



MAHABHARATA MANTHAN



INAUGURATION

Mahabharata Manthan

IGNCA, New Delhi

19th - 21st July 2017 Mahabharata Manthan 2017

The Mahabharata Manthan: Cultural Heritage, Tangible & Intangible,

- Three Days' International Conference, Mahabharata Manthan : A Critical Revisit to Tangible & Intangible Heritage, (Covering Architecture, Archaeology, History, Philosophy Culture and Socio-Cultural Perspectives).
- Exhibition: Significant Cities, Places and Art showing Timeline of Mahabharata.



Hon Minister Dr Mahesh Sharma,
Shri Ram Bahadur Rai President IGNC
and dignitaries inaugurating Exhibition



Lamp Lighting Ceremony Dr. Mahesh Sharma
Chief guest Hon'ble Minister of Culture and Tourism(IC)



Hon' Minister Dr Mahesh Sharma and
DIGNITARIES at Exhibition

Synopsis

Between the two famous '*itihas-granths*' of India, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, the latter has always been the center of 'critical' analysis and comments for many reasons. Not only have umpteen subjective commentaries been written on this longest saga of '*itihas*' of Dwapar, but some years ago, even a 'Critical Edition' was very painstakingly published by the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute. Archaeologists' work in unearthing the ancient cities and places mentioned in the poetic narration of the book *Mahabharata* has also raised controversy among several 'secular' intellectuals, just as the astronomical dating created much debate. On the other hand, while in ancient times arts played a major role in preserving and promoting the '*itihas*' of ancient times, we find that with a few exceptions, artistic representation of the sort is missing in current modern cultural milieu. A very

intriguing fact is that since past few centuries the book *Mahabharata* is somehow denied the earlier pride of place in homes, even though it not only had a short focused war to re-establish Dharma, but is full of tales of high moral value for daily life, including the revered book, the *Gita*. 'Mahabharata is often referred to as a War, whereas it is actually the '*itihas*' of Maha-Bharata or the greater land of 'Bharatavarsa'. Thus, misperceptions and misinterpretations thrive about the book, the personalities, the places and its history and culture, too.

To have a 'critical appraisal' of the various aspects of Mahabharata, discussed amongst the scholars and the general intelligentsia, we took up some main points that often lead to heated 'criticism and contention'.

Among several 'critical aspects of Mahabharata, discussed amongst the scholars and the general



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intelligentsia, we consider some main points that often lead to heated 'criticism and contention' viz.

1. Architecture of the book titled Mahabharata of 1,00,000 verses
2. Archaeological, "Itihas" and Date of the 'War'?
3. Identification and preservation of major Cities and heritage places mentioned in Mahabharata and are under ASI Protection?
4. The Mahabharata in the Socio-Cultural milieu in society, general perceptions,

5. Validity of the diluted 'Critical Edition' and its method/ architecture.

OBJECTIVE

1. Bring out the Historicity and Historiography of the personalities, places and events related to them, that are covered in the poetic narration in the Mahabharata book because the *Mahabharata* is an important book of identity of our tangible and intangible cultural heritage and history, we have made an effort to invite leading scholars to deliberate upon various related topics and throw fresh light on some of the above



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dimensions related to one of the most significant books of knowledge.

2. Dispel misconceptions and misre presentations about the book, the personalities and their actions and
3. To showcase the lacunae in the Critical Edition of Bhandarkar Institute.
4. To create a better understanding and appreciation of our history heritage and cultural continuity.

Almost 30 renowned scholars from different parts of the globe (7 international) and India, from different fields like History, Archaeology, Art, Culture, Astronomy, Philosophy and literature gathered for this Manthan. The 'Mahabharata Manthan' was organized as a three days program with Exhibition on Cities and Art linked Mahabharata, and an International Conference titled 'Mahabharata: A Critical Revisit to the Tangible and Intangible Heritage'. It was from 19th- 21st July 2017.

Venue is IGNCA, New Delhi.

The program was inaugurated by Hon Minister of Culture and Tourism Dr Mahesh Sharma who highlighted how out two significant books Ramayana and Mahabharata have created an identity worldwide for Bharata history and culture. He stressed the aim should be both academic and social as misperceptions about the book must be dispelled and Mahabharata to regain its pride of place in homes of all Indians. (See details in summary of sessions and video clips)

The historians aptly proved that Mahabharata is History and the tone was set by Keynote address of Prof B. B. Lal, who titled his paper as History begins with Mahabharata period. Dr Abhay Singh DEAN Rohilkhand University showed how cultural continuity is historical fact which is applicable to the Mahabharata too. Even the philosophers



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dealt with the 'sense' of history they find in this book. Several scholars took the same basic line that it is our history.

The most interesting paper was on Draupadi, wherein Dr Pradip Bhattacharya retired IAS official and Independent scholar showed with quotations that Draupadi was never disrobed. Another paper on Draupadi was equally fascinating comparing Lost Saraswati to regained VAK comparing Draupadi to Saraswati.

As mentioned by the Valedictory Session Chief Guest Dr Bibek Debroy (Member NITI AAYOG), every Manthan also brings out 'halahal', much 'halahal' happened during the session on Critical analysis of the Critical Edition of Bhandarkar Oriental Institute of India, Pune. Several scholars of pointed the lacunae and dilutions In the BORI edition and defenders had little left to defend.

The Valedictory address was very powerful, enriched with significant quotations. Dr Bibek Debroy gave several reasonable arguments as to why Mahabharata should be read by all Indians and be a part of our syllabus and normal reading too. The learning from this book being practical, eternal truths he emphasized the need to bring this knowledge to our youth at a large scale.

Session Proceedings

In the inaugural session, our chief guest Hon'ble Minister of Culture and Tourism (IC), Dr. Mahesh Sharma, stressed that one of the objectives of this Manthan should be to dispel wrong notions that keeping the book Mahabharata is inauspicious. He also stated outcome of this Manthan must reach the wider audience, to achieve the objective of spreading better understanding and appreciation about our heritage.

In the Keynote address, Prof. B.B. Lal exclusively focused on places mentioned in Mahabharata and the

Material culture of those sites that includes ceramics, seals and other archaeological findings. Most of the sites like *Panchala*, *Hastinapura*, *Ahichchhatra*, *Kampilya* are located in the upper Ganga valley. Therefore, we can place Mahabharata in 'Historical Period' rather than saying it as myth.



Hon' Minister Dr Mahesh Sharma and DIGNITARIES at Exhibition



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Students at Exhibition MBH



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DRAUPADI DREAM TRUST
Empowering at Every Level

Inauguration of Mahabharata Manthan and International Conference

Mahabharata Manthan

IGNCA, New Delhi

19th - 21st July 2017



Felicitation of Hon' Minister, Dr Mahesh Sharma

Synopsis of Int'l Conference

Between the two famous 'Epics' of India, the Ramayana and The Mahabharata, the latter has always been the center of 'critical' analysis and comments for many reasons. Not only have umpteen subjective commentaries been written on this longest saga of 'itihas' of Dwapar, in poetic narration, but some years ago even a 'Critical Edition' was very painstakingly published by the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute. Among several 'critical aspects of Mahabharata, discussed amongst the scholars and the general intelligentsia, we consider some main points that often lead to heated 'criticism and contention' viz

1. Architecture of the book titled Mahabharata of 1,00,000 verses
2. Archaeological, 'Itihas' and Date of the 'War',?
3. Identification and preservation of major Cities and heritage places mentioned in Mahabharata and are under ASI Protection?
4. The Mahabharata in the Socio-Cultural milieu in society, general perceptions,
5. Validity of the diluted 'Critical Edition' and its method / architecture.

Architecture of Mahabharata

The search for ancient Bharata's history or 'itihas' had begun long back, with some earnest efforts, even during British rule. It continued with archaeologists and modern 'historians' giving it their own interpretations, as per their understanding and methodology. Though



Felicitation of Hon' Minister
Dr Mahesh Sharma

Mahabharata book clearly states that it is 'itihasa', yet the current dispensation of

our 'modern secular historians' vehemently deny it the status of 'history'. One of the often repeated arguments for this is the belief among them that the original book about Kurukshetra War was 'Jaya' consisting of only 8,800 verses and the later versions about this War in 'Bharata' containing 24,000 verses and "Mahabharata" having 100,00,000 verses have too many interpolations and hence cannot be taken 'history' as understood in modern terminology.

What is the proof that additions to the original version was not an





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Felicitation of Prof B.B. Lal

expansion of the span of events that were later thought to be of importance in knowing the actual history of that period in proper context? History is always getting new dimensions as and when more information comes to light or when scholars suggest additions of more relevant information or facts to give wider perspective. So additions to text should not be a disqualification as history. Rather it should be a matter of further study to know what was added, why, and do they fit into the overall 'historical;' narration and its objective.

These doubts about historicity of Mahabharata arise as some scholars find 'So called inconsistencies' in its structure and architecture of the volumes narration. Two foreign scholars of Indian origin have worked intensely on this issue and are of the view that the Mahabharata is a well structured methodical book which merges well with the idea of presenting the events and personalities that reflects the 'itihas' of an era, that also serves the larger purpose of history as a learning basis.. The discrepancies, they opine are due to the fact that various sections were composed by different scholars.

So the question is- Is Mahabharata Book a book of History or not? Secondly, how crucial is it to find out what could be the date of the Kurukshetra War, and in what historical time frame does it fall?

Is the Mahabharata Text a historical account of ancient Bharata? Archaeological and 'Historical' aspects, date and historicity of the Mahabharata War:

According to Herodotus, considered as the father of the modern discipline of history, history, like literature and anthropology originated from 'mythology'. 'Thus, all have the same origin, and in order to know anything about ancient times of any country or place, we have to study their written, oral, or variously documented traditional material. How we sieve or we understand that documentation depends on how much we know about and understand the methodology that was prevalent in ancient times. If History is defined as *'the branch of knowledge dealing with past events' or as 'a continuous, systematic narrative of past events as relating to a particular people, country, period, person, etc., usually written as a chronological account; chronicle' does Mahabharata or for that our other texts like Ramayana, Puranas Brahmins etc fit this definition?*



Felicitation of Dr. B.R. Mani



Felicitation of Shri Ram Bahadur

The biggest or 'Maha' argument erupts as soon as we say Mahabharata is a Historical Text. All because the Method of Modern History writing is the gospel truth way, and majority of the Historians trained in this tradition will not budge an inch and rather denounce people who wish to claim a work of literary excellence as Holistic History of an Era, named as Dwapar, as per ancient calendar structuring. Concepts, methodologies and structuring of past and present facts depend on systems adopted



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during that particular period of time, as per convenience and requirements for doing the same.

The ancient eras scholars studied and learnt from those around them or those who lived before them. There was no inclination for fiction and no Printing press available to print and sell books. Knowledge percolated through Oral Tradition and knowledge was learning from, of and for 'life'.

Thus what was documented in Manuscripts and passed on orally was of utmost importance. This also had connections with social customs and hence the very important ritual of 'Shakh-ucchaar' (list of ancestors, or lineage of family) was prevalent amongst certain Knowledge communities, especially the Chaturvediis of Mathura. Incidentally they were the real knowledge repositories and wrote and documented the ancient books of knowledge. They worship 'Maha Vidya', at temple located at Mathura/ Just as a family in ancient period did not mean 'husband wife and two children' but a unit of several generations of parents/ grandparents and children living together, likewise 'itihas' was not just the chronology of rulers and their rule, but encompassed generations and events surrounding the life and times.



The crux of this matter is that whatever is documented either as Vedas, Ramayana, Mahabharata, Brahmans, Puranas, though it came into textual form much later, is actually the life and times as known and told by the knowledge community, the Rishi's 'vyasas' vaidyas, etc. Is it not time to examine the 'Historicity of the events and dynasties mentioned in these books and consider it as history as known to ancient scholars? We have invited historians to share their knowledge on this important subject.

Date - a synergetic study of the traditional, Archaeological and astronomical calculations.

The traditional date of the Mahabharata War is given as being more than 5,000 years BCE. Astronomical dating of the War, based on the celestial positions regarding several critical events related to the war and leading personalities, is almost akin to traditional date, 3067 BC or 5083 years (3067 + 2016). On the other hand Archaeologists have done their own researches and dating through scientific dating of the various materials, layers excavated at sites connected to Mahabharata. Their dates hover





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around 1000 BC 1400 BC. Both Archaeological and Astronomical dating is scientific, so how do we assess the correct date? Do Archaeologists need more explorations and excavations and finer advanced technology? After all scientific work is a continuous journey of new research and findings. So what steps are required for a better understanding of the date of the War.

The identification of major Cities and places mentioned in the Mahabharata:

ASI uses the information from literary texts for exploration and excavations, and substantial work was done in the past on places related to The Mahabharata. Significant in this regard is especially the work by B.B.Lal on Hastinapura and Indraprastha at Purana Quila, Dwarka's well researched and documented research by Dr S.R Rao. Even the Panchala region of Ahichetra was being excavated by current Agra Circle SA Bhuwan Vikram but his report is still awaited. Similar is the case with Lucknow University's Prof D.P.Tewari's excavations at Kampilya in 2011-12. In spite of all these efforts, ASI is still evasive about identification of these cities and places with the Dwapar era cities linked to The Mahabharata. A critical revisit of this scattered work, to have a cohesive and planned approach, is the need of the hour. This is important for proper identification and documentation of all ancient capital cities of the Dwapar era.



Felicitation of Prof Satyavrat Shastri

CULTURAL ASPECTS

Criticism of the method and architecture of composing the poetic sections, or 18 par vas:



Several issues have been raised by some academicians regarding, what they say are, inconsistencies in the text structure and architecture. Some have even raised questions of interpolations and additions of stories and episodes to main text, and they using this presumption of theirs to doubt the authenticity of the facts of the events and war. How far are their contentions valid, and what do the other section of scholars have to show to counter the skeptics on this aspect?

It is very surprising that our scholars are so taken up with the western concept of documentation and writing of history of a nation or events. There is not the slightest doubt that the Mahabharata was 'written'. In the



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Dr D.K.Hari and Dr Hema Hari presenting their study on Historicity of Krishna

days when there were no printing press, it is obvious it was written by hand, just like the many books documenting ancient Bharata and Aryavarta and Jambu Dweep, like the Puranas, the Brahmanas etc, and the dissemination of history was through Oral traditions. The development of suitable phonetic and scientific languages enabled an ease to memorizing. Thus doubting the accuracy of orally transmitted 'itihas' of ancient India is injustice to the quality of ancient endeavors.

The validity of the 'Critical Edition' diluting, or omitting some significant parts from the original versions: The critical Edition itself needs a critical revisit to understand the validity of the 'refurbished and shortened version, which is not acceptable to many scholars today.



Mahabharata being an important book of cultural and historical heritage, dilutions in the 'Critical Edition' also raise questions. The critical Edition itself needs a critical revisit to understand the validity of the 'refurbished and shortened version, which is not acceptable to many scholars today.

The Mahabharata in the Socio-Cultural milieu, and the general perceptions?



The Mahabharata in its current form has one lakh verses, divided into 18 Parvas or sections and of these hardly 20% is portraying the Kurukshetra War. One parva, the Udyog Parva, tells us about the War, stressing on EFFORTS for avoidance of War and for peace efforts. Though this great book of one lakh verses devotes some parts narrating about a massive war, it also brings to us the futility of war, and learning's, that encompass every aspect of life. It also has the 'Santi parva' and significantly the Bhagwat

Gita', yet the book is hardly ever found in households. On the other hand, even though the Ramayana also tells about a long drawn war, gives us no timeless treaties like the Bhagwat Gita, yet for some inexplicable reason the Ramayana finds pride of place in homes, which is denied to the Mahabharata. Was this always so or did this situation develop during a





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certain period due to certain interpretations. Why is the Mahabharata generally regarded only as a book about a war, and inauspicious?

Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage

Art, Folk and Classical traditions of storytelling, still carry forward the tales of Mahabharata and engross the society. The theatre and electronic media too have captured the saga in its multidimensional aspects and showcasing, preserving and promoting this intangible heritage is equally important for nourishing the roots of our culture and civilization. Various Art



forms, like Temple arts, performing arts and traditions all provide a glimpse into our past and attentions in this regards could provide deeper insights to a culture of aesthetics and practical in nature. Thus we propose the Mahabhrata Manthan through Oral Tradition of discussion and dissemination, chitra katha and performing arts, and seek support of likeminded persons and organizations.

To deliberate upon and understand the above dimensions related to one of the most significant books of knowledge The Mahabharata, we organize a three days International Conference at New Delhi from 19th- 21st July 2017.





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Mahabharata Manthan IGNCA, New Delhi



International Conference on Mahabharata Manthan 19th - 21st July 2017

Academic Session



Dr. B. R. Mani

In the Academic Sessions 1, Dr. B.R. Mani built his argument by establishing Mahabharata chronology on the basis of pottery cultures. Accordingly, he stated the date of the events narrated in the book Mahabharata, on the basis of Painted Grey Ware pottery dates, ranging from 1100-900BCE established by Prof B.B. Lal, upto the latest published date findings of more than 3000 BCE. He also corroborated these dates with the Aihole inscription of *Pulakesin II* to date the Mahabharata.



Dr D.K. Hari

D.K. Hari and Dr. Hema Hari, in their paper on *Historicity of Krishna*, showed that Krishna was not a mere mythical character but a historical one. To establish that, both the scholars dwelt upon Literature, Geography / Ecology, Archaeology and Archaeo-astronomical evidences.



Dr Hema Hari

Maj. Gen. G.D. Bakshi, elaborated upon the Military Heritage of ancient Bharata vis-a-vis Mahabharata period War at Kurukshetra. He highlighted various military strategies followed at that time, like various types of *Vyuhas* which followed by the Indian Army laurels in 1965 and Bangladesh war of 1971 against Pakistan. General Bakshi also elaborated upon the strategic military culture and how that differs in place and time.



Maj. Gen. G.D. Bakshi

Dr. Mohan Gupta, spoke on “The Date of Mahabharata War Historical, Puranic & *Astronomical Evidence*”, tried to fix the date of Mahabharata war. He based his argument on the basis of *Vārahmihiri's Brihat Samhita*, drying up of river Saraswati and the position of various Nakshatras as mentioned in various hymns of Mahabharata; as well as on the basis of the date of death of Bhisma.



Dr. Mohan Gupta

In next session, presenting a paper on “Apocalypse and Utopia: The Mahabharata's Burning of the Forest Myth” Dr. Vishwa Adluri, tried to give an alternative narrative of the event in terms of allegories like *Samsara, Jiva etc.* It is not seen as *Prayala* but in terms of cosmic dissolution.



Dr. Vishwa Adluri



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Dr. Joydeep Bagchee

Dr. Joydeep Bagchee's paper was titled "Empire, Enlightenment and Hermeneutics: Tilak and the Gītā" and dwelt upon how Tilak interpreted Gita and how his interpretations of Gita were conditioned by the then socio-Political context. He says that Tilak's Gita is not just a nationalist approach; rather it speaks up of a just political conflict to address the then problem.



Dr. Archana Asthana

Dr. Archana Asthana, from Archaeological Survey of India, linked inscription and their context with the Mahabharata. She also used other corroborative archaeological evidences like coins, Pillars that bear the testimony of Mahabharata. She had an exhaustive list of inscriptions from various historical periods and places, to trace the historicity of Mahabharata.



Dr. Nalini Rao

Dr. Nalini Rao, in her Paper titled "**Knowledge of the Past Challenges of Justification, Interpretation and Preservation: Case of Dwarka**", tried to show the historicity of Mahabharata with special reference to Dwarka. She also highlighted the problem of interpretation due to the nature of the site which is submerged and very difficult on the part of an archaeologist to work upon. She argues that collaborative investigation should be made to arrive at a logical conclusion. Her paper also stressed the need to preserve the site and its surrounding environment.



Dr. Molly Kaushal

Dr. Molly Kaushal, Director of Janpada Sampada at IGNCA, gave a different perspective to the debate by showing that the Mahabharata tradition is still alive in its various forms like performing arts and other local traditions. By documenting local Mahabharata traditions throughout India in various forms, she tried to show the relationship between various texts and regional living traditions.



Prof. Pradip Jyoti Mahanta

Prof. Pradip Jyoti Mahanta from Tezpur University, gave an in depth presentation about the Mahabharata Heritage in Assam. He also detailed many local living tradition in Assam associated with Mahabharata.



Dr. Pradip Bhattacharya

In the next session based on A Critical Revisit to the Critical Edition, had the first presenter Dr. Pradip Bhattacharya showed, with textual references, that no where it is explicit that Draupadi was stripped, rather she was insulted or dragged or molested. He criticized the analysis of the editors of the Critical Edition of Mahabharata published by Bhandarkar Oriental Institute, Pune, for misinterpretations and many editorial errors, with a plea to have a team of experts to review and revise the BORI Critical Edition.



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Dr. Jahnvi Bidnur

Next, Dr. Jahnvi Bidnur from BORI, discussed the Critical Edition Mahabharata and added to Dr Pradips analysis of dilutions and misrepresentations, by focusing that the European Ideologists de-legitimized the traditional perception of Mahabharata. Secondly, she advocated for the preservation of Pan Indian Traditional text of Mahabharata to provide a solid textual foundation of the treatise for future studies.



Dr. BVK Shastry

Dr. BVK Shastry laid emphasis on the morality and Dharma aspect of the epic and opined that Mahabharata is a Dharmasashtra. The treatise is a work of conduct and morality which was reflected in the text. He proposed that the text be exposed to the new generation in a today's language and context.



Shri A.K. Bhatnagar

In the Session concerning the Astronomical Dating, the first presenter, Shri A.K. Bhatnagar, a retired Meteorologist, emphasised on the use of astronomical references to determine the date of past events. Shri Bhatnagar highlighted how he used astronomical software to arrive at a conclusion by back calculation of position of planets and stars. He discussed the astronomical events in terms of phenomena, cycle and average period. He also discussed the *nakshatra* circle in great detail with beautiful flowchart and



Dr. Apirna Dhir

Dr Nilesh Oak's paper was presented by his colleague Dr. Apirna Dhir. She made a very graphic presentation on the Methodology of selection and testing of astronomical data from ancient texts she discussed the selection process for her data giving various astronomical observations and tried to bring out an accurate date of the Mahabharata, as per their method. They advocated for the scientific method of study and testing of evidence. The Academic Sessions of the ended with Dr Vishwa Adluri reading to the paper of Prof **Alfred Hildebeitel of George Washington University, who could come due to ill health. The paper was titled Vyasa's Mahabharata, and** looked at Vyasa as *the* figure through whom the epic makes an integrated statement about its own composition. The paper also discussed Bruce Sullivan's published views of Vyasa as compared with authors own. It further centers upon the text's Vedic past in which it sets its narrative and displays, what the author feels is Vedic humor.



Prof. Alexis Pinchard

The Academic Sessions continued on 21st July 2017, with another fifteen papers being presented. In Session 7 was titled Historiography and Historicity. Dr. Alexis Pinchard, in his paper titled ***"The Mahābhārata: How to Endow Human History with Sense"*** discussed how to endow human history with sense. He argued for the continuity concerning the motion of *avataras*. He sees the Mahabharata characters in duality like divine and human or divine archetype for heroes in Mahabharata. He also put parallels between Mahabharata and the churning of ocean.



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Dr. Keonaard Elst

In the next paper titled “*What the foreigners in the Mahabharata teach about its chronology*”, Dr. Keonaard Elst's dwelt on foreigners in Indian chronology vis-a-vis Mahabharata traced that before Alexander the Great's invasion of India, there were foreigners in India. He also traced two Akkadian words in Rig Veda- *Pana* or Unity of Money and *Bekanata* (Money lender) and later foreigners were made Yavanas or Yonas or Greeks and Circas means Chinese. He also discussed about Orientalises perception of Mahabharata and how they were extremely sceptical about past events. He ended up his discussion with some compassion of Ramayana and Ilias.



Dr Indrajit Badhyopadhaya

Dr. Indrajit Badhyopadhaya presented his arguments to prove that Draupadi was actually Saraswati or *Vāk*. In his paper “*Draupadī - Lost Sarasvatī Regained Vāk*”, he explored the Hymns, Characteristics, etymology and other traits to show that all the features were with Draupadi. Also, he drew a parallel between Draupadi and the river Saraswati.



Dr Indrajit Badhyopadhaya

Prof. Sushmite Pande, in her paper on Shanti Parvan emphasised the polyphonic structure of the epic. However she was very critical of the western scholars who tried to stress the heterogenous and contradictory characters in Mahabharata like that of Greek model of heroic epics. She also highlighted the concepts of Pravriti and Nivriti as provided in Gita.



Dr Abhay Kumar Singh

Dr Abhay Kumar Singh, Dean Rohilkhand University Bareilly, presented his study on “*Evaluating Traditional Past Cultural Truths and Historical Past*” highlights that Mahabharata is the creation of original text with later editing, addition and extrapolations. He stated that cultural truths are the core out of which traditional knowledge emanated. The tangible and intangible part of history may not converge and hence scholars are divided into opposite camps. Citing critical editions of Mahabharata Dr. Singh argues that in the quest for historical material in any traditional text, cultural substance is often damages as happened in Mahabharata.



Dr. Come Carpentier

Dr. Come Carpentier, while discussing “*Some Observations on the Historical and Factual Value of certain descriptions in Sabhā Parva of Mahābhārata*” stressed on the historical and factual value of certain descriptions in sabhaparva of Mahabharata, tries to prove Mahabharata as history in a higher and true sense of the term. He, in his paper tries to read Mahabharata in terms of casualty impending ecological catastrophe and ultimate destiny of the Jiva.



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Shri Praful Garodia

Shri Praful Garodia and Shri Jaganniwas Iyer discussed the genesis of Krishna Rajya, explain that it means a state run by strategic genius like Krishna. While Rama Rajya is considered as an ideal state, Krishna Rajya concept can be politically the different stated principles of India. They advocate that India required an indigenous political system as Europe and America's history have different roots



Shri Jaganniwas Iyer



Shri A Purushottaman

Shri A Purushottaman read out his paper, which was prepared jointly with Dr. A Harindranath. Their paper was titled “*Why Harivamsha calls itself the Khila of Mahābhārata? - A critique of the BORI Critical Edition of Harivamsha*” While discussing Harivarma, he highlighted the great work done by Andre Conture and deciphering proper meaning of the word *Khila*, conclude that old manuscripts should be studied in their own setting.



Dr. Jana Bandopadhyay

Dr. Jana Bandopadhyay discussed two epics Bharavi's Khiratarjuniya and Vyasa's Mahabharata, where she argues that Draupadi in Kiratarjuniya is more aggressive than Vyasa's Draupadi in Vanaparva. She interprets that Bharani depicts Draupadi as an empowered women compared to Vyasa's Draupadi.



Dr Frederick M. Smith

Dr Frederick M. Smith paper “*The Himalayan Mahābhārata culture: Pilgrimage, text, divination, and identity*” showed the continuities between local vernacular Mahabharata of Himalaya with the classical Sanskrit epic.



Shri Jijith N. Ravi

In his paper on “*Geographical Data in the Mahābhārata*” Shri Jijith N. Ravi highlighted the geographical aspect of Mahabharata that includes the names of rivers, lakes, mountains, forests kingdom, town, cities, tribes etc. On the basis of this he refutes the leftist propoganda that British have unified India Geographically, rather it was Vyasa who united this great land.



Dr Virendra Bangroo

Dr Virendra Bangroo paper “*Reflections of Mahābhārata in Kashmir*” showcased the linkage of Kashmir to Mahabharata period through a traditional Kashmiri text Nilamata Purana. The epic gives a vivid description about Sri Krishna's association with the state and a conversation between Janmejaya and Vaisampayana.



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Dr Shashi Tiwari

Dr Shashi Tiwari discussed *Apadharma in Mahabharata* or the duty of classes and individual at the time of distress due to natural and artificial reasons. It also stressed on what the book tells about how to overcome these distresses in such situations.

The Valedictory Session began with Ms Neera Misra Convener of the International Conference Mahabharata Manthan, giving a summary of the three days proceedings and reading out the Resolutions arrived at and recommendations made by several scholars.



Ms Neera Misra

This session had very learned speakers. Main was Dr Bibek Debroy, Member Niti Aayog and the Guest of Honor Shri Pranav Khullar, Joint Secretary Ministry of Culture. Shri Khullar shared his personal experiences on being exposed to the stories of Mahabharata and how they influenced his thought proves and understanding of life and people.



Dr Bibek Debroy, gave a very knowledge packed powerful and passionate talk on the value of the book of immense knowledge. He started by quoting from the book itself to prove that is 'history ittihas or as it happened. He then gave many examples with Sanskrit quotes on the invaluable learnings from Mahabharata, and went on to list many important reasons as to why all must read the book and benefit from its worldly knowledge. Dr Debroy's quoted several parts from the book to make his point and all this brought out the deep research he has done in re-writing the ten volumes of the great book of ancient 'itihas' of Bharta.

The proceedings ended with a Vote of Thanks by Air Vice Marshal Rajesh Lal.





MAHABHARATA MANTHAN

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RESOLUTION

"An International Conference on 'Mahabharata Manthan' was held under the auspices of Draupadi Dream Trust at IGNCA, New Delhi, from July 19th to 21st 2017.

1. The participants noted with regret that the NCERT text books continue to incorporate many incorrect facts about ancient Indian history and culture. They were strongly of the view that a Committee of competent historians and archaeologists be appointed by Government of India to review these books and recommend suitable amendments.
2. The participants also noted that "the Critical Edition of the Mahabharata published by BORI Pune should be revised by a committee which will consult the manuscripts left out, the Arabic, Persian and Indonesian and other South-East Asian versions. The committee will study inconsistencies and contradictions and ancient commentaries on these with a view to suggesting resolutions. It will take into account findings of lexical and stylistic research.

Every region in India and South East Asia has its version of Mahabharata. People of one are unaware of the differences in others. A compendium of variations will be compiled in English so that all in India and abroad can access the incredible variety of variations. This may be done on the lines that have been done for Ramayana in "Rama Katha-Utpatti aur Vikas" by Camille Buckle.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A Mahabharata Parikrama Identify sites mentioned in the epic. Organise the tourist circuit and visit by students. Example: An Arjuna vanavasa circuit, a Pandava vanavasa circuit and a Balarama Tirthayatra circuit.
2. An encyclopaedia on Indian epics covering the entire corpus of cultural texts-written, performing, visual, oral, be compiled through a co-ordinated effort through a state sponsored (supported) project.

3. Genealogical lists as given in different Puranas also require comparison and consideration of omissions of names and thus fixing tentative chronological framework. The internal evidences could also be taken into consideration for suggesting a possible period of Mahabharata events.
4. "An international workshop for reaching to a consensus on the actual and closer date of Mahabharata related events in which all those scholars, archaeologists and scientists who have proposed various dates, ranging between two thousand years, may be asked to present their views in short, followed by detailed discussions. This should be initially in separate segments, discipline-wise, and then finally to be discussed in a joint session. Only in this way the date of Mahabharata could be decided."
5. The date of PGW culture which is supposed to be connected with Mahabharata times has been pushed back to the third millennium BCE on the basis of new C₁₄ dates from a number of archaeological grounds to the 8th century BCE puts a gap of about two thousand years. Dr. B. R. Mani DG National Museum
6. In view of the seminal place of Indraprastha in the history of India and the foundational role of the Mahabharata, it is recommended that a great memorial monument dedicated to the deities and heroes of the Mahabharata, be built at a central location in India's capital and be called JAYA. It should be envisioned as a national cultural shrine.

Parallels and precedents are to be found in the monumental statues erected in great cities of South-East Asia which are inspired by and celebrate the Indic epics (viz. Bangkok, Vientiane, Jakarta, Bali).

The younger generation of India as a whole be inculcated heritage awareness through curricular reform and co-curricular activities. Deeply impacted by information technology and its explosion, there is an increasing tendency of its mis-utilization affecting adversely on their growing mind. The Government and the Civil Society should take initiatives to check a gradual disconcert of the English-educated young mind towards civilization heritage-tangible and intangible.



MAHABHARATA MANTHAN



SOME COMMENTS

RECOMMENDATION/RESOLUTION

Dr B.R. Mani: There seems to be no doubt among scholars and scientists about the historicity of Mahabharata. This is also evident from the deliberations in the present International Conference, Mahabharata-Manthan.

But as was already apprehended still there is no consensus amongst scholars on the date of Mahabharata related events. The date of PGW culture which is supposed to be connected with Mahabharata times has been pushed back to the third millennium BCE on the basis of new C_{14} dates from a number of archaeological grounds to the 8th century BCE puts a gap of about two thousand years.

Same as archaeology there is still no consensus amongst the astronomical scientists whose astronomical datings normally range between 3200 through 2450 and 17th-18th century BCE to about 1400 BCE. The scientific calculations should have firm basis.

Genealogical lists as given in different Puranas also require comparison and consideration of omissions of names and thus fixing tentative chronological framework. The internal evidences could also be taken into consideration for suggesting a possible period of Mahabharata events.

I would therefore propose to take the following resolution.

“It is high time to propose for an international workshop for reaching to a consensus on the actual and closer date of Mahabharata related events in which all those scholars, archaeologists and scientists who have proposed various dates, ranging between two thousand years, may be asked to present their views in short, followed by detailed discussions. This should be initially in separate segments, discipline-wise, and then finally to be discussed in a joint session. Only in this way the date of Mahabharata could be decided.”

Dr. Pradeep Bhattacharya: The Critical Edition of the Mahabharata published by BORI Pune should be revised by a committee which will consult the manuscripts left out, the Arabic, Persian and Indonesian and other South-East Asian versions. The committee will study inconsistencies and contradictions and ancient commentaries on these with a view to suggesting resolutions. It will take into account findings of lexical and stylistic research. Every region in India and South

East Asia has its version of Mahabharata. People of one are unaware of the differences in others.

A compendium of variations will be compiled in English so that all in India and abroad can access the incredible variety of variations. This has been done for Ramayana in “Rama Katha- Utpatti aur Vikas” by Camille Buckle.

Shri Come Carpentier : In view of the seminal place of Indraprastha in the history of India and the foundational role of the Mahabharata, it is recommended that a great memorial monument dedicated to the duties and heroes of the Mahabharata, be built at a central location in India's capital and be called JAYA. It should be envisioned as a national cultural shrine. Parallels and precedents are to be found in the monumental statues erected in great cities of South-East Asia which are inspired by and celebrate the Indic epics (viz. Bangkok, Vientiane, Jakarta, Bali).

Shri Kalyan S .: A rhetorical contribution towards the resolution to be passed, post-conclusion of 1st Mahabharata Manthan. If we keep dwelling upon logic, we may miss the magic. Mahabharata is like a huge fruitful tree. It is important to know about the roots of the tree. It is equally or even more important to enjoy the shade and fruits of the tree. So while the quest for the roots go on and it is unlikely and least expected to end anytime soon with universal acceptance and endorsement, let us keep benefiting ourselves with the shade, the fruits and other derivatives.

Prof. Pradip Jyoti Mahanta Tezpur University, Assam : The younger generation of India as a whole be inculcated heritage awareness through curricular reform and co-curricular activities. Deeply impacted by information technology and its explosion, there is an increasing tendency of its mis-utilization affecting adversely on their growing mind. The Government and the Civil Society should take initiatives to check a gradual disconcert of the English-educated young mind towards civilisational heritage-tangible and intangible. Congratulations Draupadi Dream Trust for the Manthan initiative. The travelling of the epic traditions of India across Indian regions created bewilderingly varied cultural texts parallel to the epics in original.

An encyclopedia on Indian epics covering the entire corpus of cultural texts-written, performing, visual, oral, be compiled through a co-ordinated effort through a state sponsored (supported) project.....



Indian Express 2017

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to the rest of the building.

The supervisor of the factory, Dhananjay Kumar Chaubey, also reached the spot.

Police said while firefighters were trying to douse the flames on the third floor, there was an explosion on the second floor.

The roof crumbled, trapping five persons under the debris.

Police said the persons were identified as fire station officer

owner and other workers have been questioned. The factory was set up in 1988 and presently employs around 40 workers, police sources said.

Meanwhile, factory workers said it took fire tenders some time to reach the spot. K K Jain, another factory owner, said: "The fire engines were delayed due to poor management of vehicle parking in the lane."

"Vijender was a dedicated fireman and used to give his hundred percent every time he was on duty. Ours was a 24-hour shift so we used to talk a lot. I still cannot believe he is no longer with us," said his colleague Triok Sharma.

Chief Fire Officer, Atul Garg, told *The Indian Express* that Pal's family will be given Rs 25 lakh as compensation from the depart-

Fireman Vijender Pal joined the Delhi Fire Services in 1996. *Express*

ment's fund. "As he died while on duty, the Delhi government may give Rs 1 crore to his family — which is a part of their scheme," Garg said.

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Capital's largest archaeological park to get a new name — Indraprastha

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NEW DELHI, JUNE 1

MONTHS AFTER a proposal was floated to rename the Teen Murti Marg as Teen Murti Haifa Marg, after a city in Israel, comes another renaming in the capital. The Dinpanah Archaeological Park, the largest such park in the heart of Delhi, will soon be known as Indraprastha Archaeological Park.

In late 2014, the DDA had proposed that Delhi's fourth archaeological park be named after Dinpanah — the historical city set up by Mughal emperor Humayun. While the other three parks in the city — Mehrauli, Sultangarhi and Tughlaqabad — were already notified in the Delhi Master Plan (MPD) 2021, the DDA proposed the inclusion of Dinpanah at a later stage, during the 14th meeting of the Advisory Group on Review of



The Dinpanah park includes the Purana Qila. *Express*

MPD 2021 in August 2014.

Spread over 800 acres, the Dinpanah Archaeological Park comprises the Purana Qila area, with nearly 100 monuments and a lush green forest. The DDA aimed to bring together various stakeholders such as the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), the National Monument Authority, the Central Public Works Department, the Ministry

of Environment, Delhi Urban Heritage Foundation and the Aga Khan Trust for Culture to carry out the planned development of the area and enhance visitor experience. Dinpanah, in fact, is bigger the other three archaeological parks.

The nomenclature had raised the ire of certain sections.

Neera Mishra, Chairperson-Trustee of Delhi-based Draupadi Heritage Trust, an organisation that promotes arts and culture, had sent letters to the ASI, Ministry of Culture, and to Urban Development Minister Venkaiah Naidu, registering her objections as an "Indian citizen and conservationist" to the area being named as Dinpanah, contending that archaeology is not just built heritage, but also remains 'signs of the 'lost built heritage'. She requested the government to consider the area's links to the Mahabharata era rather than the Mughal empire,

which came much later.

Consequently, the ASI had sent a letter to the DDA vice-chairman, on August 11, 2015, a copy of which is with *The Indian Express*, saying, "This has reference to naming of the archaeological park in the Purana Qila area, it is informed that the area had archaeological evidence going back to 1,000BC, and witnessed several cultural and dynastic strains. The Ministry of Culture and ASI have examined the issue and opined that it would be in the fitness of things to name this as Indraprastha Archaeological Park."

Though the DDA has not notified the name change till date, it is likely to do so soon. Both Manju Paul, Director (Planning), DDA, and Manisha Gupta, Senior Architect, DDA, confirmed to *The Indian Express* that the renaming is in the offing. However, they refused to offer any time frame for the notification to be issued for the same.

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sembled at Jantar Mantar to demand a CBI inquiry into the deaths of their fellow workers, Naresh Srivastava and Suraj Baitha.

"We had spread the word and informed all authorities about their protest yet no one helped us save Naresh and Suraj when they set themselves on fire on April 10," said Vinod Singh, joint secretary of the Mazdoor Sangh Union. Instead, the group of 25 workers Thursday alleged, police forces came to the spot after the incident and fired at protesters, lathi-charged them and lobbed tear gas shells at them.

"The sugar mill company

owes us a total of Rs 75 crore since it shut down in 2002. The owner is from one of the wealthiest industrial families in the country. That is why we have not been able to elude our wages. No one is investigating the harassment we have been through after Naresh and Suraj set themselves on fire," said 70-year-old Ram Chander Panit, rolling up his sleeves to show where a bullet had hit him.

Social activist and chairman of the Bonded Labour Liberation Front, Swami Agnivesh, meanwhile, alleged that he had written to the ruling dispensation in Bihar, the BJP and several other political

leaders, but in vain. "We have contacted many politicians and all of them promised help but nothing has been done so far. We demand a CBI inquiry into the deaths of the two workers," he said.

The protesters said they travelled to Delhi, thwarting attempts by police and administration to keep them from taking trains to the capital. "Baitha's wife, Maya Devi, and many workers were not allowed to board the train on Wednesday. Devi and her son will join us on Friday. We, who are here today, made it to Delhi after a lot of trouble, even hiding from police," Manohar Manav, one of

the social workers accompanying the mill workers, said.

Srivastava's wife, Purnima Devi, alleged the police, politicians and the mill owner were working hand-in-glove to oppress workers and thwart a fair probe into her husband's death. "When my husband's body was being driven down to Motihari from a Patna hospital, where he had been admitted, I demanded that they drop us outside the mill, where all the workers had planned to gather to cremate my husband. But police led to me and drove us to a ghat, where he was hurriedly cremated on April 12," she said.

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Churning Mahabharata

“What is here, is found elsewhere; what is not here, is nowhere”, such is the sweep of one of the greatest cultural legacies of humanity, the Mahabharta, that Bharat cherishes and values covetly. The conference made a laudable attempt to revisit it

■ Ajay Bhardwaj

When did the Mahabharata war take place? Where is the kingdom of Panchala, as mentioned in the epic, located? Which cities of that era still exist?

The prodigious epic, Mahabharata, came in for an intensive churning at the three-day International conference on “Mahabharata Manthan: A Critical Revisit to the Tangible & Intangible Heritage” organised by The Draupadi Dream Trust at the IGNC in New Delhi.

No other work in the Bharatiya civilisation has breathed life, and has sustained it for more than two millennia as the Mahabharata has done.

After a formal inauguration by Union Minister of State for Culture Mahesh Sharma, the conference kicked off with an exhibition, “A Journey to Dwapar Era”, which set the theme displaying inscriptions, art work, books and maps that showcased the heritage associated

with the epic. The exhibition talked about cities like Panchala, Kashi, Koshambi, Kuru and Sursena which find frequent mention in the epic. Accordingly, Sursena would cover the entire expanse between the present day Mathura and Dwarka, whereas Panchala is said to be comprising modern-day Kampilya and Ahichhetra. On display was also a work by noted artist Raja Ravi Varma, showcasing Krishna as a master strategist.

Noted archaeologist Prof BB Lal, in his keynote address, said there was adequate archaeological evidence to establish the historical testimony of Mahabharata. He said most of the sites like Panchala, Hastinapura, Ahichhatra, Kampilya, located in the upper Ganga valley, provide evidence of the material culture of the Mahabharta times.

Former Additional Director General of ASI BR Mami built his argument by establishing Mahabharata chronology on the basis of Ceramic cultures.

Accordingly, he tried to date Mahabharata on the basis of PGW dates 1100-900 BC. Also, corroborated with the Aihole inscription of Pulkesin II to date the Mahabharata. He said there seemed to be no doubt among scholars and scientists about the historicity of Mahabharata. But as was already apprehended still there is no consensus amongst scholars on the date of Mahabharata related events. The date of PGW culture which is supposed to be connected with Mahabharata times has been pushed back to the third millennium BC on the basis of new C 14 dates from a number of archaeological sites and puts a gap of about two thousand years.

Same as archaeology there is still no consensus amongst the astronomical scientists whose astronomical datings normally range between 3200 through 2450 and 17th-18th century BC to about 1400 BC. The scientific calculations should have a firm basis.

Genealogical lists as given in different Puranas also require



HERITAGE

comparison and consideration of omissions of names and thus fixing tentative chronological framework. The internal pieces of evidence could also be taken into consideration for suggesting a possible period of Mahabharata events.

More than a dozen scholars, in their respective presentations, touched on various other aspects of the epical times of Mahabharata.

D K Hari and Dr Hema Hari, in their paper, showed Krishna, not as a mythical character but a historical one. To establish that both the scholars dwelt upon literature, geography/ecology, Archaeology and Archaeo-astronomical pieces of evidence.

Dr Mohan Gupta, Based on historical, Puranic and astronomical data, tried to fix the date of Mahabharata war. He based his argument on the basis of Varahmihiri's Brihat Samhita, drying up of river Saraswati and the position of various Nakshatras as mentioned in various hymns of Mahabharata; as well as on the basis of the date of death of Bhishma.

Dr Nalini Rao tried to show the historicity of Mahabharata with special reference to Dwarka. She also highlighted the problem of interpretation due to the nature of the site which is submerged and very difficult on the part of an archaeologist to work upon. She argues that collaborative investigation should be made to arrive at a logical conclusion.

Dr BVK Shastri laid emphasis on the morality and Dharma aspect of the epic and opined that Mahabharata is a Dharamasashtra.

In the Session on Astronomical Dating, the scholars emphasised on the use of astronomical references to determine the date of Mahabharata and highlighted the use of astronomical software to arrive at a conclusion by fast calculation of the position of planets and stars. They discussed the astronomical events in terms of phenomena, cycle and average period. He also discussed the nakshatra circle in great detail with beautiful flowchart and illustrations.

Dr Keonaard Elst's paper on foreigners in Indian chronology vis-a-



Chairperson of the Draupadi Trust Ms Neena Mishra conducting Union Culture Minister Mahesh Sharma (L) through the exhibition

vis Mahabharata traces that before Alexander the Great's invasion of India, there were foreigners in India. He also traced two Akkadian words in Rig Veda- Pana or Unity of Money and Bekanata (Money lender) and later foreigners were made as Yavanas or Yonas or Greeks and Circas means Chinese. He also discussed Orientalists perception of Mahabharata and how they were extremely sceptical about past events. He ended up his discussion with a compassion between Ramayana and Ilias.

Epical journey

Mahabharata, the Epic book, also called 'Pancham Veda', was originally written as 'JAYA', comprising 8,800 verses. The focus of it was mainly the core events hovering around the story of 'Victory' of 'Dharma'. It was expanded to a second version known to us as "Bharata" having 24,000 verses, encompassing a little bigger canvas of these events. The third version titled Mahabharata is a voluminous epic having one lakh verses, in 18 'Parvas'.

Praful Garodia and Jagannivas Iyer have discussed the genesis of Krishna Rajya Means a state run by strategic genius like Krishna. While Rama Rajya is considered as an ideal state, Krishna Rajya concept can politically the

different stated of India. They advocate that India required an indigenous political system as Europe and America's history have different roots.

The participants noted with regret that the NCERT text books continue to incorporate many incorrect facts about ancient Indian history and culture. They were strongly of the view that a Committee of competent historians and archaeologists be appointed by Government of India to review these books and recommend suitable amendments. The participants wanted younger generation to be exposed to the Mahabharata heritage through curricular reforms and co-curricular activities. A Mahabharata Parikrama on identified sites mentioned in the epic, via tourist circuit for students and general public, like An Arjuna vanavasa circuit, a Pandava vanavasa circuit and a Balarama Tirthayatra circuit etc.

It is recommended that a great memorial monument dedicated to the deties and heroes of the Mahabharata, be built at a central location in India's Indraprastha the ancient capital and be called JAYA. It should be envisioned as a national cultural shrine at the capital of India, as per the lines of the monumental statues erected in great cities of South-East Asia which are inspired by and celebrate the Indic epics.

The conference also recommended setting up a Corpus for Establishing Mahabharata Shodh Sansthan, at Purana Qila, Indraprastha, and Mapping and Digitisation of all Manuscripts of Mahabharata under one roof. ■



MAHABHARATA MANTHAN

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ORGANIZER REPORT

संगोष्ठी

महाभारत के इतिहास पर मंथन



महाभारत मंथन कार्यक्रम में डॉ. प्रदीप सिंघ

'महाभारत मंथन' में विद्वानों ने भारतीय ज्ञान और इतिहास को जीवंत कर दिया। इंदिरा गांधी राष्ट्रीय कला केंद्र में 'द्रौपदी ड्रीम ट्रस्ट' द्वारा आयोजित कार्यक्रम में देश-विदेश से आए इतिहासकारों और पुरातत्वविदों ने महाभारत की ऐतिहासिकता पर चर्चा की। साहित्य, पुरातत्व, शिलालेख और खगोल विज्ञान को आधार बनाते हुए महाभारत की ऐतिहासिकता पर तीन दिनों तक गहन विचार-विमर्श का दौर चला। अधिकांश इतिहासकार इस बात पर सहमत दिखे कि महाभारत पौराणिक नहीं बल्कि ऐतिहासिक ग्रंथ है। इसका प्रमाण यह है कि महाभारत कालीन अधिकांश शहर, स्थान और परंपराएं आज भी हमारे यहां मौजूद हैं।

■ प्रदीप सिंह

महाभारत और रामायण की ऐतिहासिकता को लेकर समय समय पर सवाल उठते रहे हैं। सवाल उठाने वाले इसे इतिहास के बजाय पौराणिक महाकाव्य बताने हैं। महाभारत में वर्णित घटनाओं और चरित्रों को काल्पनिक कहानियों की संज्ञा दी जाती है। यूरोपीय इतिहासकार भारतीय परंपरिक ज्ञान और इतिहास को कोसे कल्पना की श्रेणी में रखने का पडवेंचर रचते रहे हैं। अब इस पर से पर्दा उठाने लगा है। एक नैर सरकारी संस्था द्रौपदी ड्रीम ट्रस्ट ने महाभारत में वर्णित घटनाओं, स्थानों और चरित्रों के माध्यम से इसकी ऐतिहासिकता को सिद्ध करने का प्रयास किया है। इंदिरा गांधी राष्ट्रीय कला केंद्र में तीन दिवसीय 'महाभारत मंथन' में देश

और विदेश के नामी इतिहासकार और पुरातत्वविदों का जुटान हुआ। यह आयोजन अंतरराष्ट्रीय स्तर का था। उनके चर्चा और चिंतन का विषय था कि कैसे भारतीय इतिहास और विज्ञान को झुठलाने की कोशिश हुई। 'महाभारत मंथन' में इतिहासकारों ने साहित्य के ऐतिहासिक संदर्भों, उल्लेखन में मिले पुरातात्विक सामग्री, शिलालेख और खगोल शास्त्र को आधार बनाते हुए महाभारत की ऐतिहासिकता और प्रामाणिकता पर गहन विचार-विमर्श किया।

द्रौपदी ड्रीम ट्रस्ट की कर्तापता नीरा मिश्र कहती हैं कि, 'हमारे सभ्यता और संस्कृति बहुत पुरानी है। हमारा इतिहास और साहित्य भी बहुत पुराना है। यदि हम अपने साहित्य और इतिहास का मूल्यांकन करेंगे तो उसका मानक भारतीय होगा न कि यूरोपीय।

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MAHABHARATA MANTHAN

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हम अपने इतिहास, संस्कृति, कला और लोकजीवन का मूल्यवान विदेशी मानकों पर नहीं कर सकते। 'द्रौपदी ड्रीम ट्रस्ट' कई सालों से महाभारत में वर्णित स्थानों को चिह्नित करने में लगा है। अब इसके परिणाम भी सामने देखने को मिल रहे हैं।

भारतीय पुरातत्व सर्वेक्षण के पूर्व महाविदेशक प्रो. व्हेबी लाल ने महाभारत में वर्णित स्थानों और वहां पर मिले पुरातात्विक सामग्री, मूर्तियों और चर्तनों पर प्रकाश डालते हुए कहा कि हस्तिनापुर, अंधक्य, पांचाल और कौराव्य जैसे स्थान ऊपरी गंगा घाटी में स्थित हैं। इसलिए हम महाभारत कालीन स्थानों के आधार पर यह कह सकते हैं कि महाभारत पौराणिक नहीं बल्कि ऐतिहासिक है।

महाभारत में काशी, कौशांबी, कुरु और शूरसेन जैसे अनेक राज्यों का वर्णन आता है। सर्वेक्षण और उत्खनन के आधार पर यह कहा जाता है कि काशी, कौशांबी, अंधक्य और कौराव्य आज भी उत्तर प्रदेश में मौजूद हैं। जबकि टेर सारे प्राचीन शहर देश के अन्य भागों में उमरी या थोड़े बदले नाम से अस्तित्वमान हैं। शूरसेन राज्य मधुत और झारका के बीच स्थित था। वहां पर मिले सामग्री, मूर्तियां और दूसरी पुरातात्विक वस्तुओं को आधार बनाते हुए विद्वानों ने अपने शोधपत्र प्रस्तुत किए। शोधपत्र को तैयार करने के पहले इसका अध्ययन किया कि क्या आज भी इस नाम के शहर या स्थान मौजूद हैं। आश्चर्यजनक रूप से आज भी कई शहर और स्थान उमरी नाम से न केवल अस्तित्व में हैं बल्कि वहां पर खने वाले निवासियों से महाभारत का संदर्भ आज

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द्रौपदी ड्रीम ट्रस्ट ने इंदिरा गांधी राष्ट्रीय कला केंद्र में तीन दिवसीय 'महाभारत मंथन' का आयोजन किया था। जिसमें देश-विदेश से इतिहासकार, पुरातत्वविद एवं विद्वान शामिल हुए।

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भी सुना जा सकता है। ऐसे स्थानों पर मिले शिलालेख और उनकी भौगोलिक स्थिति यह सिद्ध करते हैं कि ये वही स्थान हैं जिनका महाभारत में उल्लेख है।

राष्ट्रीय संग्रहालय के महाविदेशक डॉ. जोशार मीण ने महाभारत के कालक्रम का निर्धारण मिट्टी की मूर्तियों के आधार पर करने की कोशिश की। पुरातात्विक स्थानों से मिले रंजीत मृद भंड (पौजीडब्रू) का समय 1100- 900 ईसा पूर्व का है। पुलकेशिन द्वितीय का अट्टाल शिलालेख भी इसकी पुष्टि करता है। इस तरह से महाभारत का काल इसी क्षेत्र का है। डॉ.के. हरि और डॉ. हेमा हरि ने

वीरि आशोक के उत्खनन निकलेंगे



अपने शोधपत्र में कृष्ण को पौराणिक चरित्र के बजाय ऐतिहासिक नायक बताया। इसे सिद्ध करने के लिए उन्होंने माहिराव, भृगुल, पार्वतीश्वरीकी तंत्र, पुरातत्व और खगोल शास्त्रीय साक्ष्यों को सामने रखा।

जनरल जीटी बरहो ने महाभारत के सैन्य इतिहास पर सविस्तार चर्चा करते हुए कहा कि आज भारतीय सेना में सैन्य रणनीति और व्यूह रचना महाभारत के सैन्य रणनीति से मिलता जुलता है।

डॉ. मोहन गुप्ता ने पौराणिक और खगोलीय अंकों के आधार पर महाभारत युद्ध के तिथि को निर्धारित करने की कोशिश की। बाराहमिंदर के बृहद संहिता, सरयूती नदी के सूखने और उस समय तमाम शरों और नक्षत्रों की स्थिति और भीम पितामह के मृत्यु के समय को अपने खतबोत का आधार बताया।

डॉ. जयदीप खगधी ने तिलक के मोता रहस्य की व्याख्या करते हुए कहा कि मोता रहस्य में केवल सामाजिक राजनीतिक संदर्भों की खूबसूरती व्याख्या नहीं है बल्कि यह राजनीतिक समस्याओं का हल भी देती है। डॉ. अर्चना अम्बाना ने शिलालेखों के आधार पर महाभारत की ऐतिहासिकता को प्रमाणित बताया। यह सिक्कों, छम्बों और अन्य पुरातात्विक साक्ष्यों का हवाला देते हुए कहा कि विभिन्न स्थानों से मिले शिलालेख महाभारत की ऐतिहासिकता सिद्ध करने के लिए प्रमाण हैं।

फ्रांस से आए प्रो. एलेक्स पेंचर्ड ने कहा कि विश्व के अन्य महाकाव्यों के परंपरासुर महाभारत में भी कुछ ऐतिहासिक तथ्य हैं, जैसे होमर के इलियड में। बोल्लजयम के स्कोनार्ट एनस्ट ने भारतीय इतिहास और ज्ञान पर सवाल उठाने वाली पर कथन प्रहार किया।

डॉ. नलिनी राव ने झारका और डॉ. प्रदीप ज्योति महापात्र ने असम में महाभारत कालीन विरासत के आधार पर महाभारत की ऐतिहासिकता को सिद्ध करने की कोशिश की।

डॉ. मीलि कौशल ने महाभारत की ऐतिहासिकता को सिद्ध करने के लिए अलग नज़रिया अपनाया। उन्होंने कहा कि आज भी महाभारत कालीन संस्कृति एवं कई परंपराएं हमारे समाज में तिंटा है। देश के विभिन्न क्षेत्रों की परंपराओं और संस्कृति के तुलनात्मक अध्ययन के बाद यह कहा जा सकता है कि आज भी भारतीय संस्कृति और परंपराओं में महाभारत कालीन संस्कृति और परंपरा मौजूद है। भारत में सांस्कृतिक जीवन के जो भी तत्व हैं वे महाभारत के ऐतिहासिक होने का प्रमाण हैं।