

**Indian Renaissance and the Emergence of Modern Indian Literature
A Reevaluation**

A National Conference

organized by

Department of English

Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture, Technology and Sciences, Allahabad

2–3 November 2017

The new phase in the life of the Indian subcontinent that came in the wake of changes in the early nineteenth century is referred to as the Indian Renaissance. The reinvigorating of learning and creativity accompanied by a spirit of social reform had a defining impact on the entire South Asia, first on a small minority and eventually on the millions of its denizens. Ideas and concepts that are universally associated with modernity such as individualism, rationality, forms of democratic polity, mass education, industrialization, critical evaluation of tradition and religion, began to hold sway on the ancient land of India. Contact with Europe, especially Britain, brought about new ways to conceptualise human existence. It had a deep implication for literature—in themes, moral concerns, characterization and its very *raison d'être*.

It must be one of the most ironical of twists in the subcontinent history that Indian Renaissance was concomitant with the high tide of imperialism and colonial presence in India. The two seem to be completely antithetical. For instance, conventional academic consensus holds that colonial educational policy was meant to impose the cultural hegemony of the imperial power. Its primary and exclusive goal was subjugation of natives and colonial aggrandisement. And it's not merely the colonial state; even the non-state actors like missionaries were implicated in carrying out the colonial agenda. However, the question needs to be asked whether the twin phenomena of Indian Renaissance and colonial presence run parallel or did they intersect? Did they even have a causal relationship? Did colonial discourse carry chinks within its own enunciation? Did non-state actors collude with the state or did they confront its designs; or was there an occasional shifting of stance—from collusion to confrontation, and vice versa? If the goal of the colonial education was to subjugate the subjectivity of the native intelligentsia, how did the subversive textual tools of modern public sphere such as newspapers, pamphlets, essays, novels, etc., become available to the same subjugated people?

The conference hopes to discuss and debate the above and related questions. Is colonialism, important as it is, the only lens through which to study nineteenth-century India? Can the Indian Renaissance be studied more fruitfully in terms of intellectual and socio-spiritual movements like Enlightenment and Reformation? It is important to read and analyse the writers of the period on their own terms to have a sober and balanced assessment of the

period. The pioneering poets, essayists, polemicists, novelists and journalists writing in the nineteenth century demand a fresh evaluation of their works.

Sub-themes of the conference (*indicative, not exhaustive*)

1. Intersection of West and East: Religion, Literature, Culture
2. Colonialism and Caste
3. Pioneering texts
4. Pioneering authors
5. Women and modern literature
6. English and Indian languages: Threat or mutuality?
7. Emergence and revision of genres
8. Missionary and religious-reform movement vis-à-vis literature

Interested teachers, researcher and independent scholars are invited to send their abstracts (250–300 words) on the pertinent topics to the convener at SHUATS.English@gmail.com, not later than 31 August 2017.

Acceptance will be conveyed by 5 September 2017.

Selected papers will have to be submitted in full by 20 October 2017.

REGISTRATION:

(Participation with paper presentation)

1. Professors/Assoc. Professors/Asst. Professors: Rs 2,000
2. Research Scholars: Rs 1,000

(Participation without paper presentation)

3. Participation fee: Rs 500

Cost includes the event kit, lunch and tea on both the days. Accommodation may be provided at reasonable rates. Registration via NEFT transaction:

PUNJAB NATIONAL BANK, Allahabad	Account Name: General Fund Account A/C-SHUATS
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