's 'TriveNii' (1950), Yogananda Jha's 'Munik matibhram' (1953), Krishnakant Mishra's 'Aatma maryaadaa' (1953), Kanchinath Jha 'Kiran's' 'Jay janmabhumi' (1955), Chandranath Mishra 'Amar's', 'Samadhaan' (1955) and Harischandra Jha 'Harish's' 'Chiik' (1956). But by and large, the spurt in writing and production of plays that we witness after 196t)s was not witnessed during 1911—1956.

Apart from these areas, there was also dearth of work in a number of other fields such as studies on language and linguistics, travelogue, light essays, bio-

graphical literature, science fiction, review literature, belles letters, etc. Some of these, however have not developed even till this day, although the situation has improved considerably on all other counts.

## 22. Concluding Remarks

This paper attempts to fill up a gap in the literature on language planning and development for the minor languages of India with special reference to the Maithili speech community in North Bihar. To appreciate the course that this particular language movement has taken since mid-1950s when the movement was launched with renewed vigour, about which two completely divergent accounts are given in Brass (1974) and Singh, Rajaram & Bose (1985), it is important to know the background of development of this language. It, therefore, aims at pointing out the attainments and failures of the speakers of Maithili who have been making efforts to gain their rightful place in education, administration and literary recognition to restore their language rights since the beginning of this century.

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