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WRITING ALLAHABAD:
TEXTS AND IDENTITIES IN A PROVINCIAL CITY (1885–1939)

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Note on Translations and Transliterations

All translations from Hindi, Bengali, and Urdu sources are my own, unless mentioned otherwise. I have followed the Library of Congress system of transliterations for Hindi, Urdu, and Bengali words. I have not italicized or transliterated Indic words that are widely used in English, especially caste and sub-caste names, except in the instances when these names appear in the title of publications. Hence, I write Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra when I refer to the four *varṇas*, and Kayastha and Kalwar when I refer to *jāti* names, but *Kāyastha Samāchār* and *Kalwār Kshatriya Mitra* when I refer to caste journals. Similarly, I transliterate the name of the script as Nagari but use *Nāgarī* when I refer to a text or journal in whose title this word appears. On the tricky issue of the names and spellings of cities, I have borrowed from local usage. The city of Varanasi is also known as Banaras, and variant spellings include Benaras and Benares. I use Banaras throughout this work, which is close to its Hindi/Urdu spelling, *Banāras*. Similarly, I use Allahabad as the standardized English spelling of the name of the city throughout this dissertation. When transcribing from Hindi or Urdu sources, I rely on the colloquial pronunciation, which is also close to its Hindi/Urdu spelling; hence, *Ilāhābād*.

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Abstract

In this dissertation, I examine the socio-cultural history of the provincial city of Allahabad from 1885 until 1939. In October 2018, the city was renamed Prayagraj by the Bharatiya Janata Party-led state government of Uttar Pradesh. Changes in the names of cities are hardly ever incidental. Rather, they are deliberate acts of endowing and, sometimes imposing identities on places. Place, identities, and most importantly, texts, are the three pillars on which the theoretical and empirical claims of my dissertation rest. Relying on these three categories, the dissertation examines the cultural politics of place-making in Allahabad by taking texts and textually mediated publics as the locus of debates on literary, linguistic, religious, gender, and caste-based identities in the city. I argue that all of these identities became arenas of contestations between liberal and conservative trends. Paying attention to these contestations complicates the hitherto existing claim that the dominant marker of this city's identity is its Indo-Islamic syncretic culture, known in popular parlance as *gaṅgā jamunī tahzīb*.

The dissertation asks a cluster of questions with three broad aims. The first objective is to propose a theoretical relationship between the urbanity of this prominent provincial city and the textuality engendered here by the efflorescence of print culture under conditions of colonial modernity. My second objective is to highlight how each text-based public produced particular urban imaginations and institutions, a process I call place-making. My third aim is to analyze the *acts of writing and publishing* in cities as essential to the process by which indigenous agents and interest groups emerged as modern publics. In so doing, I establish that writing and publishing were the grounds on which new imaginations of local civic communities developed, and that

they were often distinct from visions of a national community. These urban imaginations of self and community were informed by contradictory instincts. In the early decades of the twentieth century, each marker of identity examined in this dissertation, be it literary selfhood, language politics, caste, religion, or gender, was simultaneously the locus of progress and inclusive expansion as well as the site of conservative boundary-making exercises.

Scholars have cautioned against viewing contestations that characterized Indian modernity as a simple binary between tradition and modernity, or as a conflict between universal values and their incomplete or faulty adaptation in particular contexts. My thesis demonstrates that examining socio-cultural change and shifts in identity at the site of a medium-sized but significant provincial city reveals a more complex portrait of modernity. Instead of focusing on the *nature* of modernity generated in this provincial city, I argue for a shift of attention to the modern *acts of writing and publishing for a public*. In so doing, my case study of Allahabad uncovers the existence of multiple local and regional modernities that were contingent and contested. Local publics wrote and expressed themselves in a number of genres and addressed a variety of audiences. Close and careful reading of these textual sources reveal that place-making was a field of various possibilities, limitations, as well as contestations. As a result, place-making cannot be viewed simply as generating an exclusively liberal ethos and progressive norms. Rather, the processes of public reasoning, reflection, and negotiation through the medium of textuality and print enabled the emergence of urban modernity in a number of contradictory ways. Urban arenas and institutions generated the conditions of production and dissemination of a variety of texts, and in turn, texts became a major locus of the city's vibrant public sphere. By tracking the complex entanglement between text and place, I argue that the sub-fields of textual

studies, urban history, and micro-history hold the potential of making an intervention in the larger domain of cultural history.

My dissertation examines the history of the city at its apex, from 1885 until 1939. From 1940 onwards, a number of global and national events coincided, hitching the fate of the city squarely to the anti-colonial nationalist struggle and the dream of not one but two new nation-states, India and Pakistan. The beginning of the second world war in 1939, the launch of the Quit India movement in 1942 which led to the arrest of several anti-colonial leaders, and the re-emergence of Delhi in its new form as the national capital city called New Delhi, were events that indicated a firm shift in the history of the nation and the beginning of a different chapter in Allahabad's history as well. In revisiting the period before 1939, arguably Allahabad's golden era, my project is also an attempt to retain the memory of a place whose identity is under steady erasure today. On the one hand, the possibilities of growth of an egalitarian ethos engendered by vibrant cities like Allahabad in the early twentieth century were indeed promising for some stakeholders and communities. On the other hand, the cultural politics of the contemporary moment has made us aware that postcolonial nostalgia for places like Allahabad, which embody the image of secularism and liberal values, often obscured the deep contestations that divided its cultural fabric, especially in the arena of caste and gender.

The first part of the dissertation comprises two chapters which analyze the arena of literary texts and journals in Allahabad. For a city so deeply marked by its literary publics, it is only apt to first approach it through the representational relationship that textual genres share with the place. In chapter one, I explore this relationality between place and various genres of texts. The second chapter takes us to the history of the most prominent publishing house of the

city, the Indian Press (est. 1884), one of the many such institutions that fueled the textual efflorescence in the city. Apart from its multilingual book list, the Indian Press also published journals in four languages within a period of fifteen years. Exploring the cultural politics of these journals, especially how language became the site of contestations of identity and culture, uncovers a crucial perspective about the discursive public sphere of the city.

The second part of the dissertation similarly consists of two chapters. These chapters examine the histories of urban institutions that developed at the intersection of print culture, education, and identity politics. Access to these institutions was often circumscribed by religious, caste, or gender identities. Chapter three is a comparative study of two caste groups of the city—the Kayasthas and Kalwars—who used the medium of texts as a major strategy of institution-building and mobilization. Chapter four looks at the history of university hostels in Allahabad, whose development was caught in the crosshairs of secular education and sectarian community norms. As a result, the city's sense of place and the city's identity, too, were defined by these limitations, compromising the vision of cosmopolitanism and secularism that was also developing in the public sphere. Taken together, the four chapters of the dissertation shine light onto particular instantiations of the relationship between text and place-making and reveal the cultural politics at play within various identities in the city.

My dissertation is positioned at the intersection of three aspects of modern history of north India: its multilingual and multivocal pasts expressed in the city's print cultures; debates in linguistic, religious, caste, and gender identities within the urban public sphere; and lesser-known practices of place-making that constitute the provincial city. The chapters that follow open up for readers the benefits of studying provincial cities through their multi-lingual and

multi-genre textual archives. My focus on how a space becomes place through its textual activity is also meant to present historians with new methods of studying and understanding provincial cities. Looking beyond South Asia, I hope that my case study on Allahabad will encourage historians of the Global South to bring to scholarly attention other provincial spaces, and the processes by which they emerged as places. My project is not an idealistic recuperation of the socio-cultural history of Allahabad. Rather, it is an engagement with caste, class, linguistic, gender, and religious divisions in the city that were expressed in a variety of texts. In balancing a number of competing identities that together constitute a place, I demonstrate that the city was a place of limitations and exclusions as much as it was one of aspirations and possibilities.

Introduction

On my first visit to Allahabad in July 2017, casual conversations on the history of city with its residents would elicit questions like, “Have you read that book?” or “Have you been to this library?” Initially, I attributed these responses to the open-ended, free-flowing nature of our convivial discussions. But as days passed and I pitched specific questions about associations, institutions, and personalities of the city, the answers remained similar, “Have you visited the Indian Press yet?” or “Have you checked out the collection at the Bharti Bhavan Library?” These conversations with contemporary Allahabadis were my earliest insights into the way the city’s history and its urban life were structured and expressed through a textual archive. Being an Allahabadi was very much about reading, writing, publishing, debating, listening to *mushā’iras*, producing journals, forming associations, and other such activities. Young immigrant students living in hostels as well as long-time residents of the city participated in this life. Women were able to make slow inroads into this literate and elite public culture, but lower-caste residents struggled for much longer to find entry. In other words, the formation of urban publics and urban institutions in the city were mediated through textuality. It is the mutually productive and reinforcing entanglement between Allahabad and textual production that forms the subject of this dissertation.

I examine the socio-cultural history of the provincial city of Allahabad from the 1885 until 1939. In October 2018, the city was renamed Prayagraj by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led state government of Uttar Pradesh. Changes in the names of cities are hardly ever incidental. Rather, they are deliberate acts of endowing and, sometimes imposing identities on

places. Place, identities, and most importantly, texts, already mentioned above, are the three pillars on which the theoretical and empirical claims of my dissertation rest. Relying on these three categories, the dissertation examines the cultural politics of place-making in Allahabad by taking texts and textually mediated publics as the locus of debates on literary, linguistic, religious, gender, and caste-based identities in the city. I argue that all of these identities became arenas of contestations between liberal and conservative trends. Paying attention to these contestations complicates the hitherto existing claim that the dominant marker of this city's identity is its Indo-Islamic syncretic culture, known in popular parlance as *gaṅgā jamunī tahzīb*.

The dissertation asks a cluster of questions with three broad aims. The first objective is to propose a theoretical relationship between the urbanity of this prominent provincial city and the textuality engendered here by the efflorescence of print culture under conditions of colonial modernity. My second objective is to highlight how each text-based public produced particular urban imaginations and institutions, which I call place-making. My third aim is to analyze the *acts of writing and publishing* in cities as essential to the process by which indigenous agents and interest groups emerged as modern publics. In so doing, I establish that writing and publishing were the grounds on which new imaginations of local civic communities developed, and that they were often distinct from visions of a national community. These urban imaginations of self and community were informed by contradictory instincts. In the early decades of the twentieth century, each marker of identity examined in this dissertation, be it literary selfhood, language politics, caste, religion, or gender, was simultaneously the locus of progress and inclusive expansion, as well as of conservative boundary-making exercises.

Scholars have cautioned against viewing contestations that characterized Indian modernity as a simple binary between tradition and modernity, or between universal values and their incomplete or faulty adaptation in particular contexts.¹ Sidestepping the claim that Indian modernity as it developed in urban sites was essentially “fractured,” my thesis demonstrates that examining socio-cultural change and shifts in identity at the site of a medium-sized but significant provincial city reveals a more complex portrait of modernity.² Instead of focusing on the nature of modernity generated in this provincial city, I argue for a shift of attention to the modern *act of writing for a public*. In so doing, my case study of Allahabad uncovers the existence of multiple local and regional modernities that were contingent and contested. Local publics wrote and expressed themselves in a number of genres and addressed a variety of audiences. Close and careful reading of these textual sources reveal that place-making was a field of various possibilities, limitations, as well as contestations. As a result, place-making cannot be viewed simply as generating an exclusively liberal ethos and progressive norms. Rather, the processes of public reasoning, reflection, and negotiation through the medium of

¹ The far-ranging scholarship on this debate is too extensive to cite in full. See Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton University Press, 1993) for a thought-provoking and generative proposition that Indian elite masculine selfhood, and by extension, the project of the Indian nation-state, was split between inner and outer, spiritual and material, traditional and modern domains. This theory has generated a number of important conversations and criticisms. For a pioneering critique of the Eurocentrism of Western thought and its assumptions of universalism and the potency of “particular” histories, see Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton University Press, 2009). An excellent discussion that outlines the various scholarly positions on modernity is available in the Introduction by Michael S. Dodson and Brian A. Hatcher, in *Trans-Colonial Modernities in South Asia*, ed. by Dodson and Hatcher, 1–12 (London ; New York: Routledge, 2012). With the advent of globalization, “public culture” has emerged as a compelling rubric to think through modernity, especially in its postcolonial instantiation. See Carol Breckenridge, ed., *Consuming Modernity: Public Culture in a South Asian World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995).

² Sanjay Joshi, *Fractured Modernity: Making of a Middle Class in Colonial North India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001).

textuality and print enabled the emergence of urban modernity in a number of contradictory ways. Urban arenas and institutions generated the conditions of production and dissemination of a variety of texts, and in turn texts became a major locus of the city's vibrant public sphere. By tracking the complex entanglement between text and place, I argue that the sub-fields of textual studies, urban history, and micro-history hold the potential of making an intervention in the larger domain of cultural history.

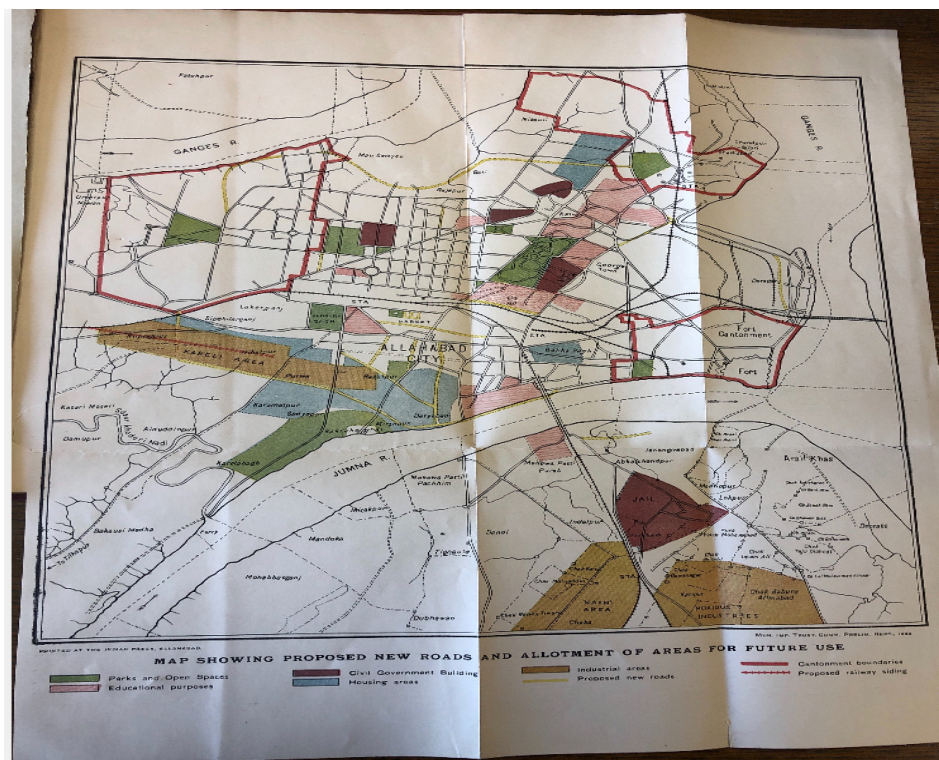


Figure 1: Map of Allahabad, 1920

SOURCE: Allahabad Improvement Trust Committee. *Preliminary Report on the Improvement of Allahabad*. Allahabad: Indian Press, 1920

My dissertation examines the history of the city at its apex, from 1885 until 1939. From 1940 onwards, a number of global and national events coincided, hitching the fate of the city squarely to the anti-colonial nationalist struggle and the dream of not one but two new nation-

states, India and Pakistan. The beginning of the second world war in 1939, the launch of the Quit India movement in 1942 that led to the arrest of several anti-colonial leaders, and the re-emergence of Delhi in its new form as the national capital city called New Delhi, were events that indicated a firm shift in the history of the nation and the beginning of a different chapter in Allahabad's history as well. In revisiting the period before 1939, arguably Allahabad's golden era, my project is also an attempt to retain the memory of a place whose identity is under steady erasure today. On the one hand, the possibilities of growth of an egalitarian ethos engendered by vibrant cities like Allahabad in the early twentieth century were indeed promising for some stakeholders and communities. On the other hand, the cultural politics of the contemporary moment has made us aware that postcolonial nostalgia for places like Allahabad, which embody the image of secularism and liberal values, often obscured the deep contestations that divided its cultural fabric, especially in the arenas of caste and gender.

From the Mughals to the British: Why Allahabad?

The native community makes no stir in any important concerns of life—in religion, trade, education, politics, or pleasure,—*everything languishes at Allahabad*. But all this ennui is soon to be at an end. There is a question on the tapis to make Allahabad the seat of the North-Western Presidency. Hereafter, the excellent geographical position, the strength of the natural boundaries, the fine climate, and the great resources of the neighbouring provinces, may point the place out for the seat of the Viceroy himself. [emphasis added]

—Bholanauth Chunder, *Travels of a Hindoo*³

³ Bholanauth Chunder, *The Travels of a Hindoo to Various Parts of Bengal and Upper India* (London: N. Trübner, 1869), 331.

Mughal chronicles give differing accounts about the exact date and year when emperor Akbar embarked on his project of renaming the town of “Piyag” (Prayag). Badauni writes that Akbar visited the town in July 1574 and the plans to build a fort and give the fortified city a new name cropped up at this time.⁴ Between 1580 and 1583, Akbar reorganized the administration of his empire and created twelve new provinces (*ṣūbah*), one of them being the province that came to be known as Allahabad. Abul Fazl mentions in the *Ā'in-i Akbarī* that the event took place on November 14, 1583. Badauni and Nizamuddin Ahmad suggest other dates.⁵

All the Persian chronicles, however, converge on some telling details: that Akbar went to “the wished spot,” “where the waters of the Ganga and Jumna unite,” which was “a very sacred place of the Hindus.”⁶ Here, he laid the foundation of a fort and a city and called the place Ilāhābās, “the abode of god”; the city was also anointed the capital of the *ṣūbah*.⁷ Akbar seems to have known as much about showmanship as modern political figures do. In this act of renaming the city at the site of the confluence of rivers, it appears that Akbar expressly and demonstrably acknowledged its significance within Indic sacred geography and religious history, while also putting his own stamp on it.⁸ From the late sixteenth century onwards, the city was the site of the courts of high-ranking governors, including Mughal princes like Dara Shukoh who was *ṣūbedār*

⁴ Badauni, II, 179, *Safar* 982, cited in S. N. Sinha, *Subah of Allahabad Under the Great Mughals: 1580–1707* (New Delhi: Jamia Milia Islamia, 1974), fn 12, 22.

⁵ Sinha, *Subah of Allahabad*, 85.

⁶ *Ibid.*, fn 7

⁷ *Ibid.*, 85, and fn 7. Akbar brought together the former provinces of Jaunpur, Kara-Manikpur, and the territories of Bandhogarh and put them under the *ṣūbah* of Allahabad. Badauni dates this event to June 14, 1574. Sinha furnishes some interesting details about Akbar’s selection of the city as the capital of the province, see 83–88.

⁸ Ilāhī is an Arabic adjective that denotes the divine, the heavenly, or just a generic term for god. It was particularly favored by Akbar in his religious and secular policies as evinced in the name of his religious sect, “ilāhī Mazhab,” or “dīn-i ilāhī.” The system of weights and measures he proposed was called “ilāhī gaz” and his chosen seal, “ilāhī mohar.” “Ābād” and “āvās” are Persian and Sanskrit cognates with the same meaning—city, town, inhabitation, etc. See John T. Platts, *A Dictionary of Urdu, Classical Hindi, and English* (London: W. H. Allen & Co., 1888).

between 1644 and 1645.⁹ In the wake of the Mughals, several orders of Sufis arrived and the city rose to fame as the center of twelve Sufi shrines.¹⁰ Under the influence of the local court and more importantly Sufism, Persian and Urdu poetry flourished in the city.¹¹

By the mid-eighteenth century, the city was once again at the center of imperial ambitions, this time of the East India Company. After the Mughal emperor Shah Alam II lost the battle of Buxar in 1764, Allahabad came under the informal control of the Company. Under the Treaty of Allahabad that was signed at the Allahabad fort in 1765, Shah Alam ceded the Diwani of Bengal (which included the provinces of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa) to Robert Clive of the British East India Company, marking a new era of colonial territorial control of India. Between 1765 and 1800, the command of the province of Allahabad shifted between the Nawab of Lucknow and the Mughal emperor, but the Company maintained a garrison at the fort. Under the Treaty of 1801, Nawab Saadat Ali Khan formally ceded the Doab and Rohilkhand, including the city of Allahabad to the Company. Thus, after years of conflict between the Company and indigenous forces, Allahabad came under the direct control of the Company.¹² From then on, it was referred to as Allahabad, a faulty transliteration of the vernacular name for the city, “Ilahabad.” In the texts analyzed in this dissertation, we find that Allahabad and Prayag are

⁹ Sinha, *Subah of Allahabad*, see Appendix A, 172–177.

¹⁰ For instance, Muzaffar Alam mentions that Dara Shukoh shared a close relationship with a noted Sufi of the Chisti-Sabiri order of Allahabad, Shah Muhibb-Allah (d. 1648.). Muzaffar Alam, *The Mughals and the Sufis: Islam and Political Imagination in India, 1500–1750* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2022), 46. For an overview of the Sufi centers in the city, see Y. P. Singh and Badri Narayan, eds., *Prayāg: Atīt, Vartmān aur Bhavishya, Uttar Pradesh ki Saṃskritik Dharohar* (New Delhi: Vani Prakashan, 2003).

¹¹ Shamsur Rahman Faruqi, “Urdu and Persian Literature in Allahabad,” September 2007, http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealc/pritchett/00fwp/srf/txt_allahabad.html.

¹² William H. Woodward, *A Short History of the Expansion of the British Empire, 1500–1902* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1902), 245; Harbans Singh Bhatia, *Military History of British India: 1607–1947* (New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications, [1977] 2008), 97.

sometimes used interchangeably, depending largely on authorship and the audience in question. In a number of Hindi works, the preferred term is Prayag, but in most sources across languages, Prayag appears as the term for the sacred pilgrimage site, while Allahabad refers to the entire city.

In the aftermath of the Rebellion of 1857, when the colonial administration was looking for a site to situate the new capital of the North-Western Provinces, they might have asked the same question, “Why Allahabad?” The colonial archive yields no direct answer as to why the British decided to move the capital of the province from Agra to Allahabad in 1858. Before I unpack the key propositions of this dissertation, a brief introduction to the particularities of this city, which led to its choice as the new provincial capital, will also reveal why Allahabad is the site of my inquiry. One of the major changes brought about in the aftermath of the Rebellion of 1857, a watershed moment in modern Indian history, was that the administration of India passed from the hands of the privately managed East India Company to the direct administration of the British Crown.¹³ On November 1, 1858, the Governor-General Lord Canning read out the Queen’s Proclamation from the ramparts of the Allahabad Fort where a Darbar was held.¹⁴ The Proclamation was a crucial charter in the history of colonial rule that announced the transfer of the government of India to the Crown. Simultaneously, Canning was installed as the first Viceroy of India and Allahabad proclaimed the capital of the nation just for a day. In establishing the capital of the province in a new city, the British wished to signal new beginnings and a fresh start in a province recently marked by violence.

¹³ For postcolonial reassessments of this ground altering event, see Biswamoy Pati, ed., *The Great Rebellion of 1857 in India: Exploring Transgressions, Contests and Diversities* (London; New York: Routledge, 2010).

¹⁴ Correspondence of Lord Canning (1858–1859), MSS Eur F699/1/1, British Library, London.

Geographically, Allahabad is located at center of the highly fertile Indo-Gangetic plains connected by riverine and road networks. In 1859, the East Indian Railways inaugurated a 119-km track between Kanpur and Allahabad—the first rail network of north India.¹⁵ The city is poised midway between Calcutta, then the capital of the Indian empire, and Delhi, or Shahjahanabad, the former capital of Hindustan and the Mughal empire. Delhi was razed to the ground by the British in 1857 but remained a powerful symbol and significant site in the socio-political imagination of the region. After the Rebellion, Lucknow and Kanpur continued to be viewed by the British as the loci of Muslim and Hindu anger towards the East India Company.¹⁶ Meanwhile, since the early nineteenth century, Banaras had been under the semi-autonomous rule of a Raja from a Hindu zamindari family who was installed by the Company and supervised by a British Resident. Under the Raja and due to the powerful presence of the mercantile elites (*naupatīs*), warrior-trader-mendicants (*gosāīms*), and the Company, Banaras became a showcase instance of traditional Hindu power and Hindu religiosity under British protection.¹⁷ To British minds situating the provincial capital in any of these other key cities of the region would have displaced these fine balances of power. Agra and Delhi’s identity as the erstwhile capitals of the Mughal empire and sites of rebellion also rendered them unfit. I propose that the lack of

¹⁵ Christopher Bayly dates the arrival of railways in Allahabad a decade later, to 1869, but this is an error. See Indian Railways website, https://indianrailways.gov.in/railwayboard/view_section.jsp?lang=0&id=0,1,261 and Christopher A. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen, and Bazaars: North Indian Society in the Age of British Expansion, 1770–1870* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012), 531.

¹⁶ The infamous Sati Chaura ghat massacre of several British civilians, including women and children, took place in Kanpur. This riverbank came to be known as Slaughter Ghat, see <http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/apac/photocoll/s/019pho000000193u00020000.html>. At Lucknow, the Residency witnessed heavy fighting and utter destruction. On Lucknow, see Veena Talwar Oldenburg, *The Making of Colonial Lucknow, 1856–1877* (Princeton University Press, 1984).

¹⁷ See Sandria B. Freitag, “Introduction: The History and Political Economy of Banaras,” in *Culture and Power in Banaras: Community, Performance, and Environment, 1800–1980*, ed. by Freitag, 1–25 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

association with either the Mughal empire or with a successor state and consequently, the lack of a specific cultural identity rooted in an Islamicate or Hindu court culture rendered Allahabad an appropriate site for the new capital.

Additionally, in comparison with the other prominent cities of the region, the British exercised almost complete control over the physical space of this city, having burnt to cinders the eight villages that constituted pre-colonial Allahabad in the aftermath of the unrest of 1857.¹⁸ This erasure meant that the new British administration had a free hand to spatially reorganize the landscape of the city. While Allahabad was no doubt a strategically advantageous and suitable location for the new provincial administrative capital, Allahabad's cultural significance as an ancient pilgrimage site for Buddhists and Hindus, with a documented history going back to at least the third century, did not escape the colonial rulers.¹⁹ Kama McLean shows in her discussion of the Magh Mela that the British, aided by the Prayagwal Pandas, sought to both control and exploit the city's socio-cultural and religious value.²⁰ Owing to this cluster of factors, Allahabad was designated as the capital of the British administrative region known as the North-Western Provinces, marking the beginning of its transformation from a dusty town which until then had been dismissed as "Faqīrābād" (abode of *faqīrs*/beggars) into modern Allahabad.²¹ The

¹⁸ Arvind Krishna Mehrotra, *The Last Bungalow* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2007), 2.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 32–36. The sixth-century Chinese traveler Hsuan Tsang recorded his impressions of a festival at "Po-lo-ye-Kia (Prayag), see Mehrotra, *The Last Bungalow*, 32–35. For the inscriptions on the Ashokan Pillar, see Shaligrama Srivastava, *Prayāg Pradīp* (Allahabad: Hindustani Academy, [1937] 2008), 219–231.

²⁰ Kama Maclean, *Pilgrimage and Power: The Kumbh Mela in Allahabad, 1765–1954* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

²¹ Bishop Heber heard of this infamous epithet when he passed through the city in the 1820s. Reginald Heber, *Narrative of a Journey Through the Upper Provinces of India from Calcutta to Bombay, 1824–1825 (with Notes Upon Ceylon)* and *An Account of a Journey to Madras and the Southern Provinces, 1826, and Letters Written in India in Two Volumes* (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea, and Carey, 1828), 283.

arrival of the colonial administration, accompanied by the Government Press in 1858, signaled the beginning of a series of shifts in the cultural and infrastructural landscape of the city.

By the 1870s, the changes put in motion by colonial modernity had stuck. The transformation was pointedly summed up in the words of the eminent English poet, literary scholar, and raconteur of the city, Arvind Krishna Mehrotra:

In the space of little more than a decade [between 1858 and 1870], centuries of isolation gave way to cosmopolitanism; village settlements to city roads and parks, tower clocks and spires, bandstands and covered markets, gymkhana clubs and newspaper offices, law courts and colleges, hospitals and libraries.²²

By the 1880s, the population of the city had doubled due to inward migration from across the country; its people spoke a number of languages; it was the site of the Government Press (est. 1858), the seat of the High Court (est. 1864), and home to India's fifth university (University of Allahabad, est. 1887). Allahabad was also city of residence of prominent leaders of the Indian National Congress, making it the de facto headquarters of India's leading anti-colonial political party. Literacy rates in the city were among the highest in the region, even though only a small section of the country's populace was educated.²³ In this period, Allahabad emerged as the nerve center of north India with strong pulls in several directions. From the east, from Bengal and Bihar, a large number of educated migrants—many of whom were Brahmins, Kayasthas and *Ashraf* Muslims—made their way. From the north came a number of *Ashraf* families and Kashmiri Pandits who sought to start anew after the devastation of Shahjahanabad in the aftermath of 1857. Parsis, Maharashtrians, Anglo-Indians, and other communities also followed.

²² Mehrotra, *The Last Bungalow*, 2.

²³ *Census of India*, 1891.

These migrant communities spoke many languages and carried aspects of their respective regional culture to Allahabad, transforming it into a multicultural place.

For the purposes of this dissertation, the most significant development was the emergence of a vibrant print culture in the city from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards, with Allahabad becoming the hub of the publishing industry of the region. While it could be argued that all of north India was witnessing a boom in the print industry, three factors made Allahabad stand out. First, the early arrival of the Government Press in the city (est. 1858), followed by a number of other publishing houses, implied that despite limitations, the public sphere of the city was capacious enough to accommodate some marginal and even dissenting voices. Second, the city's status as capital and the arrival of migrants ensured that there was a noticeable multilingual trend in Allahabad's print culture, which led to a degree of heterogeneity of opinions. Third, a number of associations and institutions developed in conjunction with specific pockets of textual culture, giving rise to what I call 'textually-mediated publics.' Consequently, texts, urban publics, and institutions were closely entangled in a mutually productive relationship, together generating the urban culture of this prominent provincial city. All these processes were fraught and often marked by jockeying for power. I examine the cultural politics inherent in this process of place-making which have not been fully examined in existing works of urban histories. In so doing, I propose a methodological reorientation in urban history towards an examination of textual production by the publics of provincial cities.

Texts and Textuality as History: Archive and Method

Laura Ann Stoler situates the “force of writing” at the center of her inquiry into the materiality of colonial archives. The “force of writing” and its product—texts—also lie at the heart of this dissertation.²⁴ Taking a cue from Stoler, I analyze what happens when the author of texts is not a colonial administrator but an indigenous agent living, to cite Stoler again, a “lettered colonial life” of writing and publishing in the city. Perhaps such people and communities could be described as agents of words and agents of print who through their participation in public life, produced the city in very different ways than the colonizer. Keeping in mind Stoler’s insights into the constructed nature of the archive, I offer some reflections on the logic of assemblage of sources that constitute the archive of this work.

The dissertation relies on sources from three kinds of institutional archives: the colonial archive now housed at the British Library in London; the archives inherited by the postcolonial state from the empire and now stocked at the National Archive of India and in the Regional Archives of Lucknow and Allahabad; and third, the private libraries of Allahabad and Banaras that hold a wealth of vernacular sources. The colonial archive is also a repository of a number of rare vernacular texts and records about the publication of these texts—a situation that was born out of the exigencies of the regime of censorship. My dissertation, like many others, benefits from this hybrid nature of the colonial archive as the British Library’s collection was an important supplement to the libraries in South Asia.

²⁴ In the introduction to this work she writes, “This book is about the force of writing and the feel of documents, about lettered governance and lettered colonial lives.” Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton University Press, 2009), 1.

The archive of this dissertation includes a variety of eclectic printed sources; together they constitute a ‘textual’ archive that produces Allahabad as a provincial urban city. These works fall into three broad categories: first, miscellaneous texts such as guidebooks, city histories, autobiographies, journals, and memoirs which expressed the urban experience from the subjective perspective of either a traveler, a migrant, and/or a resident. These are discussed in chapter one. In chapter two, I discuss another miscellaneous genre of ‘texts’ that targeted a general audience: high-brow journals like *Saraswatī*, *Prabāsi*, *Modern Review*, and *Adīb* that have hitherto not been examined adjacently as modes of address and the sites of constitution of a variety of literate, urban publics. The second category comprises texts like caste journals, and reports and periodicals of university societies and hostels addressed to a specific caste group or a particular community like students. In chapters three and four, I read such textual and periodical publications with the same attention reserved for more canonical literary works in order to understand how specific publics were addressed and how particular communities used the medium of texts in order to fashion their modern identities. Finally, official records of the colonial government, especially records of publications of books and periodicals, reports on public instruction, reports on administration, statements of newspapers and periodicals, the census, gazettes, and files of the Educational and Home Departments constitute the third part of my archive. Many of these texts were produced to document or surveil the activities of indigenous agents. But read against the grain, they yield insights into place-making initiatives that surpassed surveillance and left behind a rich trace for scholars.

This wide definition of the textual allows me to move beyond the literary and non-literary divide that determines the study of the urban either as representation or as reality. To elaborate,

literary works on the urban are usually considered to be mediums of representation and reflection on urban experience, but not as historical sources. By contrast, informational, documentary, and evidentiary genres of texts are used by scholars as source material for the writing of history but not of literary analysis. In conceiving a wide variety of genres and different kinds of printed sources as texts that are at once representation and evidence, information as well as experience, documentation as well as discourse, I expand the scope of my analysis of the city and its textually produced nature. In so doing, I refer back to the mutual constitution of text and history. I do not imply that the differences of genre are not significant. Rather, my claim here is that in order to examine the cultural history of a place, only a wider than usual assemblage of written works and opinions would allow us to approximate how the urban was produced in a variety of ways. I have paid attention to the modes of address of these works, the languages in which they are composed, their target audiences, and most importantly, their conceptual relationship with the city in which they were produced and published, and which, I argue, they were also producing as a place.

Stephen Greenblatt and other New Historicist literary scholars have consistently drawn attention to the historicity of literary texts and the textuality of history.²⁵ In a somewhat similar vein, historian Hayden White's work has uncovered how the discipline of history relies on literary devices such as narrative and emplotment in its efforts to write, explicate, and interpret the past.²⁶ In reflecting upon the textual-historical archive on the city of Allahabad, I posit yet

²⁵ For a discussion on the "historical turn" of American literary criticism, see Jeffrey N. Cox and Larry J. Reynolds, eds., *New Historical Literary Study: Essays on Reproducing Texts, Representing History* (Princeton University Press, 1993).

²⁶ Hayden White, "New Literary History 4, no. 2, On Interpretation: II (Winter 1973): 281–314; and White, "The Question of Narrative in Contemporary Historical Theory," *History and Theory* 23, no. 1 (February 1984): 1–33.

another relationship between texts and history. I argue that writing and publishing, in other words, text-making, was one of the essential historical conditions of place-making in Allahabad. Consequently, texts were the staging ground for the emergence of urban publics who used the medium of print to associate, debate, advocate, report, document, and create urban communities.

I utilize sources spread across four languages—Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, and English. By 1900, Hindi and Urdu were recognized as official languages in the North-Western Provinces, while Bengali was the mother tongue of a large number of migrants to the region. The use of English was widespread in administration, education, and in the public sphere. All four languages were widely spoken and were also the languages of public discourse in the city. Spreading the archival net across various linguistic groups and a variety of publics allows me access to a wider cross-section of the city than covered by previous scholarship. Balancing these many outgrowths of print culture and public discourse in Allahabad, the dissertation also strikes a cautionary and critical note. While the capacious nature of print culture in Allahabad allowed a variety of expressions in a variety of genres, these discursive arenas were zones of complexities and contestations of identities. The coexistence of linguistically diverse and prolific publics in Allahabad did not necessarily imply cultural heterogeneity. My thesis keeps in view the complex identity politics generated by multilingualism.

A limitation of the textual method I employ in this work is that I do not include performative and visual traditions that might have contributed to place-making but did not leave textual traces or that fell outside the purview of a discursive and reflective relationship with place. For instance, Allahabad was home to a prolific tradition of music and dance centered around the Prayag Sangeet Samiti, which was established in 1926. A history of this site would

offer crucial insights into the evolution of Hindustani classical music within an institutionalized setting in north India.²⁷ Similarly, many scholars (including myself) mention the rich tradition of *mushā'iras* and *kavi sammelans* that animated the city. In order to understand the full range of cultural discourses in Allahabad, it would be productive to study the history of these public performative practices through an ethnographic lens. Thus, some ways of being in the city might still be left out of the methodology that I employ in this work or methods used by the scholarship that I have relied on.

Histories of Texts and Print Cultures in North India

Multilingualism in Cities and Bringing Urdu Back into Focus

I build upon a number of pioneering works by scholars who have brought to the forefront various facets of print culture in north India. Francesca Orsini's analysis of the modern Hindi public sphere in the colonial period first drew my attention to the urban nodes of print culture rooted in the *qasbas* and cities of north India.²⁸ Orsini's recent writings have engaged with the early modern period whereby she locates the region of Awadh (a neighbor and close cultural kin of Allahabad to the west of the city), as an exciting multilingual locale that witnessed the flourishing of Braj, Persian, and Urdu.²⁹ Following Orsini, multilingualism has emerged as both

²⁷ Attesting to the significance of the Prayag Sangeet Samiti, Janaki Bakhle mentions that this institution grew influential enough to pose a challenge to Marris College, which was also established in 1926 by Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhante and Rai Umanath Bali in Lucknow. See Janaki Bakhle, *Two Men and Music: Nationalism in the Making of an Indian Classical Tradition* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), chapter 4, fn 76.

²⁸ Francesca Orsini, *The Hindi Public Sphere 1920–1940: Language and Literature in the Age of Nationalism* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002).

²⁹ Francesca Orsini, "Between Qasbas and Cities: Language Shifts and Literary Continuities in North India in the Long Eighteenth Century," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 39, no. 1 (May 2019): 68–81.

a methodological practice as well as a crucial concept that informs my dissertation. In conceptualizing Allahabad as a place that was shaped by a number of languages and linguistic publics, my dissertation questions the exclusively Hindi-centric identity of the city. At the same time, I acknowledge the seminal influence of Hindi in the region and the particular brand of politics it engendered.

Ulrike Stark's comprehensive examination of the Naval Kishore Press, the enormously successful publishing house based in Lucknow, establishes the crucial role played by the printing press as an institution in shaping publics and multilingual print cultures in Urdu, Hindi, Persian, Arabic, and Sanskrit.³⁰ In another article, Stark establishes the presence of cross-cultural print modernity in multiple languages in Banaras.³¹ Rochelle Pinto's scholarship on the print and literary cultures of colonial Goa analyzes a variety of linguistic publics, who were using different languages such as Konkani, Marathi, and Portuguese in order to carve out disparate identities.³² My examination of the multilingual history of the Indian Press of Allahabad and its journals draws upon this substantial oeuvre.

While Hindi's preeminence in north India has been investigated by a number of scholars, Urdu was also a major literary language of Allahabad. Despite the fact that Urdu began to be increasingly and deliberately marginalized with the rise of Hindi, Urdu had a longer tradition in the city, going back to the eighteenth century and rooted in its famed Sufi centers (*dā'iras*).³³

³⁰ Ulrike Stark, *An Empire of Books: The Naval Kishore Press and the Diffusion of the Printed Word in Colonial India* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2007).

³¹ Ulrike Stark, "Benares Beginnings: Print Modernity, Book Entrepreneurs, and Cross-Cultural Ventures in a Colonial Metropolis," in *Founts of Knowledge: Book History in India*, ed. by Abhijit Gupta and Swapan Chakravorty, 15–73 (New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2016).

³² Rochelle Pinto, *Between Empires: Print and Politics in Goa* (Oxford University Press, 2007).

³³ Farooqi, "Urdu and Persian Literature in Allahabad."

Mehr Afshan Farooqi charts the progressive Urdu vernacular literary sphere that developed before and after India's partition by taking as her case study Urdu's first professional literary critic, Mohammad Hasan Askari, who was also associated with the Progressive Writers Association (PWA) in its early years.³⁴ Allahabad was a key center of the activities of this anti-imperialist, left-wing literary and socio-political initiative. The PWA was established in 1936 and led by a group of authors who wrote primarily in Urdu and English such as Sajjad Zaheer, Ahmad Ali, and Rashid Jahan. Some of the initial organizational meetings deliberating the foundation of the movement were held in Allahabad, where Zaheer lived with his father, Syed Wazir Hasan, a judge at the Allahabad High Court.³⁵ The association also organized two Hindi-Urdu conferences in the city in 1937 and 1938.³⁶

Examining Urdu literary works from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Jennifer Dubrow demonstrates that Urdu literature aimed to inculcate liberal and cosmopolitan sensibilities in its transregional and transnational reading publics. In some contrast with the agenda of nationalist Hindi, Dubrow argues that the Urdu cosmopolis was comprised of heterogenous readers who were affiliated by shared bonds of the language rather than sectarian identities.³⁷ In another important work on Urdu public culture, Megan Robb's analyzes the archives of *Madīnah*, an Urdu newspaper based in the *19actual* of Bijnor. Her study charts the intrinsic connection between Urdu print culture, small-town urbanity, and the temporality of

³⁴ See Mehr Afshan Farooqi, *Urdu Literary Culture: Vernacular Modernity in the Writing of Muhammad Hasan Askari* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

³⁵ See Zaheer's recollections of the foundational moments of this seminal literary movement, *Raushnā'ī* (New Delhi: Sima Publications, 1985). The text is also available in English translation, *The Light: A History of the Movement for Progressive Literature in the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2006).

³⁶ Farooqi, *Urdu Literary Culture*, 4.

³⁷ Jennifer Dubrow, *Cosmopolitan Dreams: The Making of Modern Urdu Literary Culture in Colonial South Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2018).

Islamic life-worlds in colonial north India. This body of scholarship on Urdu supplements the extensive research on Hindi in the region. The Urdu public sphere of this period also provides a contrasting model to Hindi, which was increasingly being fashioned to fulfill a nationalist and culturally conservative agenda.³⁸ By examining Hindi and Urdu print cultures side by side, along with writings in English and Bengali, my work aims to disseminate a more nuanced understanding of north India's print culture in the twentieth century.

Many Facets of Hindi in Allahabad

The influential role that Hindi periodical literature played in the region cannot be overemphasized, including its hand in cementing the cultural debates on the status of Hindi as the national language between 1900 and the 1920s. While the movement for Hindi first developed in the second half of the nineteenth century in Banaras, led by the activities of litterateur Bharatendu Harishchandra and others, Allahabad's centrality is noteworthy as well.³⁹ As I discuss in chapter two, Allahabad was the center of publication of *Saraswatī* which was the authoritative Hindi literary journal for decades. Sujata Mody has traced Hindi and *Saraswatī*'s trajectory under the leadership of the journal's prolific editor, Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi, aptly described by Mody as "an enterprising and contentious litterateur."⁴⁰ Thus, even while I reframe Allahabad as a city constituted by multiple linguistic publics, following Dalmia's attention to the potent link between cultural politics of majoritarian nationalism and urban society, I highlight

³⁸ Megan Eaton Robb, *Print and the Urdu Public: Muslims, Newspapers, and Urban Life in Colonial India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020).

³⁹ On the rise of the Hindi and Hindu movements in Banaras, see Vasudha Dalmia, *The Nationalization of Hindu Traditions: Bharatendu Harishchandra and Nineteenth-Century Banaras* (Oxford University Press, 1997). On the script controversy, see Christopher R. King, *One Language, Two Scripts: The Hindi Movement in Nineteenth Century North India* (Bombay and New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

⁴⁰ Sujata S. Mody, *The Making of Modern Hindi: Literary Authority in Colonial North India* (Oxford University Press, 2018), 4.

how linguistic heterogeneity began to lose its critical edge in Allahabad with its ascent as a center of nationalist Hindi activities. Beginning in the early decades of the twentieth century, apart from Urdu journal, the Hindi, Bengali, and English journals of the Indian Press of Allahabad showed signs of pro-Hindi sentiments and general cultural homogeneity.

The textual publics I examine in this work were largely led by male writers and authors. I attend to questions of gender by noting the absence of women in the textual publics that I trace, or their presence, however marginal and marginalized. In addition, I rely on the impressive body of scholarship that examined texts and journals which addressed a female readership. These texts constitute an important archive of women's writings as well as writings on women. This research functions as a crucial background and supplement to my work. Allahabad, alongside Banaras, was the major center of publication of several periodicals for women. Shobhna Nijhawan has examined a number of these pioneering Allahabad-based journals: *Strī Darpaṇ*, *Grihalakshmī*, and *Chānd* for women and *Kumārī Darpaṇ* and *Kanyā Manoranjan* for girls.⁴¹ Smita Gandotra's research turns to another literary corpus in Hindi which addressed the female reader—*strī upyogī sāhitya*, or instructional literature for women. In this arena too, Allahabad emerged as a crucial locus.⁴² Within the field of high-brow literary production, Mahadevi Varma was perhaps the foremost female litterateur of Allahabad. Karine Schomer's work on the Chhayavad school of experimental poetry furnishes a profile of Varma's long career as a poet, essayist, educator, and

⁴¹ Shobna Nijhawan, *Women and Girls in the Hindi Public Sphere: Periodical Literature in Colonial North India* (Oxford University Press, 2012), 17–18.

⁴² Smita Gandotra, "In Search of a Subject; Stri Upayogi Sahitya, 1870–1930," (Phd diss., University of Chicago, 2013), 99. Via Gandotra, we learn that approximately twenty-one writings in this genre were published between 1867 and 1900 in the city with a total print run of around 63,000. In addition, a number of prominent female authors who wrote works of instructional literature like Gopal Devi, Yashoda Devi, Sushila Devi Nigam, and Jyotirmayi Thakur, were based in Allahabad.

social reformer that spanned most of the twentieth century.⁴³ Striking a different note from these scholars, Charu Gupta extensively examines the Hindi popular and periodical print culture to reveal the nexus of caste and gender. In the realm of caste, Gupta shows that, in particular, lower-caste women frequently appeared as the target of reform but almost never spoke in their own voice. Meanwhile, upper-caste masculinity was also premised upon the othering of Muslim and lower-caste men and women.⁴⁴ By rooting the textual efflorescence that was animating all of north India in a specific locale—the provincial capital city of Allahabad—I draw attention to the rich publishing history of the place. At the same time, my dissertation adds a further layer to the method of doing urban history by drawing attention to texts as complex sites of cultural politics and place-making.

Place-making in a Provincial City

Place, however, has more substance than the word location suggests; it is a unique entity, a ‘special ensemble’ (Lukermann, 1964: 70); it has a history and meaning. Place incarnates the experiences and aspirations of a people.

—Yi-Fu Tuan⁴⁵

A Sense of Place

Cities, even medium-sized, provincial ones, are inherently defined by the fact that they have a spatial and material dimension—built landscape, monuments, landmarks, markets, and neighborhoods. Via physical infrastructure, an inhabitable place is built out of empty space. At

⁴³ Karine Schomer, *Mahadevi Varma and the Chhayavad Age of Modern Hindi Poetry* (University of California Press, 1983). Along with Jaishankar Prasad, Sumitra Nandan Pant, and Suryakant Tripathi “Nirala,” Varma was one of the “Big Four” poets of the Chhayavadi school. See Schomer, Chapter Five, “City of Literary People: Allahabad” and Chapter Six, “Mr. Varma’s Daughter: The Poet as a Young Girl,” 124–195.

⁴⁴ Charu Gupta, *Sexuality, Obscenity, Community: Women, Muslims, and the Hindu Public in Colonial India* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2001).

⁴⁵ Yi-fu Tuan, “Space and Place: Humanistic Perspective,” in *Philosophy in Geography*, ed. by S. Gale and G. Olsson, 387–427 (Dordrecht; Boston: D. Reidel, 1979).

the same time, cities are also metaphysical entities, defined by their society and culture, their public sphere, and the everyday life-worlds of their people which evolve over time. In thinking through the theoretical ramifications of both these dimensions, I have relied on the writings of a number of thinkers.

A significant philosophical turn towards the spatial concepts of space and place occurred in the social sciences from the 1970s onwards. In part, this turn was heralded by the reception of the German phenomenological philosopher Martin Heidegger's writings, which became available in English only in 1962.⁴⁶ In particular, Heidegger's phenomenological insights into the relationality between place and human beings who make their dwelling in a place, appealed to scholars.⁴⁷ Heidegger postulates that human beings and their dwelling are not bound up only by a relationship of instrumentality and functional utilization of space, rather, humans actively make place in the world. Another significant influence on the spatial turn came from Marxist philosopher Henri Lefebvre who underlined how space was a product of social relations. By popularizing the phrase, "the right to the city," Lefebvre advocated that the city must normatively operate as a space of actualization of social justice for the urban poor and disenfranchised.⁴⁸ These two disparate and distinct approaches have led to productive conversations between scholars from across the humanities and social sciences.⁴⁹ My use of the

⁴⁶ Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* was published in 1927 but its first English translation only became available in 1962—Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. by John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson (New York: Harper, 1962).

⁴⁷ "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," is a short lecture delivered in 1951 that dwells on the idea of place, space, and built environment. See Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings: From Being and Time (1927) to The Task of Thinking (1964)*, ed. by Heidegger and David Farrell Krell, 343–365 (San Francisco, California: Harper San Francisco, 1993).

⁴⁸ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (NA: Blackwell, 1991).

⁴⁹ For instance, see Doreen Massey *Space, Place, Gender* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994) and *For Space* (London: Sage, 2005), 9, where she puts the two categories in conversation. Also see Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso, eds, *Sense of Place*, 1996 for a variety of ethnographic approaches to place.

concept of place and place-making borrows from both these scholarly lineages and sutures it to a humanistic historiography of a provincial city. In this regard, geographer Yi-fu Tuan's formulation of place as an "ensemble," bound by its spatiality and temporality, embodying the experiences and aspirations of the people, has been most productive⁵⁰

Place-making in geographical scholarship is a term used by urban planners to describe the material processes of city planning. When imported to the humanities, it implies a range of other activities.⁵¹ In following the scholarly discussion on the philosophy of place, it becomes apparent that activities associated with place-making in the city are, in fact, closely aligned with *making a place in the city*. In my dissertation, such place-making involves the activities of different individuals and communities making a place for themselves in the city through migration, putting down roots, forging relationalities, writing, publishing, advocating, and institution-building. By activating different meanings of place—figurative and literal—we are able to tune into the organic relationship that city dwellers shared with their place of dwelling. The first chapter of the dissertation analyzes place-making as a process of forging subjective relationality with the city, of either distance or closeness, through the medium of texts. The second chapter focuses on the history of Allahabad's premier publishing house, the Indian Press, which through its journalistic production intervened in the cultural politics and public discourse of the city. The later chapters think through place as a culturally and socially produced category, again with texts as the central staging ground on which multifaceted identities were produced in

⁵⁰ See Tuan, "Space and Place," 388.

⁵¹ John Friedmann, "Place and Place-making in Cities: A Global Perspective," *Planning Theory and Practice* 11, no. 2 (2010): 149–165; Arijit Sen and Lisa Silverman, "Embodied Placemaking: An Important Category of Critical Analysis," in *Making Place: Space and Embodiment in the City*, ed. by Sen and Silverman, 1–19 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013).

the city. Consequently, texts emerge as the site of negotiation of place and identity as well as archive of such negotiations. As a result, the textual archive that I assemble here embodies a crucial locus of the theoretical claims of this dissertation: writing and publishing were intrinsic to the urban experience and place-making.

The Provincial City

Scholars of urban history of colonial India have a long tradition of focusing their attention on the coastal metropolitan cities that were the capitals of the presidencies of Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras.⁵² As Delhi has been central to the history of successive empires and polities—the Mughal, British, and the postcolonial Indian nation-state—it has also attracted substantial scholarly attention.⁵³ The historiography of non-metropolitan cities picked up from the 1970s and 1980s onwards, with prominent works on the colonial re-ordering of Lucknow by Veena

⁵² There is a substantial body of scholarship on these cities, especially Bombay and Calcutta. I mention only a few here. On Bombay, see Sandip Hazareesingh, *Colonial City and The Challenge of Modernity: Urban Hegemonies and Civic Contestations in Bombay City* (Orient BlackSwan, 2007); Nikhil Rao, *House, but No Garden: Apartment Living in Bombay's Suburbs, 1898–1964* (Minneapolis: Univ of Minnesota Press, 2013); Prashant Kidambi, *The Making of an Indian Metropolis: Colonial Governance and Public Culture in Bombay, 1890–1920* (Routledge, 2016); Juned Shaikh, *Outcaste Bombay* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2021). On Calcutta, see Pradip Sinha, *Calcutta in Urban History* (Calcutta: Firma KLM, 1978); Sukanta Chaudhuri, *Calcutta, the Living City*, two volumes (Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1990); Swati Chattopadhyay, *Representing Calcutta: Modernity, Nationalism and the Colonial Uncanny* (London: Routledge, 2006); Debjani Bhattacharyya, *Empire and Ecology in the Bengal Delta: The Making of Calcutta* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019). Among the metropolitan cities, scholarship on the history of Madras is less robust as compared to writings on Bombay, Calcutta, and Delhi. Some notable works are Susan J. Lewandowski, “Changing Form and Function in the Ceremonial and the Colonial Port City in India: An Historical Analysis of Madurai and Madras,” *Modern Asian Studies* 11, no. 2 (1977): 183–212; Lewandowski, *Migration and Ethnicity in Urban India: Kerala Migrants in the City of Madras, 1870–1970* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1980). Though not a work of urban history per se, but one which examines the scholarship produced by colonial administrators and Indian scholars at St. Fort George of Madras in the early nineteenth century, see Thomas R. Trautmann, *Languages and Nations: The Dravidian Proof in Colonial Madras* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006). See a recent work on the early phase of colonization, Moola Atchi Reddy, *East India Company and Urban Environment in Colonial South India: Madras, 1746–1803* (Routledge India, 2021).

⁵³ Stephen P. Blake, *Shahjahanabad: The Sovereign City in Mughal India, 1639–1739* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Stephen Legg, *Spaces of Colonialism: Delhi's Urban Governmentalities* (NA: Blackwell, 2007); Hans Schenk, *Housing India's Urban Poor, 1800–1965: Colonial and Post-Colonial Studies* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2020).

Talwar Oldenburg and an analysis of the political culture of Surat in the colonial period by Douglas Haynes.⁵⁴ Among north Indian cities, Banaras has been discussed extensively by historians, anthropologists, and literary studies and cultural studies scholars.⁵⁵ However, a significant body of scholarship on medium-sized cities of southern India is lacking, with the notable exceptions of Janaki Nair's work on Mysore and Eric Beverley's examination of Hyderabad. Both cities were capitals of Indian princely states.⁵⁶

Recently, David Boyk has proposed the productive category of “provincial urbanity” to understand the shifts in the cultural history of Patna in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He argues that *mofussils* (a colonial term for smaller cities) like Patna were not “backward” sites whose sole identity lay in the fact that they lagged behind bigger cities. Boyk shows that through its rich networks of Urdu literary cultures and notions of cosmopolitanisms, provincial cities like Patna were generators of a particular form of “provincial urbanity.”⁵⁷ In my reading, “provincial” or “metropolitan” are functions of scale and not just a product of geographical location and historical circumstances. Compared to the city of Patna that underwent a decline in the nineteenth century with the arrival of colonialism, the rise in fortunes of Allahabad from the late nineteenth century onwards presents a contrasting model of provincial urbanity. As discussed

⁵⁴ Oldenburg, *Making of Colonial Lucknow*; Douglas E. Haynes, *Rhetoric and Ritual in Colonial India: The Shaping of a Public Culture in Surat City, 1852–1928* (University of California Press, 1991).

⁵⁵ For an overview of the wide scholarship on Lucknow, see a bibliography compiled by Jörg Gengnagel & Axel Michaels, “Banaras Bibliography” (Heidelberg: South Asia Institute, updated July 2011). <https://www.sai.uni-heidelberg.de/abt/IND/publikation/bibbanaras/bibbanaras.php>. This list is helpfully divided by disciplinary focus such as cultural history, history, cultural geography, architecture, etc.

⁵⁶ Janaki Nair, *Mysore Modern: Rethinking the Region under Princely Rule* (Minneapolis: Univ of Minnesota Press, 2011); Eric Lewis Beverley, *Hyderabad, British India, and the World: Muslim Networks and Minor Sovereignty, c.1850–1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

⁵⁷ David S. Boyk, “Provincial Urbanity: Intellectuals and Public Life in Patna, 1880–1930” (PhD diss, University of California, Berkeley, 2015).

earlier, Allahabad shed its identity as *faqirabad* after the provincial capital was shifted there in 1858. My archive shows the citizens were well aware of their own historic status as the most important inland city of the region, second only to the coastal metropolises, and hence a place of opportunities poised at the junction of colonial power and indigenous enterprise. Unlike the case of Patna, colonial Allahabad did not experience its provinciality as a handicap. As my thesis shows, both colonial authorities and indigenous citizens of Allahabad were deeply invested in the project of creating metropolitan culture and socio-political life within the spatiality of the provincial city. As a result, the debates and contestations on key markers of identity that were prevalent in the public sphere of this major provincial capital are the key to understanding the complex nature of colonial urban life.

Allahabad first received detailed attention in the work of Christopher Bayly. His examination of the city's political economy with a focus on its political leadership demonstrated that the "roots of Indian nationalism" lay in the machinations of the local mercantile elites.⁵⁸ His work, however, did not consider urban phenomenon outside the framework of the political, leaving largely unquestioned the cultural arena. Indeed, the hegemonic focus on nationalism has shaped most historical sub-fields in South Asia, and urban history is no exception. In contrast with Bayly's nationalist focus, Lucy Carroll's research took up the "Kayastha movement" of north India, focusing in particular on the history of two institutions: the Kayastha Pathshala of Allahabad and the Kayastha Conference of Lucknow. Carroll's work, as noted, was part of the historical turn in the study of caste, which until then had mostly been a mainstay of sociologists.

⁵⁸ Christopher A. Bayly, *The Local Roots of Indian Politics: Allahabad, 1880–1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975).

In contrast to the sociological approach pioneered by M. N. Srinivas, who proposed the category of Sanskritization to explicate changes in the structure of caste, Carroll approached the study of caste through an analysis of its historical evolution.⁵⁹ While her work is a rich and invaluable study on the Hindustani Kayasthas, she does not fully interrogate the role privilege and access to urban facilities of the provincial city played in the success of this caste. My comparative analysis in chapter three of the mobilization of Kayasthas and Kalwars of Allahabad, seeks to address these gaps in the study of caste and in the study of provincial cities.

Since the 2000s and under the influence of the postcolonial turn, there is a renewed emphasis on the indigenous reception of modernity in urban spaces.⁶⁰ Sanjay Joshi's study of the formation of the middle class in Lucknow, a non-metropolitan but important provincial city, is useful here.⁶¹ My study of Allahabad to some extent builds on Joshi's proposition but also differs in crucial ways. Unlike Joshi, I take the provincial city and its textual publics as the main objects of analysis rather than as exemplars of the evolution of the analytical category of the middle class. This shift in emphasis is significant since class as a framework does not exhaust the range of cultural concerns I explore in the provincial city. Furthermore, the concept of contestation itself needs to be interrogated as an experience rather than as a set characteristic of one or the other class. As I discuss in the next section, the contestations that urban publics faced in negotiating modernity were germane and particular to them. Viewing the entire range of

⁵⁹ Lucy Carol [sic] (Stout), *The Hindustani Kayasthas: The Kayastha Pathshala, and the Kayastha Conference, 1873–1914*, 1976.

⁶⁰ On the “urban turn” in South Asia, see Gyan Prakash, “The Urban Turn,” in *The Sarai Reader 02: The Cities of Everyday Life*, 2–7 (New Delhi: CSDS: 2002). <https://sarai.net/sarai-reader-02-cities-of-everyday-life/>.

⁶¹ Jyoti Hosagrahar, *Indigenous Modernities: Negotiating Architecture and Urbanism* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2005); Sanjay Joshi, *Fractured Modernity: Making of a Middle Class in Colonial North India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001).

negotiations through the binary rubric of tradition versus modernity, which Joshi's "fractured modernity" model suggests, might be limiting. My focus on the processual aspects of modernity approximates William Glover's analysis of the making of modern Lahore, another important provincial city, and interrogates various discursive imaginaries that shape a place.⁶²

Identities: At the Cusp of Limitations and Possibilities

A City of Associations, Institutions, and Many Publics

Allahabad's capacious print culture, powered by its prolific publishing houses and presses, made writing and publishing accessible to a wide number of people. As I will argue in this dissertation, these were major enabling conditions for several groups of people to emerge as publics. Urban citizens and agents of print participated in a variety of place-making activities; they formed associations and built institutions such as literary organizations, publishing houses, caste associations, and hostels. As I show in the chapters of this work, these textually mediated urban publics were the locus of negotiation of a variety of identities that both produced and reflected the historical changes taking place in the society and culture of the region.⁶³ In tracing the rise of these publics through the textual archives they left behind, I am interested in the contestations at

⁶² William J. Glover, *Making Lahore Modern: Constructing and Imagining a Colonial City* (University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

⁶³ On the theoretical impulses behind the formation of publics and the public sphere, in the west and elsewhere, see, Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991); Craig Calhoun, "Civil Society and the Public Sphere," *Public Culture* 5, no. 2 (1993): 267–280; Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (Cambridge, MA: 2002); Rajeev Bhargava and Helmut Reifeld, *Civil Society, Public Sphere, and Citizenship Dialogues and Perceptions* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2005); Francis Cody, "Public and Politics," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 40 (2011), 37–52. On the related concept of the "social" as it developed in the indigenous public sphere, see Rochona Majumdar, "A Conceptual History of the Social: Some Reflections Out of Colonial Bengal," in *Trans-Colonial Modernities in South Asia*, ed. by Dodson, Michael S., and Brian A. Hatcher, 165–188 (London; New York: Routledge, 2012).

the heart of place-making efforts in Allahabad. Modern institutions such as journals, schools, and hostels, were dealing with two logics of constitution. Their establishment allowed large numbers of city-dwellers to access opportunities of expression, association, education, and residence, which were previously unavailable to them. While the activities of writing, publishing, association formation, and institution-building allowed the emergence of these communities as publics, we also find that their self-fashioning was deeply circumscribed by caste, religion, and gender identities, which sat uneasily with their public and civic potential. Consequently, place-making activities in Allahabad were a troubled enterprise.⁶⁴ Viewed through this prism, any normative potential inherent in these publics are characterized and produced by internal debates whose parameters are set by the nature of the community rather than by predetermined and already defined criteria.

One of the crucial factors that led to the rise of textual activities in the public sphere of Allahabad was the emergence of a variety of associations and institutions outside the domain of the colonial state. They functioned as creative spaces for indigenous agents and communities to come together and explore their mutual interests, in the process furthering place-making activities in the city. These institutional spaces were key sites for the formation of publics led by particular or general interest groups and local intellectuals. Associational culture in the city was not limited to middle-class and upper-caste activities. To some extent, lower castes and communities with less cultural clout were also able to find a toehold in this arena. The plethora

⁶⁴ Chakrabarty's case studies of particular life-worlds of Bengal included in *Provincializing Europe* and *Habitations of Modernity* have been essential in parsing out the various facets of contestations and how to make sense of these fissures. Also see Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Habitations of Modernity: Essays in the Wake of Subaltern Studies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

of institutional activity is also significant in generating its own archives outside the realm of the state. In tracing indigenous efforts that shaped the city, these archives have furnished invaluable records for scholars in the form of pamphlets, journals, proceedings, and other ephemeral publications, written mostly in Hindi and Urdu.

In her discussion of Lucknow's Jalsah-i-Tahzib, Stark mentions that voluntary associations emerged as a distinctive feature of urban social life after 1860.⁶⁵ In Allahabad too, such voluntary associations became widespread within a decade. One of the earliest civic associations of the city, the bilingual Urdu-English Allahabad Literary Society was established in 1877 by a number of professors and students of the Muir College.⁶⁶ Eleven years later, the Bharati Bhavan Pustakalaya, the city's first Hindi public library opened in 1889 as an initiative of the Malviya Brahmin community, led by Balkrishna Bhatt and others. The Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, an organization for the promotion of modern Hindi, was inaugurated in 1910. The Hindustani Academy was formed in 1927 by a group of intellectuals to advocate Hindustani, the intermediate register between Hindi and Urdu, and to promote the simultaneous use of both vernaculars as ways to bridge the fractious Hindi-Urdu divide.⁶⁷ Tara Chand, a prominent historian, the principal of the Kayastha Pathshala College, and professor at the University of Allahabad, was the first general secretary of the Hindustani Academy and tirelessly promoted a

⁶⁵ Ulrike Stark, "Associational Culture and Civic Engagement in Colonial Lucknow: The Jalsah-e Tahzib," *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 48, 1 (2011): 1–33.

⁶⁶ Dave Family Papers, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi. Due to constraints of the pandemic in accessing resources, I have not included a discussion on this institution here. I plan to discuss this association at length elsewhere.

⁶⁷ See "Institutionalising Unity: Hindi, Urdu and the Hindustani Academy" in "Looking for Common Ground: Aspects of Cultural Production in Hindi/Urdu, 1900–1947" (PhD diss, SOAS, University of London, 2021).

syncretic cultural milieu in the city and the region.⁶⁸ This plethora of socio-cultural formations that animated the public life of Allahabad elicits further theoretical analysis.

Beyond the *Diyār-i-Gang-o-Jaman* (Land of Ganga and Yamuna)⁶⁹

Historically, the claim that Allahabad embodies the best of *gaṅgā-jamunī tahzīb*—the syncretic culture of two rivers, Ganga and Yamuna, and two communities, the Hindus and Muslims—has been perceived to be the cornerstone of culture of the city.⁷⁰ As mentioned earlier, in October 2018, the name of the city was suddenly changed to Prayagraj by the administrative fiat of the government of Uttar Pradesh, a province where the Hindu nationalist BJP has been in power since 2017. Several important public figures of the city like Shamsur Rahman Faruqi, Neelum Saran Gour, and Heramba Chaturvedi, among others, spoke out against the move.⁷¹ All of them

⁶⁸ For instance, the Allahabad Agricultural Institute was established in 1910 by Sam Higginbottom, an English Presbyterian Missionary associated with the Ewing Christian College. See Prakash Kumar, “The Development of Uttar Pradesh Agricultural University,” in *Indo-US Entanglements from the Age of Empire to Decolonisation*, ed. by Harald Fischer-Tine and Nico Slate, na (Leiden: Leiden University Press, forthcoming 2022).

⁶⁹ Title of a book of Urdu poetry on the city. Iqbal Mahir, *Diyār-i-Gang-o-Jaman: Allahabad* (Allahabad: Anjuman-i-Tahzib-i-Nau, Publications Divisions, 1975).

⁷⁰ Gyanesh Kudaisya writes that even in the post-Independence period, the conflict of vision and contestation of ideas on the grounds of the nomenclature, linguistic identity, and cultural identity of the region continued, perhaps exacerbated by the experience of Partition of the country in 1947. On the question of naming of the region, he writes, “All the proposals for renaming Uttar Pradesh were rooted in Hindu mythology or cultural geography of pilgrimage. Not a single proposal came forward which acknowledged UP’s rich history as the region which had nurtured Indo-Islamic culture, arts, and language.” See Gyanesh Kudaisya, “‘Aryavarta,’ ‘Hind,’ or ‘Uttar Pradesh’: The Postcolonial Naming and Framing of a ‘Region,’” in *From the Colonial to the Postcolonial: India and Pakistan in Transition*, ed. by Dipesh Chakrabarty, Rochona Majumdar, and Andrew Sartori, 264–268 (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007).

⁷¹ Shamsur Rahman Faruqi, “Call Me Ilahabas,” *Indian Express*, October 18, 2018.

<https://indianexpress.com/article/express-sunday-eye/call-me-ilahabas-5420926>; Neelum Saran Gour, “Prayagraj is Now the Official Name, but Allahabad will Live on in the Way the City Imagines Itself,” October 21, 2018.

<https://scroll.in/article/898980/pryagraj-is-now-the-official-name-but-allahabad-will-live-on-in-the-way-the-city-imagines-itself>. Chaturvedi cited in Vikas Pandey, “The Name Change that Killed My City’s Soul,” BBC News, Delhi, November 7, 2018. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-46015589>. Subsequently, there was a move to change the name of the University of Allahabad to match the new name of the city. Basant Kumar Mohanty, “Yogi Govt Moves to Rename Allahabad University,” *The Telegraph*, February 5, 2019. <https://www.telegraphindia.com/india/yogi-govt-moves-to-rename-allahabad-university/cid/1683844>.

referred to the name of the city as an embodiment of its syncretic identity, encapsulated perfectly by the phrase *gaṅgā-jamunī tahzīb*. I take up the discussion on toponyms and their cultural significance in chapter one. Here, I seek to understand and interrogate the implications of this shorthand and what it stood for historically and now.

Despite *gaṅgā-jamunī tahzīb* being a widespread, popular, and crucial cultural category, its ubiquitous and commonsensical nature has implied that there has been little serious discussion on it. In public-facing writing, a British-Canadian artist of Pakistani-Bengali origin, Naz Ikramullah, has published a short text accompanied by several photographs titled *Ganga Jamuni, Silver and Gold: A Forgotten Culture*.⁷² In this work, she identifies a number of markers of this cultural heritage: Sufi and Bhakti poetry, Hindustani classical music, Baul songs, qawwalis, Kathak dance, Mughal paintings, Indo-Islamic architecture, Urdu poetry, the long tradition of translation between Persian and Sanskrit, Bollywood films, food, cultural rituals, material culture, and popular games. This variety of cultural syncretism has much theoretical purchase if and must be explored within debates on secularism in a global and South Asian context.

Within the purview of my discussion in this thesis, *gaṅgā-jamunī tahzīb* is one among the many crucial aspects of urban identity in Allahabad but comes up short when it claims to be an overarching category. Going by the discussions in these public articulations of *gaṅgā-jamunī tahzīb*, my research demonstrates that this much-invoked phrase is not a comprehensive framework to study the whole range of cultural shifts that took place in Allahabad at the turn of the twentieth century. While significant instances of inter-communal harmony exist in the city

⁷² Naz Ikramullah, *Ganga Jamuni, Silver and Gold: A Forgotten Culture* (Dhaka: Bayeux Arts, 2013).

with Hindu, Muslim, and Christian communities living in close proximity, other important aspects of urban life and local identity politics that are not encompassed by the lens of religion, are caste, and to some extent, gender. As is well-established by now, caste is a form of privilege and discrimination that affects every religious community of South Asia. Given its significance, it is worth noting that few general works of urban history take up caste alongside gender, religion, or politics within their frameworks. As soon as caste is included as a crucial logic of place-making, *gaṅgā-jamunī tahzīb* faces a serious challenge as a comprehensive or adequate framework for a work of urban history. Thus, even as we acknowledge the substantial cultural currency of Indo-Islamic syncretism, we must also go beyond it in our understanding of the urban. Without including caste in the cultural purview, a major shift like the change of name of the city—a product of the identity politics led by a party that seeks to impose a Hindu identity in the country and relies on exploiting caste identities—cannot be comprehended. My work aims to examine these underexamined aspects of urban publics in the provincial city and how they negotiated identities. Each chapter focuses on a specific locus of negotiation of self, community, and identity in Allahabad discussed below.

Chapter Outline

The first part of the dissertation comprises two chapters which analyze the arena of literary texts and journals in Allahabad. For a city so deeply marked by its literary publics, it is only apt to first approach it through the representational relationship that textual genres share with the place. In chapter one, I explore this relationality between place and various genres of texts. The second chapter takes us to the history of the most prominent publishing house of the city, the Indian

Press (est. 1884), one of the many such institutions that fueled the textual efflorescence in the city. Apart from its multilingual book list, the Indian Press also published journals in four languages within a period of fifteen years. Exploring the cultural politics of these journals, especially how language became the site of contestations of identity and culture, uncovers a crucial perspective about the discursive public sphere of the city.

The second part of the dissertation similarly consists of two chapters. These chapters examine the histories of urban institutions that developed at the intersection of print culture, education, and identity politics. Access to these institutions was often circumscribed by religious, caste, or gender identities. Chapter three is a comparative study of two caste groups of the city—the Kayasthas and Kalwars—who used the medium of texts as a major strategy of institution-building and mobilization. Chapter four analyzes the history of university hostels in Allahabad, whose development was caught in the crosshairs of secular education and sectarian community norms. As a result, the city’s sense of place and the city’s identity, too, were defined by these limitations, compromising the vision of cosmopolitanism and secularism that was also developing in the public sphere. Taken together, the four chapters of the dissertation shine light onto particular instantiations of the relationship between texts and place-making and reveal the cultural politics at play within various identity groups of the city.

Chapter one, “A Sense of Place: Representations of Allahabad across Genres” examines a variety of texts that represent Allahabad in many different idioms: travel narratives by Bishop Heber and Bholanauth Chunder; guidebooks by various writers; city histories by Shaligram Srivastava and Syed Maqbul Ahmad Samadani; autobiographies by Syed Ijaz Husain and Harivansh Rai Bachchan, and memory sketches by Mahadevi Varma. As noted above, for a

dissertation that takes up questions on the co-constitution of urban and textual publics, it is fitting to open the discussion through the eyes of a variety of writers—poets, intellectuals, public historians, and literary critics. The chapter explores identity and place-making in the literary and representational arenas by examining the interplay between author and genre, the gaze of the outsider and that of the insider, objective and subjective descriptions, and colonial and orientalist constructions versus affective associations. In my reading of this archive, literary affect and intimacy with the city emerge as significant grounds of relationality between author, text, and place. My exploration of these varied engagements demonstrates how literary writing is a crucial place-making activity. The process of writing generated publics who share an affective relationship with the city. In so doing, I suggest that literary texts outside the domain of fiction and poetry constitute a major and somewhat untapped archive of the cultural history of a place, especially, of the provincial city. This chapter takes up the experiences and perspectives of visitors as well as local residents to demonstrate the richness and particularity of the life-worlds of the provincial city. I demonstrate that these affective associations with place that were expressed in texts endowed Allahabad with a unique and particular sense of place.

Chapter two, “The Indian Press of Allahabad: A Multilingual Publishing House in a Divided Public Sphere,” focuses on the Indian Press, the most prolific publishing house of the region in the period under review. Within a short span of thirty years of its establishment in 1884, the Indian Press published books in various languages and produced several eminent journals. *Saraswatī* in Hindi (est. 1900), *Prabāsī* in Bengali (est. 1901), *Modern Review* in English (est. 1907), and *Adīb* in Urdu (est. 1909/10), went on to become leading journals among the publics of this region and beyond. By placing them in the context of Allahabad, I do not aim

to reduce or localize the wide influence of these important journals. Rather, I read them as historical documents, as texts that reveal that Allahabad, today perceived as the center of Hindi print culture, was in fact a multilingual locale with widespread influence in the region. Similarly, reframing Allahabad as a multilingual city is an act of historical revisionism that I undertake in order to complicate the current understanding of the urban public sphere. By examining the pages of these four journals, I am able to access a slice of the politically charged cultural and social debates that were animating the city, in particular, debates focused on the contentious issue of languages and identities. I show that despite linguistic heterogeneity, many of the languages in use were, in fact, becoming platforms for the advocacy of cultural nationalism. At the same time, some voices of the public sphere like *Adīb* offered resistance against these trends. A close examination of the journals reveals the varieties of opinions and contestations prevalent among the readership which would be difficult to tap into otherwise.

Chapter three, “The Place of Caste in the Provincial City: Texts and Institutions of the Kayasthas and the Kalwars” compares the mobilization strategies deployed by two caste groups of disparate ritual and cultural status in Allahabad. Through these strategies of upward mobility, Kayasthas and Kalwars negotiated their modern identities as urban caste-based communities. I show that the opportunities offered by the city, namely print culture and associational activities, facilitated the ‘textualization’ of caste, one of the earliest and most important among an array of mobilization strategies. The first step towards fashioning a caste public was to write down, print, and publish the origin myths about one’s caste and locate scriptural sources for claims to higher ritual status. In so doing, the powerful Hindustani Kayasthas as well as the relatively

marginalized Kalwars were addressing colonial authorities as well as their own caste publics and the larger Hindu society.

Caste journals emerged as another space for self-expression and mobilization by these castes through which they advocated for a higher ritual status, addressed caste members outside the city, publicized their associational activities, and solicited donations for community initiatives, especially education for the boys and men of the community. Establishing educational institutions and professionalization were the second crucial steps of urban mobilization. For castes like the Kayasthas with hereditary access to literacy and employment, these were avenues to maintain their stronghold over avenues of employment or to diversify into other lucrative professions. Kalwars emulated a similar strategy of establishing a pipeline, but with far more limited success. Thus, by focusing on caste as a crucial vector of textual culture and institution-building in Allahabad, and by studying the mobilization processes of two castes of different status within the same city, I am able to compare the roles of social and cultural capital in the making of modern Allahabad.

Chapter four, “Learning Together and Living Separately in Allahabad: A History of University Hostels,” addresses the intersection of the history of colonial education in India and urban history of provincial cities. The rise of educational institutions, their infrastructural expansion, and their wide socio-cultural reach were squarely a part of the growth of colonial urbanity. Hostels, sometimes called boarding houses, were novel and modern spaces of dwelling and learning in the city which were developed alongside the growth of colonial education in India from the nineteenth century onwards. By examining a number of magazines associated with affiliated colleges of the University of Allahabad as well as reports and articles about

hostels in the city, I explore the history of three hostels in the city— the Musalman or Muslim Boarding House established by elite Muslims of Allahabad, the Oxford and Cambridge Hostel run by the Christian Mission Society, and Women’s Hostel which was the product of the joint initiatives by Indian and English educators of the university. These spaces, I argue, were a training ground for a number of values such as civility, sociability, propriety, and discipline, which were seen as close corollaries to the colonial educational mission in India. In the eyes of British educators and their Indian allies, acquisition of a Western education and experience of residential life were essential preparations for a colonial subject to lead a modern cultured life. The influence of hostels was in many ways a means to introduce the ethos of metropolitan life to the provinces. In shaping residential arrangements, a number of ideological and community-driven needs also had a major influence. This array of ideologies compromised the egalitarian premises and promises offered by colonial public education. Thus, even while hostel life marks a novel presence in the Indian social landscape, their lack of heterogeneity is writ large and made visible in the absence of lower-caste students that contemporary society considered its others. The near complete absence or marginal presence of lower-caste students raises questions about the narrow reach of education and the many forms of exclusion that were built into the nature of colonial urbanity. Caste remained an almost insurmountable block when residential arrangements threatened to upset the rules of commensality and sharing space. In a landscape where the Hindu caste-based society maintained a rigid demarcation in norms of commensality and co-habitation even among the sub-sects of higher castes, there is little surprise that Muslims would continue to implement norms that followed majoritarian impulses. As a result, the Muslim Boarding House only accommodated Muslim scholars. Finally, in the realm of women’s

accommodation, we find that all stakeholders—local elites, educators, and colonial administrators—acknowledged the desire and need for making space for women decades after men had already enjoyed these privileges. Even while hostels began to accommodate women, their everyday lives were severely circumscribed and bound by patriarchal notions of safety, morality, and propriety. The formalization of caste, religion, and gender norms in hostel life were, thus, a concretization of principles that animated public interactions in modern Indian society.

Contribution to the Field

My dissertation is positioned at the intersection of three aspects of modern history of north India: its multilingual and multivocal pasts expressed in the city's print culture; debates in linguistic, religious, caste, and gender identities within the urban public sphere; and lesser-known practices of place-making that constitute the provincial city. The chapters that follow open up for readers the benefits of studying provincial cities through their multi-lingual and multi-genre textual archives. My focus on how a space becomes place through its textual activity is also meant to present historians with new methods of studying and understanding provincial cities. Looking beyond South Asia, I hope that my case study on Allahabad will encourage historians of the Global South to bring to scholarly attention other provincial spaces, and the processes by which they emerged as places. My project is not an idealistic recuperation of the socio-cultural history of Allahabad. Rather, it is an engagement with caste, class, linguistic, gender, and religious divisions that were expressed in a variety of texts. In balancing a number of competing identities

that together constitute a place, I demonstrate that the city was a place of limitations and exclusions as much as it was one of aspirations and possibilities.

PART I

Chapter One

A Sense of Place: Representations of Allahabad across Genres

Whose eye can miss the evidence that two sacred rivers, Ganga and Jamuna, pass by at Prayag. Both merge at the *saṅgam* (confluence), they meet, yet remain separate. A barrier intervenes between them. At the height of union and confluence too, the grandeur of distinction and difference remains manifest. Neither has the authority to dominate the other. During the descent of the holy Qu’ran—the token of blessings and divine mercy, and that conveyor of divine power—this unique and good place was present on the surface of the earth and infinite wisdom was widespread here.

— Syed Maqbul Ahmad Samadani, *Tārīkh-i-Ilāhābād*¹

*Tīn tribenī haiṁ do āmkhem merī
Ab ilāhābād bhī punjāb hai*

My two eyes have joined the three strands of rivers (*trī-veṇī*),
Now Allahabad too is the land of five waters (*panj-āb*)

—Nasikh, eighteenth-century Urdu poet²

In *Tārīkh-i-Ilāhābād*, Syed Maqbul Ahmad Samadani describes the city of Allahabad as a “unique and good place.” What makes this place unique and good in the eyes of an Allahabadi? And why would a Muslim author describe the confluence of rivers—a Hindu sacred site—in these reverent terms? Similarly, an eighteenth-century Muslim poet wittily wove in puns on two toponyms—Allahabad and Punjab—within a single memorable couplet in order to pay tribute to

¹ Syed Maqbul Ahmad Samadani, *Tārīkh-i-Ilāhābād*, Allahabad: Star Press, 1938, 7.

² Nasikh wrote this couplet during his visit to Allahabad in the eighteenth century when he was a guest at the *khānaqāh* (hospice) of the Sufi saint, Shah Muhammad Ajmal, one of the twelve such Sufi *dā’iras* (centers, gatherings) that left a deep imprint on the landscape and history of pre-colonial Allahabad. See Shamsur Rahman Faruqi, “Urdu and Persian Literature in Allahabad,” September 2007, http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00fwp/srf/txt_allahabad.html.

this Hindu holy site. Following these literary traces, the chapter asks two central questions: how do authors and their textual representations frame and present Allahabad as a place? As a corollary to the first question, why is it a significant historiographical exercise to recover this relationality between place and text? In answering these questions, I show how the identity of Allahabad as a distinct place was debated and defined within a range of texts in a variety of genres: guidebooks, travel narratives, city histories, autobiographies, and memoirs. The chapter builds up a contrast between the sense of place expressed in travel narratives and guidebooks on the one hand, and genres like city histories and autobiographies on the other. By examining this contrast between two forms of expressions and understandings of place, I analyze how specific genres mediated place-making strategies in their representations of the city.

Literary scholars have observed how works of fiction, especially forms of prose such as the novel and short stories, were spaces for the exploration of urban subjectivities and urban life-worlds arising from the specific socio-cultural history of each city.³ In north India, a long tradition of affective engagement with urban sites exists in Persian, Urdu, Braj, and Awadhi poetry. Scholars have commented on poetic genres like the *shahr āshob* composed in Persian and Urdu—a medium of lament on the decline of cities, and the *nagar shobhā* written in the Indic vernaculars—a playful catalogue of the beautiful men and women of a town.⁴ By comparison, the potential of non-fiction literary texts as sites of engagements with particular places, and their

³ Vasudha Dalmia highlights how the Hindi novel emerged as a space of reflection on and representation of modernity in various cities of north India—Allahabad, Lucknow, Agra, Delhi, and Banaras. See *Fiction as History: The Novel and the City in Modern North India* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2019). For Indian English novels, see Vassilena Parashkevova, *Salman Rushdie's Cities: Reconfigurational Politics and the Contemporary Urban Imagination* (London and New York: Continuum, 2012).

⁴ See Sunil Sharma, “Celebrating Imperial Cities,” in *Mughal Arcadia: Persian Literature in an Indian Court* (Harvard University Press, 2017), 89–124. Also see Eve Tignol, “Nostalgia and the City: Urdu Shahr Āshob Poetry in the Aftermath of 1857,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 27, no. 1 (2017): 591–610.

function as archives of place-making practices, remain underexplored. Within the broad category of non-fiction, primarily one genre has garnered the attention of scholars—the travel narrative or the travelogue, as it presents a case of direct engagement with a place. Little attention has been paid, however, to other genres such as city histories and autobiographies which I explore here, and which display a much wider range of strategies of place-making.

In addition, scholars have mostly turned to texts published in one language or the other to analyze urban phenomenon, such as writings in either English, or Hindi, or Urdu, sidestepping the fact that urban spaces were often sites of multilingual publication and hence representations of urbanity also proliferated in a number of languages. In contrast with these approaches, this chapter, and the dissertation as a whole, adopts a multilingual approach. I discuss here texts in three languages—Hindi, Urdu, and English—across a variety of genres. In so doing, I aim to demonstrate how the multi-genre, multi-lingual approach is the key to unlocking a wider range of relationalities with a place. This approach also complicates the line between representation and documentation, literary and evidentiary, and literature and history. In terms of method, I bring the sensibility of literary history to the writing of urban history by highlighting the role of different genres in evoking a sense of the city. By delving into a wide variety of texts on Allahabad, I seek to understand the in-between-ness or the relationality between textuality and urbanity.⁵ The texts discussed here were published between 1826 and 1969. Consequently, this chapter also gestures towards an argument about temporality since various texts coincide with the experience of different periods of colonial modernity in Allahabad. For a city experiencing

⁵ My use of the concept of “affect” here draws on the now substantial body of work on affect theory. For an overview, see “Introduction” by Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth in their edited volume, *The Affect Theory Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010). The articles in this book showcase a range of approaches to the concept of affect.

such rapid transformation, texts function in two ways, first as an engagement with the past of a place, and second, as an archive and index of temporal changes that colonialism and modernity brought in its wake. I explore how the making of Allahabad is a process that simultaneously contains two contesting developments. On the one hand, it is a place that embodies multicultural and multilingual aspirations that is captured in the phrase *gaṅgā-jamunī tahzīb*.⁶ On the other hand, it is also a place rooted in the ascribed identities of gender, caste, and religion in the city. Instead of viewing these contestations as essential markers of colonial urban modernity, I attend to nuanced practices of textual place-making and the rise of a literary public in Allahabad who debate socio-cultural contradictions on their own terms.

The two parts of the chapter highlight two distinct forms of relationality I locate in the genres under discussion. The first part takes up travel narratives and guidebooks by European and Indian authors writing in English and in Hindi. I did not come across a travel narrative or guidebook in Urdu that discusses Allahabad. The main framework of travel narratives and guidebooks is a distanced depiction of sites and people of the city. Viewed through this prism of “distance,” writers build a catalogue of all that is sight-worthy and noteworthy. In so doing, they reduce the lived experience of the city to palatable samples for the consumption of visitors. In the case of Allahabad, writers tend to underscore the city’s sacred geography, its picturesque ruins, and its potential as a place of technological and industrial efflorescence and colonial modernity. I uncover this mode of representation by discussing texts by Bishop Heber (1783–1826), Bholanauth Chunder (1822–1910), and H. G. Keene (1826–1915). I also refer to the

⁶ See the section titled “Beyond the *Dayār-i-Gaṅg-o-Jaman*” in the Introduction for a discussion on this important conceptual category.

Handbook of the UP Exhibition written on the occasion of the exhibition by an anonymous writer.

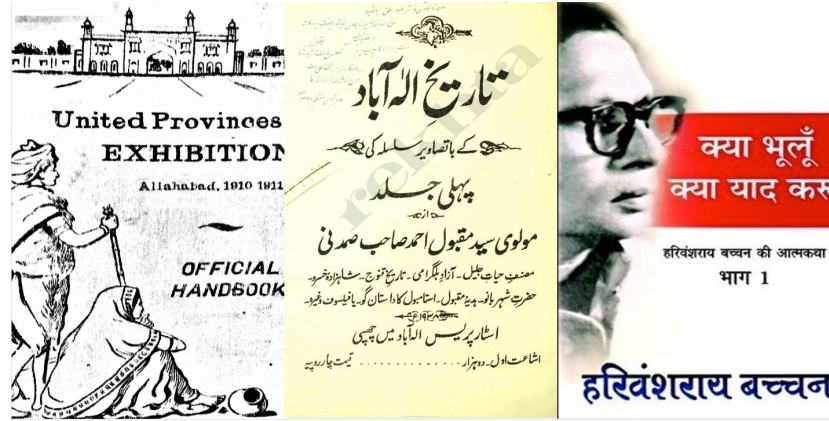


Figure 2: Covers of Some Texts on Allahabad
Left to Right: *Handbook of the UP Exhibition* (1910–11), *Tārīḫ-i-Ilāhābād* (1938), *Kyā Bhūlūm, Kyā Yād Karūm: Ātma-citraṇa* (1969)

The second part of the chapter focuses on two other genres, city histories and memoirs, which are less frequently discussed by urban historians. Each employs a very different framework of representation. Instead of distance, these genres display the opposite stance, that of an intimate and affective relationality between the authors and the place. City histories are distinct from other non-fiction genres like guidebooks in that the city is both the object and subject of description. In this form of representation, the built heritage of the city and monuments are not described merely to appeal to the senses of the visitor or onlooker, but rather as spaces that reveal an affective and personal relationship between authors and the city. For instance, for Samadani, Allahabad is an “abode of memory” (*yādbād*) and this close relationship between person and place renders the inanimate space of the city into a distinct living place. I examine two city histories, *Prayāg Pradīp* by Shaligram Srivastava (dates not available) in Hindi

and *Tārīkh-i-Ilāhābād* by Samadani (dates not available) and Urdu. Both were Allahabadis, public historians, and authors who wrote in the vernacular.⁷

Autobiographies present another instance of the subjective relationship between the author and the place, whereby the author is a historical witness to the place and the city potentially assumes a number of functions, from mere backdrop to a place of belonging, identity, and nostalgia. A further degree of affective relationality with place is expressed in the autobiographies of two prominent Allahabadis—Harivansh Rai Bachchan (1907–1975), eminent Hindi poet and a professor of English at the University of Allahabad, and Syed Ijaz Husain (1898/99–1975), a professor of Urdu at the university and a prominent literary critic associated with the Progressive Writers’ Movement.⁸ I also briefly discuss renowned poet Mahadevi Varma’s (1907–1987) life in Allahabad which gives an insight into the experience of women in the male-dominated world of letters.⁹ In their descriptions of city neighborhoods, (*mohallas*) and of the city’s cultural milieu, we get a sense of the life-worlds that make up urban life in the provincial city.

⁷ Given the dates of publications of their works, Srivastava and Samadani were likely born in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

⁸The Progressive Writers Movement (PWA) was an anti-imperialist, leftist literary and socio-political initiative led by a group of authors who wrote primarily in Urdu and English such as Sajjad Zaheer, Ahmad Ali, Rashid Jahan, and others. The PWA aimed to radically transform literature into a medium of direct engagement with social reality and advocacy for social justice. It was formally inaugurated in 1936 and soon spread to many parts of the country. Many important literary figures of period supported it, including Hindi-Urdu author, Munshi Premchand. Some of the initial organizational meetings in preparation of the foundation of the PWA were held in Allahabad where Zaheer spent time in the city with his father, Syed Wazir Hasan, a judge at the High Court. See Zaheer’s recollections of the foundational moments of this seminal literary movement, *Raushnā’ī* (New Delhi: Sima Publications, 1985). The text is also available in English translation, *The Light: A History of the Movement for Progressive Literature in the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2006).

⁹ Fanny Parkes was one of the earliest British women authors to write about north India. She lived in Allahabad for a number of years between 1827 and 1838. Her experience of colonial life in the pre-1857 period provides an invaluable insight but merits a separate discussion since her memoir predates the other autobiographies by over a hundred and fifty years. Fanny Parkes. *Wanderings of a Pilgrim in Search of the Picturesque*, ed. by Indira Ghose and Sara Mills (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, [1850], 2001).

In recent works, historians and literary scholars of South Asia have engaged with the cultural politics of place-making in a bid to recover the narrative of places whose semantic, conceptual, intellectual, and historical identities have been lost or occluded.¹⁰ For instance, Manan Ahmad Asif juxtaposes the history of loss of “Hindustan” against the invention and rise of contemporary India.¹¹ Asif’s work presents a compelling perspective on the politics of place-making of the modern nation-state which functions through an erasure of the history of early modern South Asia. Similarly, Mana Kia interrogates the notion of place, origin, and selfhood in the Persian cosmopolis in the period before the rise of Iranian nationalism. She demonstrates that Persian place-making and belonging were not rooted in a specific place or territory, Persia, but rather anchored in a placeless notion of *adab*, which she describes as a mode of ethical and aesthetic comportment, “the proper form of things and being in the world.”¹² By contrast, my work takes the concept of place in its literal sense, as a specific territorial category rooted in one city since place-making is not an idealized proposition in the works on Allahabad even while the texts have various ideological orientations.

Part I

What’s in a Name?

Place names give rise to a number of significant questions—who belongs to a place, whom does a place belong to, and who has the right to name it? In October 2018, when Allahabad was renamed Prayagraj, Shamsur Rahman Faruqi, Urdu literary critic and long-time resident of the

¹⁰ See the Introduction for a discussion on the wider scholarly lineage of the critical concept of place.

¹¹ Manan Ahmed Asif, *The Loss of Hindustan: The Invention of India* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2020).

¹² Mana Kia, *Persianate Selves: Memories of Place and Origin before Nationalism* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2020), 5.

city along with other Allahabadi intellectuals protested the move.¹³ This change was brought about by the current right-wing Hindu government of the state of Uttar Pradesh. Allahabad's intellectuals reiterated that "Prayag" had always been the name of a small area where the Ganga and the Yamuna rivers meet a mythical third river, the Saraswati, and that this was a centuries-old, revered and renowned pilgrimage spot. But the city that was settled near this holy site was established by emperor Akbar. In fact, he had endowed the name of Ilahabas on this new city in honor of the sanctity of the Prayag.¹⁴ The further addition of the suffix *rāj* (derived from the term *tirtha rāj*—supreme among pilgrimage spots) to the ancient name of the city, served to entrench the primacy of this place squarely within Hindu sacred geography.

Drawing attention to the fact that historical discourse remains relevant to the identity of a place, Faruqi states: "History is not a mere word in a dictionary that can be obliterated by fiat. It is a time, a people, and a sensibility. It stays with you, however much you may deny it."¹⁵ Asif opines on this change and includes it as evidence of the marginalization of the inclusive toponym, Hindustan, and its concept-history, that his work highlights. He writes: "More recently, the reclamation [by the Republic of India] has turned to the Mughals: the city founded by the emperor Jalaluddin Akbar in 1583, which is at the confluence of the Ganga and Yamuna Rivers, was changed to Prayagraj by the elected government of the province in 2018. Now, Allahabad is *a colonial word*, and the Mughals a *colonizing force*."¹⁶ Here, Asif draws an important distinction between the two waves of settlers who arrived in Hindustan or the Indian sub-

¹³ See Shamsur Rahman Faruqi, "Call Me Ilahabas," *Indian Express*, October 28, 2018, available at <https://indianexpress.com/article/express-sunday-eye/call-me-ilahabas-5420926/>. Also see "Beyond the *Dayār-i-Gang-o-Jaman*" in the Introduction to this dissertation.

¹⁴ See the discussion in the Introduction, "From the Mughals to the British: Why Allahabad?"

¹⁵ Faruqi, "Call Me Ilahabas."

¹⁶ Asif, *The Loss of Hindustan*, 5.

continent in the last two millennia. This is a significant point of discussion in the intellectual history of place names whereby a false equivalence is drawn between the Mughals and the British, wherein both are portrayed as “colonizing forces.” This deliberate misinterpretation of historical actors and events lies at the heart of the present-day reclamation project of changing names of places to which Allahabad too has fallen victim. Asif reminds us that there is indeed a difference between the colonial extractive project and the Asian empire-builders who settled down in Hindustan from the eighth century onwards, the latest among them being the Mughals.

Consequently, this discussion on present-day politics of naming is integral to the argument of this chapter—whose gaze is powerful, whose gaze is acceptable, and why? Heber and other European travelers repeat these toponyms within the subjective yet seemingly factual genre of the travelogue. However, these impressionistic opinions ended up taking the authoritative status of facts. As Asif’s monograph demonstrates, these “facts” were often circulated far and wide and often internalized by Indian opinion-builders as well.

Bishop Heber’s Account of Allahabad

The Anglican missionary Bishop Reginald Heber (1783–1826) was educated at Oxford and was an intrepid traveler with much experience of travel in Europe. He undertook two long journeys during his brief tenure of three years in India, before he succumbed to illness in 1826 at the age of forty-two. During 1824–1825, he travelled from the seat of his diocese in Calcutta to Bombay by river and land. In 1826, he explored southern Indian including Sri Lanka. During the first long journey through northern and western India, he passed through Allahabad in September 1824 and

left a record of his impressions and stay in the city.¹⁷ My reading of Bishop Heber's account of Allahabad examines the history of the name of "Allahabad," and how practices of nomenclature fix the concept-history of a place.¹⁸ Heber's writing followed a straight-forward style of documentation with short journal-like entries reporting his day-to-day travels. Beneath the factual surface, lay a complicated vision which was a mix of imperial ethos as well as a Christian missionary's perspective on Indian history and culture. Moreover, he left a lasting influence on later-day travel writers. For instance, more than thirty years later he was cited by Bholanauth Chunder, an Indian traveler writing in English, as well as by vernacular writers discussed here like Srivastava and Samadani. The importance of Heber's account can be attributed to two factors. First, Heber was one of the first travelers to document his passage through Allahabad after the city became a colonial possession in 1801. Second, later authors cite Heber's work and reiterate it in order to establish their own awareness of the tradition in which they write about the region.

Heber gives a detailed narrative of his trip from Bengal to Allahabad which he navigated via a boat that sailed upriver on the Ganga. His account provides an intimate sense of the modalities and the precarities of travel during the period as well as a glimpse into the economy and society of the region in the period before the Rebellion of 1857. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the Indo-Gangetic inland region was undergoing rapid economic

¹⁷ Reginald Heber, *Narrative of a Journey Through the Upper Provinces of India from Calcutta to Bombay, 1824–1825 (with Notes Upon Ceylon) and An Account of a Journey to Madras and the Southern Provinces, 1826, and Letters Written in India in Two Volumes* (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea, and Carey, 1828).

¹⁸ Ronit Ricci's discussion of the layers of history inherent in the various names of Sri Lanka is illustrative for my discussion. History and semantics meet in the various toponyms such as Ceylon, Sarandib, and Lanka. See *Banishment and Belonging: Exile and Diaspora in Sarandib, Lanka and Ceylon* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

growth propelled by agrarian development and the flourishing of commerce.¹⁹ As a result, Heber witnessed north Indian cities like Banaras and Patna at the height of their wealth and prosperity.

This is indeed a most rich and striking land. Here, in the space of little more than two hundred miles, along the same river, I have passed six towns, none of them less populous than Chester, — two (Patna and Mirzapoor), more so than Birmingham; and one (Benares) more peopled than any city in Europe, except London and Paris! And this besides villages innumerable. I observed to Mr. Corrie that I had expected to find agriculture in Hindostan in a flourishing state, but the great cities ruined, and in consequence of the ruin of the Mussulman nobles.²⁰

Allahabad, however, presented a stark contrast to the splendors of these flourishing places which lay on the Ganga *en route* to Allahabad.

Allahabad stands in, perhaps, the most favourable situation which India affords for a great city, in a dry and healthy soil, on a triangle, at the junction of the two mighty streams, Gunga and Jumna, with an easy communication with Bombay and Madras, and capable of being fortified so as to become impregnable. But though occasionally the residence of royalty, though generally inhabited by one of the Shah-zadehs, and still containing two or three fine ruins, it never appears to have been a great or magnificent city, and is now more desolate and ruinous than Dacca, having obtained, among the natives, the name “Fakeerabad,” “beggar-abode.” It may, however, revive to some greater prosperity, from the increase of the civil establishment attached to it.²¹

The city’s fate and reputation as a desolate place stretched on for a few more decades.²² But Heber’s prediction about a brighter future for Allahabad came true in 1858 when Allahabad became the capital of the provincial colonial administration. From the nineteenth century

¹⁹ See Christopher A. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen, and Bazaars: North Indian Society in the Age of British Expansion, 1770–1870* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012). In a confirmation of Bayly’s thesis of expansion and growth in the late eighteenth and nineteenth of the eastern regions of this area, Heber’s text mentions that “many ancient families had gone to decay” but “had been more than filled up by a new order rising from the middling classes, whose wealth had increased very greatly.” In contrast, the area around Delhi and Agra lay in ruins.

²⁰ Heber, *Narrative of a Journey*, vol. 1, 270.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 283.

²² Bayly also confirms that in the early decades of the nineteenth century, Allahabad was no more than a small market town. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen, and Bazaars*, 346.

onwards, in administrative records and in private accounts like Heber's, Allahabad's fortuitous location at the center of the Indo-Gangetic plains is invoked repeatedly.²³ In fact, through frequent citation of Allahabad's strategic geographical situation between the east and the west, and between south and the north, and its ease of access by river and road, Allahabad's location comes to constitute a recurring motif in the city's place-making. On the one hand, Heber's subject-position as a missionary in India made his account somewhat different than that those written by other European visitors who were scholars, soldiers, and administrators. For instance, we find a brief and sympathetic account of the lives of native Christians, their congregations, educational initiatives, and social lives. On the other hand, as an early nineteenth century European visitor, Heber still embodied the power dynamic and the asymmetrical gaze of the outsider which is most evident in his discussion of the name of the city. He writes, "I find all the people here, particularly the Mussulmans, pronounce Allahabad, 'Illahabaz.' Allah is certainly very often pronounced Ullah or Illah, but why 'Abad' the Persian word for abode, should be altered, I do not know."²⁴

Contemporary readers will approach the missionary's ignorance with a sense of irony: the name given by Akbar to the city he found by the confluence of rivers was indeed "Ilāhābās." "Ilāhābād" and its Anglicized spelling, "Allahabad," were names that were made commonplace by the East India Company and later the British administration.²⁵ Heber's blind spot reveals the colonial assumption that the Anglicized names of places were standard and authentic, and any other iteration was an aberration without considering the fact that indigenous place names harked

²³ The Indo-Gangetic plains were also known as the "Upper Provinces of India."

²⁴ Heber, *Narrative of a Journey*, 427.

²⁵ See chapter one for a discussion on the important history of the name.

back to the pre-colonial past of the region. The interventionist nature of colonialism and Allahabad's emergence as a colonial city were well underway in the 1820s, and travelers like Heber played a seminal role in determining the identity of places through the medium of the travel narrative. Heber's river journey concluded at Allahabad which was an important stop for travelers from the east who switched the boat and the river for the horse and carriage and took up the land route to go further north or west.²⁶

The “Hindoo” Gaze of Bholanauth Chunder

Bholanauth Chunder's *Travels of a Hindoo to Various Parts of Bengal and Upper India* (1869) presents an instance of both imitation and a deliberately built-in contrast with Heber's work.²⁷ Aside from what it tells us about place-making, Chunder's English texts is also an important demonstration of the afterlife of European travel-writing in India and specifically, the influence of this genre on Indian travel-writers. Chunder's journey follows broadly the same route as Heber's, in particular, imitating Heber's trip from Calcutta to Delhi that also featured a stop at Allahabad.²⁸ Focusing on Allahabad, I examine how the “Hindoo” and Anglophile Indian traveler's gaze come together to frame Allahabad. Chunder was an Indian and a Hindu, but he

²⁶ Heber's route and mode of travel in the 1820s—sailing on a barge on the Ganga from Bengal through present-day Bihar and Eastern Uttar Pradesh until Allahabad—also became the standard travel template for many later-day visitors. The arrival of the railways in the region in the 1859 offered visitors a faster option. Parts of this route were negotiated by *dāk* (a palanquin carried by a few “bearers”), while the boat caught up afterwards. At Allahabad, the barge was abandoned and the rest of the journey, often northwards to the Mughal capital of Delhi, or westwards to Bombay, was undertaken by horse and road. A helpful visual titled “Travelling Dak” added to the copies of Heber's text by Henry G. Bohn depicts what this mode of travel entailed. Heber, *Narrative of a Journey*, 359.

²⁷ Bholanauth Chunder, *The Travels of a Hindoo to Various Parts of Bengal and Upper India*, vol. 1 (London: N. Trubner & Co., 1869).

²⁸ The journey was undertaken between 1845 and 1858 and published in a series in a Calcutta periodical, *Saturday Evening Englishman* from 1866–1867. Heber, “Introduction,” xi. Chunder was in Allahabad three years after the events of 1857; in October 1860.

was also an Anglophile scholar who had studied at the Hindu College and was a member of the Royal Asiatic society. He was also a loyalist to the British Crown.²⁹ In this way, he occupied an interesting position in the eyes of both Indians and the British. His English patrons perceived his account to be the product of an insider's gaze which was produced by a trustworthy native informant and a translator of Indian places and experiences into English.³⁰ In the Introduction to the book, J. T. Wheeler, professor at the Madras Presidency College, writes:

The Travels of the Baboo in India are not the sketchy production of a European traveler, but the genuine bona fide work of a Hindoo wanderer, who has made his way from Calcutta to the Upper provinces, and looked upon every scene with Hindoo eyes, and indulged in trains of thought and association which only find expression in Native society, and are wholly foreign to European ideas.³¹

This unique account, perhaps the first travelogue in English by an Indian, has garnered attention in recent times from scholars of both literature and history. Saubhik Bandhopadhyay reads this account as more than an anecdotal representation and rather as a didactic manual of what "ought to be seen."³² Avishek Ray's article argues for an analysis of the "Hindu" gaze that operates throughout this text. Ray claims that in the 1860s, "cultural histories were being woven from a highly contingent process of political partisanship amid struggles over the meaning of

²⁹ For instance, his travelogue is dedicated to Sir John L. M. Lawrence who was the Viceroy and Governor-General of India at that time. In the dedication he writes: "That the ascendancy of British rule may long subsist in India to improve the condition of its population, and that your Excellency may long continue to exercise an influence over their welfare and happiness, is the earnest prayer of, Your Excellency's, Most obedient and most humble servant." He hailed from the Bengali mercantile caste and community which did not support the rebellion. Indeed, his perspective on the events of 1857, as depicted in the travelogue, are decidedly pro-British—a sentiment that was not unusual among the Anglicizing upwardly-mobile communities of India. Chunder, *Travels of a Hindoo*, vol. 1, "Introduction," xxi.

³⁰ Avishek Ray, "The Discursivity of the 'Hindu' Gaze: Reading Bholanauth Chunder's Travelogue," *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 43, no. 3 (April 2020): 379–391.

³¹ Chunder, *The Travels of a Hindoo*, vol. 1, xii.

³² Saubhik Bandhopadhyay, "A View from Bengal: Depiction of Indigenous People in a Nineteenth Century Travel Narrative," *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 72, part I (2011): 759–768. In particular, Bandhopadhyay analyzes how the Santhals—the indigenous people of the Chotanagpur region—and their culture and polity were perceived by Chunder, a resident of metropolitan Calcutta.

nationhood and citizenship, interacting with (anti-)imperialist ideologies laced with notions of territorialization.” He notes that the “Hindoo” gaze, of Chunder and others, fostered this communal ethos. While there is no doubt that Chunder’s Hindu voice and gaze are hardly innocent, it would be historically anachronistic to claim that at the time of this text’s publication in 1869, the concepts of nation, citizenship, and communities were already well-developed and trenchant. In my analysis of Chunder’s trip to Allahabad, I parse out how Chunder’s “Hindoo eyes” perceived north India during 1859–60, merely two years after the Rebellion of 1857 and before the emergence of nationalist Hindutva as a socio-political category.

At Allahabad, Chunder, like other Hindu pilgrims, first visited the *saṅgam*, the sacred point of confluence of rivers, “But the Ganges at Allahabad is contemplated as the eternal river, which rolls on, watering the fairest valley of the earth, and forms the imperial highway on which pass and repass ten thousand fleets through every day of the year.”³³ While his account highlights the sacredness of the spot, he also derides the “superstitions” attached to the ritual of bathing at this spot and getting a tonsure.

Religion is diffident to address itself purely to the understanding, which is cold and cautious to accept its statements. It therefore seeks the aid of poetry to accept its statement. There is scarcely a lovelier spot than the *prayag* of Allahabad. The broad expanse of waters, the verdant banks, and the picturesque scenery, tell upon the mind and fascinate the pilgrim. Here, therefore, has superstition fixed a place for purification, through which it is obligatory on a Hindoo to pass on his arrival at Allahabad. The purification falls a little short of an ordeal.³⁴

He continues in this vein, mocking the ritual and the “greedy” *pāṇḍās* (pilgrimage priests) of Allahabad:

But squatting in little booths erected upon the edge of the waters and mumbling their prayers like the gibberish inflicted in swearing a jury, do the Pandas of

³³ Chunder, *Travels of a Hindoo*, vol. 1, 302.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 303.

Allahabad contrive to sheep-shear their pilgrims without distinction of sex, age, or rank . . . The fellows looked, sans their eyebrows, like idiots past all hope, unrecognizable even by their own mothers. Certainly, the ceremony is ‘more honoured’ in the breach than in observance.³⁵

Throughout this section, Chunder’s critique is directed at Brahminical rituals and the chokehold of Brahmins on Hindu society. For instance, in his discussion of the prominent Buddhist past of north India, the same reformist sentiments are on display. In the light of these statements, Chunder seems more aligned with a reformist neo-Hinduism of the ilk that was promoted by students at the Hindu College at the peak of the Bengal Renaissance, rather than conservative Brahminical Hinduism.³⁶

It is worth noting that he was a Hindu of the mercantile caste, a community which was critical of orthodox Brahminism. At the same time, Chunder’s text also embodies a sense of civilizational pride which was probably reified by his exposure to orientalist scholarship, visible in statements such as these, “The Hindoos are acknowledged to have been the first in the race of civilization.” Similarly, he claims that “Ayodhya and Allahabad were the first cities found by the Aryan conquerors in the plains of India” lamenting that in a place of “such great antiquity and renown as this . . . there should be no Hindoo monuments to give notions of ancient Hindoo history.”³⁷

As a native traveler, Chunder was able to access Indian perspectives on key events that took place in the city which European travelers could not always have tapped into. As a result, the discussion of the events during the Rebellion of 1857 that unfolded in Allahabad, and the

³⁵ Ibid., 303.

³⁶ On the Hindu College’s role in fermenting the Bengal Renaissance, Sushobhan Sarkar, *Bengal Renaissance and Other Essays* (People’s Publishing House, 1981).

³⁷ Chunder, *Travels of a Hindoo*, 286; 306.

experience of the Bengali community in the city, take up a substantial amount of space in Chunder's writings on Allahabad. For instance, while discussing the significance of the Allahabad Fort, he recalls its role in the hands of various empires, and how it proved to be a safe haven for the British during the Mutiny, "The City of Refuge [that] floated like a tossing ship that expected every moment to founder in the storm . . ." ³⁸

Like Heber, he visited the monuments and ruins that dotted the landscape of Allahabad such as the bathing ghats of the city, the Jama Masjid, the ashram of Bharadwaj, a mythical sage, the Khusrau Bagh, a Mughal resting house (*sarāī*) adjoining the Bagh, and the Allahabad Fort built by Akbar at the spot of the *saṅgam*. At least within the section on Allahabad, he displays no antagonism towards Mughal rulers or monuments associated with Islam. Instead, he takes every opportunity to criticize ritualistic Hindu beliefs. And even though an Anglophile loyalist, he describes the occupation of the Masjid in these words,

The *Jumma Musjeed*, or the Mahomedan Cathedral, is a stately old building. The pork-eating Feringhee having desecrated it by his abode, it has ceased to be used as a place of worship by the sons of Islam. But not far from this mosque do the Hindoos worship a very image of the hog, under the name *Baraha*... 'It were better to have no notion of God at all, than such an opinion as is unworthy of him'—than blaspheming him as a fish, a pig, and a tortoise. ³⁹

Thus, we see that Chunder's rhetorical style is colorful, evocative, and sardonic. We also find that Chunder's "Hindu gaze" is a bundle of contradictory affects and biases rather than advocacy for a nationalist Hindu nation-state since this kind of imaginary manifested itself some years after Chunder's writings were published. Instead, Chunder's peculiar gaze included a critical sensibility towards orthodox Brahminical Hinduism and the "pork-eating Feringhee."

³⁸ Ibid., 312.

³⁹ Ibid., 328.

Both attitudes were likely derived from his association with the Hindu College and the reformist Brahmo Samaj, an inflated sense of Hindu civilizational pride that was consolidated through access to orientalist scholarship, and a romantic yearning for the past combined with a sense of the picturesque.

Guidebooks: European versus Indigenous Perspectives

Between 1869, when Chunder's travel narrative was published, and the 1890s, when the first guidebooks to the city were produced, Allahabad underwent a massive transformation. Colonial rule and colonial modernity changed the city as a place and texts on the city, including a somewhat dry, informational genre like the guidebook, registered this transition even as the ways of memorializing the past themselves underwent change.

The first guidebook on the city was probably H. G. Keene's fourteen page write-up on Allahabad which appeared as an addendum in 1890, in the second edition of *Keene's Handbook for Visitors: Allahabad, Cawnpore and Lucknow, to which is Added a Chapter on Benares* (first edition, 1875).⁴⁰ Keene writes in the Preface that while the guidebook was "meant as an aid to the traveller (sic) visiting Lucknow," but since there was a probability that "he" will pass through Allahabad and Cawnpore and "both those places contain matter of interest, though not enough for an independent handbook," he had decided to add a few pages describing these cities. Like the accounts of Heber and Chunder, Keene locates Allahabad within an imperial tourist circuit of Lucknow, Banaras, Kanpur, and Agra. In so doing, travel narratives and guidebooks also imagined a consolidated regional imaginary whose official borders were still in flux and included

⁴⁰ H. G. Keene, *Keene's Handbook for Visitors: Allahabad, Cawnpore, and Lucknow: To Which is Added a Chapter on Benares*, second edition, revised (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink and Co., [1875] 1896).

or excluded areas based on political contingencies rather than on principles of linguistic or cultural cohesion. However, unlike the travel narratives which followed the style of daily journals, Keene's guidebook was organized in the form of short entries to tourist spots that will be familiar to readers as the current style followed in guidebooks. Like the earlier travelers, Keene catalogued places of historic and scenic value like the *saṅgam*, Khusrau Bagh, the Fort which also contained Ashoka's Pillar and the Akshaya Bat (a sacred Banyan tree) and a passing mention of the Jama Masjid which had been "repeatedly and discredibly desecrated by the British residents, and was ultimately removed in 1857, for strategic reasons, without any compensation, either in land or money, being bestowed on the Moslem community."⁴¹

Keene also furnishes a short introduction to the history of the city and a catalogue of places associated with the colonial administration, perhaps with the view that European and Anglo-Indians visitors would appreciate these fruits of colonial intervention. In this vein, he mentions the railway station, the Jumna bridge, hotels (Lauries's or the Great Northern, the Great Eastern, and Kellner's Rooms), and the "Civil Station" build by C. B. Thornhill which he admits is the "White-town" of Allahabad as "Anglo-Indian custom denotes."⁴² The inclusion of snippets of information on the civil, military, and judicial administration on the city suggests that Keene was appealing particularly to European and Anglo-Indian visitors who might be colonial or missionary officials. Apart from the Government Press, the High Court, and administrative offices, Keene's guidebook also highlights the sites that displayed the city's long association with missionary activities such as the St. Paul's College (the Divinity School of the Church Missionary Society), various churches, cathedrals, and cemeteries, and a famous eye hospital. He

⁴¹ Ibid., 1.

⁴² Keene, *Handbook*, 4.

also highlights public works and buildings that reinforce the benefits that colonial rule brought to the city such as Alfred Park (popularly known as Company Bagh and today called Chandrasekhar Azad Park), the Thornhill-Mayne Memorial Public Library, the Muir College, and the Mayo Hall. Keene ends on a note which reads like an insider tip meant only for a European audience and which would perhaps alarm indigenous readers:

Such then is the capital of the North-West Provinces, a tract nearly coincident with the old province of Hindustan. Though neither central in situation, nor an important commercial mart, its strategic value is great, and the money that has been sunk on the public offices will always render it a matter of serious consideration *to depose it from its eminence as a provincial metropolis*.⁴³[emphasis added]

In 1921, the capital of the province indeed moved to Lucknow. It might be possible that despite the heavy investment in the city by colonial authorities since 1858, Allahabad had grown a tad too eminent in its anti-colonial stance.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, several more guidebooks on Allahabad were published. In 1910–11, Allahabad was chosen to host an annual industrial exhibition to showcase the North-Western Provinces at a time when the region was recovering from a lengthy episode of famine. Probably, the exhibition was intended to provide a boost to the economy and social life of the city. It is possible that guidebooks were published at this time to cater to visitors who were expected to attend this event. The publication of these texts suggests that the city was actively promoted at this time. These texts produce the city as a place worth visiting by tourists as well as by commercial and mercantile visitors.

⁴³ Ibid., 14

The Official Handbook of the United Provinces Exhibition, Allahabad, 1910–11

performed the twin functions of a guidebook to the city and a handbook to the exhibition.⁴⁴ The *Official Handbook* profiled a different aspect of the city, in particular, showcasing its status as the administrative capital of the second most populous region of British India and a modern city that was an important center for handicrafts, paper, technology, and print culture. The cover depicts two quintessential rural figures of India—a man standing upright holding a *lāṭhī* (stick) in his hand, clad in traditional clothes, a dhoti and *pagṛī* (turban) and a woman in a saree, her head covered, seated, with a *loṭā* (a vessel for water) next to her (see first panel of Figure 1). The exhibition ground portrayed in the background resembles a palace, with minarets, cupolas, and arches. The exhibition architecture is described in the handbook as representing the “true Indian style of architecture, combining the best features of Hindu and Muhammadan art.”⁴⁵

On the intended audience of such colonial exhibitions, including the one held in Allahabad in 1911, Gyan Prakash writes that the objective of these exhibitions was to instruct, educate, as well as impress rural and urban audiences with spellbinding spectacles. Even the organization of the exhibition space followed a distinct classificatory principle that emphasized the functionality of space. Displays of technology at the exhibition served the purpose of teaching the region what “modernity” looked like.⁴⁶ In my reading of the *Handbook* as an important text that frames the city of Allahabad, the exhibits and the organization of the space reflect the developmentalist ambitions that animated such colonial-era extravaganzas, inspired no

⁴⁴ No author, *Official Handbook of United Provinces Exhibition, Allahabad, 1910–11* (Allahabad: No publisher), 1910.

⁴⁵ *Official Handbook*, 9.

⁴⁶ On the staging of science as wonder and spectacle for Indian audiences, especially with reference to the Allahabad Exhibition, see Gyan Prakash, *Another Reason: Science and the Imagination of Modern India* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 23–36.

doubt by the template of world fairs such as the Columbian World Fair of Chicago in 1893. In fact, the biggest attraction of the United Provinces exhibition of 1911 was the first aviation display in the region—a novelty that was sure to attract large crowds:

To the European tourist who has attended big meetings in England and on the Continent, this may not prove so great an attraction, but for the thousands belonging to this country who will throng the aviation ground, the wonderful sight of man conquering the air on a machine completely under his control, will be a sight long to be remembered and to be talked over on their return to their village.⁴⁷

In the same year, Adityaram Bhattacharya, professor of Sanskrit at the University, wrote *Allahabad or Prayag: A Handbook*, in English, which was published in 1910 by Modern Review Office of Calcutta (the new publishers of *The Modern Review* journal). In several ways, these English-language works by Indians end up replicating the same information found in the texts by Europeans. In contrast with these English-language sources that sought to frame the city as a place of modernity—of speed, light, and flight—or of oriental grandeur, the Hindi guidebook, *Prayāg Darpaṇ* (Mirror of Prayag, 1917) by Shaligram “Prayagvasi” (resident of Prayag) Srivastava, framed the city primarily as a site of pilgrimage (*tīrtha sthal*). The author might have been aware of this tradition of writing guidebooks which were meant to guide pilgrims through the sacred sites of a holy city.⁴⁸ Consequently, its idiom was markedly different from that of the modern city guide and highlights the exalted status of “Prayag” within Hindu sacred geography.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 7.

⁴⁸ For instance, “Kāśīdarpaṇa,” a map drawn by Kailash Nath Sukula in 1876 is pictographic depiction of the sacred spots of Banaras based on the *Kāśīkhaṇḍa* and other texts. Here, the map stands in for a mirror, providing viewers a glimpse into the holy city. Available at <https://kjc-sv038.kjc.uni-heidelberg.de/evaluation/Gengnagel04/PeTAL/index.html#O43664>. See the fascinating web project, J. Genganel and Axel Michaels, “Introduction,” A Virtual Mirror of Kāśī, Kailasanatha Sukula’s Mirror of Kasi (Kāśīdarpaṇa), (South Asia Institute, Heidelberg, 1876) <http://benares.uni-hd.de/introduction.htm>

It is Prayag rather than Allahabad which is highlighted in this text since the audience is the Hindu pilgrim from Hindi-speaking areas of the country. But the text also retains its functionality. It offers pilgrims the most convenient options for completing their pilgrimage at a minimum expense and most comfort, including a discussion of railway fares. It reports rates of *ekkās* and *tongas* (horse-drawn carts) and the fare of railway tickets between small and big cities of British India and furnishes the addresses of *dharamshālās* and *āshrams* (charitable boarding houses) where the pilgrims might stay during their time in the city. The author also suggests other sites of interest that Hindu pilgrims could visit and where they could experience the city beyond its pilgrimage spots. In contrast with English language guidebooks written by Europeans primarily for European audiences, *Prayāg Darpaṇ* furnishes a “traditional” way of engaging with the city as a pilgrimage center, while also providing practical information to the modern pilgrim.

Going beyond the limited vision of guidebooks, Allahabad’s transformation into a significant tourist city is an index of two influences—colonial modernity as well as indigenous agency. The extension of railways to the city occurred in the 1859 and subsequently, Allahabad emerged as an important railway junction between the east-west and east-north routes within India. In fact, Chunder, unlike Heber, was able to use the railways for part of the journey to Allahabad. Allahabad’s transformation into an important provincial city which I discuss in the Introduction—its status as the administrative capital and bench of the High Court, alongside its rise as an educational and publishing hub, contributed to a change in fortune. Additionally, the transformation of the annual Magh Mela into a Kumbh Mela in the late nineteenth century, under

the aegis of the of colonial authorities and Prayagwal *pāṇḍās*, all played a major role in garnering greater tourist attention to the city.⁴⁹

The relationality between text and place charted by the travel narrative and the guidebook reveals a number of ways of seeing a city. As the discussion so far shows, guidebooks composed by Europeans for Europeans and those written by locals in a variety of languages varied in rhetoric, subject, and representation. Paying attention to questions of genre, gaze, and subject-position of the authors vis-à-vis the place, we access the cultural politics of framing the identity of a city. As compared to the genres that present the city as a place of passing interest for travelers who only need to negotiate it for a short time during their visit, the next part of the chapter turns to the ways of seeing that are accessible in the account of locals.

Part II

Vernacular City Histories in Hindi and Urdu

In contrast with travel narratives and guidebooks, city histories reflect a more affective form of relationality with the city and its people, mediated by a sense of intimacy and belonging.

Allahabad in Pictures (1911) occupies an intermediate space between a picture book and a documentation of city monuments in the vein of a city history and was perhaps the first work on the city produced by local citizens. A retired army officer, Baman Das Basu provided the photographs and Satya Chandra Mukherji wrote the text. Published in 1911, it was possibly produced to coincide with the 1911 exhibition which garnered much attention from visitors. I do

⁴⁹ See chapter two for a detailed analysis of the relationship between print culture and Allahabad. For a history of the Kumbh Mela in the city, see Kama McLean *Pilgrimage and Power: The Kumbh Mela in Allahabad, 1765–1954* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

not include a detailed discussion of the text here since it repeats several tropes already under discussion, plus it goes beyond the textual into the realm of the visual, which merits a separate conversation.

Shaligram Srivastava is a fitting writer to discuss when tracing the contrast between a literary medium like the city history and an informational genre like the guidebook, since he was the author of a guidebook in Hindi titled *Prayāg Darpaṇ* (Mirror of Allahabad, 1917) as well as the author of a prominent city history, *Prayāg Pradīp* (Lamp of Allahabad, 1937). Little to no detail of Shaligram Srivastava's life is available beyond the hint in the foreword in one of his texts that he was a government employee and resident of Allahabad with ties to the Hindustani Academy of Allahabad, which is also the current publisher of this book, and with the University of Allahabad, where his work found encouragement from professors. His name suggests that he is a Kayastha, a caste whose presence in Allahabad I discuss extensively in chapter three. In the absence of more details, we can surmise that Srivastava was a keen amateur scholar with a deep interest in the history of his own city.

Prayāg Pradīp presents itself as an amalgamation of a gazetteer and a work of history, but a strong indication of an affective attachment to place emerges in the prefatory paratext and introductory sections of this work, as well as in the narrative style. Possibly in anticipation of a critical response from contemporary scholarly establishment, he clarified his stance in the preface (*vaktavya*), Srivastava writes, "Such books are called "gazetteer" in English. I have benefitted from the gazetteer myself. But as the great poet Ghalib says in this couplet: I have *my own* work cut out/ What business do I have with the dealings of the other."⁵⁰ The pun inherent in

⁵⁰ Shaligram Srivastava, *Prayāg Pradīp*, second edition (Allahabad: Hindustani Academy, 2008 [1937]), 9.

the word “my own” (*apnā*) is more than a reference to his own writing. Rather, it is a playful indication of the author’s sense of belonging to the place which he contrasts with the stance of alienation of the compilers of gazetteers, the “other(s).” Such an assertion is born out further in the following statement where Srivastava mentions how his work is distinct from the gazetteer. He contends that *Prayāg Pradīp* was not just a product of painstaking research and information collected from archives and secondary sources but also was the outcrop of oral histories and personal interviews conducted over “ten to fifteen years” that were possible only due to his intimacy with and knowledge of the people of the city.⁵¹

As seen here, indigenous authors like Srivastava were familiar with the colonial genre of the gazetteer and its mode of enquiry into the history of places. They were also aware of the audience they were addressing and hence clarified the genre in which they wrote. But it is quite likely that they also drew inspiration from indigenous works of historiography on cities, in particular, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan’s influential text, *Āṣār-us-Ṣanādīd* which was first published in Urdu in 1847 and a heavily revised version came out in 1854.⁵² An indication of such an influence is available in the fact that *Prayāg Pradīp* follows a structure that is somewhat similar to *Āṣār-us-Ṣanādīd*. The latter provides a detailed description of the history of the monuments of Delhi, the royal city of Shahjahanabad, its people, and various dynasties. Thus, the monumentality of the city of Delhi and its culture finds a permanent record in Khan’s monumental and comprehensive work, rendering the text into an archive of the city’s past.

Literary critic and poet Maulana Altaf Husain Hali penned one of the most important biographies

⁵¹ Ibid., 9–10.

⁵² The Foreword by Ramprasad Tripathi to the first edition of *Prayāg Pradīp* (1937) suggests a similar inspiration, *ibid.* C. M. Naim translates the title of the work as “The Remnant Signs of Ancient Heroes” “Syed Ahmad and His Two Books Called ‘*Asar-al-Sanadid*,’ ” *Modern Asian Studies* 45, no. (3) 2010: 1–40.

of Khan. His comments on the 1847 edition of the *Āṣār-us-Ṣanādīd* are worth citing here: “Its first three chapters painted a beautiful picture of Delhi’s old glory and majesty. The last chapter described a city full of accomplished people of art, culture, and knowledge.”⁵³ Hali’s emphasis on “a city full of” majestic monuments and cultured people capture a particular sense of belonging to a specific place that must have impelled Khan to undertake this work. Written in a similar vein, Abdul Halim Sharar’s Urdu work, *Guzashtah Lakḥnau*, was published in a serialized form between 1913 and 1919 in his journal *Dilgudāz*. It reflects the same desire as *Āṣār-us-Ṣanādīd*—to leave a textual record of the everyday urban culture of a city and its living traditions before colonial modernity erased it.⁵⁴

Srivastava and Samadani’s texts not only share formal features with Khan and Sharar’s works but also display a similar relationality between author, text, and place. Both these works, like Sharar’s text *Guzashtah Lakḥnau*, were published in the twentieth when colonial modernity had already transformed the place. As such, these works were self-conscious attempts to archive the memory of places that were rapidly changing beyond recognition. As a result, the relationality between author, text, and place is registered in their desire to write about “one’s own place,” i.e., the city and its surrounding areas, a phrase that recurs in both Srivastav and Samadani’s texts. Their texts might be an inward turn to the city’s past and a record of its

⁵³ This book has recently been translated into English. See Syed Ahmad Khan, *Āṣār-Us-Ṣanādīd*, trans. by Rana Safvi (New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2018.) For Hali’s commentary, see Maulana Altaf Husain Hali, excerpt from *Ḥayāt-i-Jāvīd*, *ibid.*, 404.

⁵⁴ A long tradition of engagement with place, in particular, with cities, exists in poetry composed in Persian, Urdu, and in the mixed vernaculars of Braj, Awadhi, and Hindavi. These poetic genres are known as *shahr āshob* in Persian and Urdu and *nagar shobhā* in the Indic vernaculars. See Sunil Sharma, “Celebrating Imperial Cities,” in *Mughal Arcadia: Persian Literature in an Indian Court*, 89–124 (Harvard University Press, 2017). Sir Abdul Qadir and Sachchidananda Sinha, “Sharar Luchnavi,” in *Famous Urdu Poets and Writers*, 181–188 (Lahore: New Book Society, 1947).

monuments and people, written in order to hold on to a sense of self and place that was under pressure and erasure from colonial modernity, even as their own works are shaped by it. Textual reflections of these affects abound in the rhetoric and prose of both authors in which they freely embrace the personal and subjective affiliation with the place. In the choice of subject matters too, indigenous city histories exceed European conventions of historiography in including the history of notable urban citizens, important families and their genealogies, and many details of local life.

Srivastava's *Prayāg Pradīp* is divided into two sections—"Historical Prayag" [*Aitihāsik Prayāg*] and "Contemporary Prayag" [*Vartamān Prayāg*], mirroring the divisions of ancient, medieval, and modern history that were becoming normative within the practice of historiography in India. "Historical Prayag" is further subdivided into four chapters, "Prayag's Early History," "Buddhist to Greek period," "The History of Muslims," and "Prayag during British Rule." "Contemporary Prayag" to a large degree imitates the subdivisions found in gazetteers: "Natural Conditions," "Population," "Education and Literature," "Agriculture and Farmers," "Trade and Commerce," "The Prayag District," but exceeds the conventions of the gazetteer in including the histories of "Various Organizations," "Special Description of the City," and "The Family Histories of the *Ra'īs* of Prayag." Unlike guidebooks that provide a surface-level description of historical monuments of the city, this work of city history attempts to encompass the totality of a place, even while admitting that capturing it can only remain a frustrating but unfulfilled ambition. In chapters seven and nine of this work, the affective and scholarly instincts coincide most prominently. Even while the tone of reportage remains neutral and the third person narratorial forms are used, Srivastava displays an intimate knowledge of the

people and the place that is achieved only through personal association. The section on “The History of Some City Neighborhoods” briefly looks at the names of the city *mohallas* that hint at their heritage even while acknowledging that the 70actual70e70nn is sometimes based on hearsay, “*aisā batlāyā jātā hai*” (“so it is said”)—a type of information that is accessible mostly to those who have relationships of intimacy with a place. Srivastava catalogues the names of various city neighborhoods and appends a brief history—Atarsuiya from the names of the mythical sage Atri and his wife, Anasuya; Khuldabad, a *mohalla* probably established by emperor Jahangir; Daraganj after the popular Mughal prince Dara Shukoh; Katra which was settled by Raja Jaisingh of Jaipur during the time of Aurangzeb and along with Rajapur and Fatehpur. The practice of naming neighborhoods after notable personages continued into the colonial era. Srivastava mentions the colonial officials after whom the neighborhoods of Johnstonganj, Kydganj, Lukerganj, Allenganj, and Mumfordganj were named. It is interesting to note that rather than debating the authenticity of a place based on its name or its association with Puranic, Mughal, or British history, the author takes a descriptive approach when presenting the history of names and practices of nomenclature. As a result, these names reveal to the readers a sense of place layered with different co-existing rather than competing temporalities. In a similar vein, Srivastava’s detailed description of the history of ruins and monuments dotting the landscape of the city is starkly different from the presentation in guidebooks, including his own that was published two decades earlier in 1917. In the genre of the city history, monuments and *mohallas* come alive as part of the living landscape of the city, not as fetishized tokens of pasts. Consequently, city histories constructed and represented the place in distinct ways, rendering visible several unseen aspects.

The last chapter of *Prayāg Pradīp*—a history of the *ra`īs* (landed elite) in the district of Allahabad and their estates in the city—is yet another illustration of this difference. The genealogy of the *ra`īs* provides a wealth of sociological insight into the formation and growth of Allahabad as a place. An analysis of Srivastava’s narrative reveals the pattern of urbanization of the mofussil elite; with the rise of Allahabad as a capital city, the *ra`īs* migrated from the hinterlands into the city and invested their feudal wealth in mercantile and professional activities in the city. I discuss the social implications of this process in greater detail in chapter three. For the purposes of this chapter, in terms of representational value, the power of oral and anecdotal sources that were collated through personal connections is on display here. For instance, Srivastava provides a detailed account of the origins of Hindu, Muslim, and “English” landowners of the region. He reports about the circumstances and whereabouts of their descendants, many of whom lived in the city. This fascinating account of the “who’s who” of the city uncovers for the reader the nexus of land ownership, caste and class privileges, and politics of religion that make up Allahabad. In speaking in a variety of voices, *Prayāg Pradīp* draws on and combines two modes of representation—historiography and ethnography—such that it merges modern scientific conventions of citation, references, and taxonomic classification of information with subjective reflections on the past of a place.

Samadani’s *Tārīkh-i-Ilāhābād* (1938), an Urdu work of city history, is akin to *Prayāg Pradīp* in some ways. It is the first volume of what was envisaged as a multi-volume work. The first volume comprises around 299 pages plus three lists, or *fihrist*s—paratexts, one of which is a detailed index. Samadani’s description of his work as a *tārīkh* is suggestive and worth examining. The *tārīkh* was the traditional genre of historiography among the Persianate literati in

the pre-colonial period. To take one of the most prominent models, *Tārīkh-i-Firishta*, composed by early modern historian Firishta (1560–1620; based in the court of Ibrahim Adil Shah II of Bijapur), we see that the focus was on the history of dynasties, people, places, and events in Hindustan over several centuries, drawing into its timeline even the events of the Hindu epic, the Mahabharata.⁵⁵ Other historians writing in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, like Abu'l Fazl and Sujjan Rai Bhandari included sections on provinces and regions which listed some features of the cities in their macro-histories like *Ā'in -i Akbarī* and *Khulāṣat al-Tawārikh*, respectively. But the beginning of the practice of detailed engagement with the local can be traced to the eighteenth century. In the wake of the decline of the Mughal empire, *tārīkh*s were commissioned by powerful families who ruled in smaller regions and cities like the Nizam of Hyderabad, Nawabs of Faizabad, of Lucknow, and rulers of Banaras, Farrukhabad, Rampur, and Bhopal. Beyond the landscape of India, histories of some notable towns like Mecca, Medina, Cairo, Damascus, Baghdad, and Bukhara were also written in this period by Indian authors. These works mostly describe the eminent scholars and poets of these cities and do not engage with the history of ordinary residents, neighborhoods, or the place itself.

I argue that by the nineteenth and twentieth century the evidence suggests that the *tārīkh* genre had been adapted by Indian writers to engage with the local at an intimate scale. *Khulāṣah-i-Tārīkh-i-Jatgām* (1869), *Tārīkh-i-Jazirah-i-Andamān* (1871), *Tāwārīkh-i-Ajmir* (1876), and *Tāwārīkh-i-Kānpūr* (1877), are just a few examples of such nineteenth century texts.⁵⁶ In these works, historians scale back from writing the history of empire to engage with the particularity of

⁵⁵ Asif, *The Loss of Hindustan*.

⁵⁶ These texts were recorded under the category of “History and Geography” and under the subsections “General” and “Local. J. F. Blumhardt, *Catalogue of the Library of the India Office, Hindustani Books, Vol. II. Part II* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1900), 80–84.

a place and its people. The titles indicate how the genre of Urdu *tārīkh*s expanded, increasingly focusing on the local and drawing different areas of the sub-continent into the discursive arena of the Urdu public sphere, from Chittagong to Kanpur, and from Ajmer to the Andamans.⁵⁷

By the time of publication of *Tārīkh-i-Ilāhābād* in 1938, Samadani used the *tārīkh* genre to engage with three aspects of Allahabad: his personal connection with the place, the history of monuments of Allahabad, and his narrative of the lives of the Mughal princes and princesses who lived in the city. Samadani conceptualizes his text as a work of history, one which was arranged according to modern conventions of scholarship such as including extensive footnotes, secondary references, and primary research. However, when contextualized within the corpus of writings on the city, Samadani, like his contemporary Srivastava, innovates beyond the modern standards set for historiography by representing Allahabad as a place of lived history with which he shares an intimate relationship.⁵⁸ The narrative texture of the text is also noteworthy—a medley of high-register Urdu prose layered with Awadhi songs, Persian poetry, and Urdu couplets which reflected the multilingual imagination of the writer and perhaps his readership. At the very outset of the text, the dedication establishes this tone of intimacy, “To an Ilahabadi princess—a remembrance by her poor friend,” interlacing the history of the city with not just personal memories but also the affect of belonging to a place. The introductory section is titled “Melody of Loyalty” (*Navā-i-Wafā*) and the titles of the sub-sections leave no doubt as to who the addressee of this devotion was—the city. The titles of the sub-sections read: “Allahabad,

⁵⁷ *Sources on Awadh: From 1722 to 1856 A.D.* offers a comprehensive catalog of Hindi, Urdu, Persian, and English manuscript and printed sources on this region, often followed by a short description of the titles. See Hamid Afaq Qureshi, *Sources on Awadh: From 1722 to 1856 A.D. From 1722 A. D. to 1856 A. D.* (Lucknow: New Royal Book Co., 2004).

⁵⁸ Here we notice how traditional Persianate and Indic genres like the *tārīkh* was inflected by the practices of Western modes of writing history and how “indigenous” historiography was undergoing change. I am unable to develop this train of thought here due to paucity of space but will do so elsewhere.

Abode of Memory, Abode of People,” “The First Link in the Chain: Khusrau Bagh,” “Applaud and Respect for Prayag: Prayag’s Sanctity,” “Maraja-al-Bahrayn: The Meeting of Two Rivers Here,” “The Qualities of its Weather: Some Sayings.”⁵⁹ The introductory section is written in the affective voice of a memoirist who in presenting his personal recollections. In the process, he establishes for his readers his relationality with the place. Like many other migrants to the city who subsequently became “of Allahabad” (*Ilāhābādī*), Samadani arrived in the city in 1886 as a student and eventually settled down there in 1918. The city is repeatedly invoked as an important entity using various rhyming epithets which read like benedictions upon the city, such as “May you remain in my memory, Iahabad, may you live forever, Iahabad” (*yādbād Illāhabād, pā’indābad Illāhabād*) and “May you remain peopled, Iahabad, may you continue to be happy, Iahabad” (*Ābādbād Ilāhābād, shādbād Ilāhābād*). This clever addition of the Persian suffix *ābād* (abode) to the Persian-Urdu words *yād*, *pāindāh*, and *shād*, creates a pleasant rhyme with the “*ābād*” in the city’s name. The stated aim of composing this work also arose from the wellsprings of the personal; Samadani notes that in leaving behind a record of the conditions of the longstanding monuments of the city, he hoped to pay off the debt of kindness that the city had bestowed on him.⁶⁰ In chapter two, we will once again witness the same instinct of intimacy between place and self that was forged by another set of migrants engaged in the multilingual world of print.

⁵⁹ Table of Contents, *ibid.* The Arabic phrase “maraja” is less commonly used in the context of reference to a meeting of two rivers and more often used to indicate a meeting of two seas or more conceptually, two schools of thoughts, as in “Majma‘-al-Bahrayn,” which is the title of a famous Persian text composed by Mughal prince Dara Shukoh in 1655.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

Spread over five pages, the rest of the introduction is an emotionally charged tribute to the *saṅgam*—the confluence of rivers. The quotation with which I open this chapter is extracted from this part of Samadani’s work. The rhetorical depth of the description recalls an ekphrastic exercise but goes beyond a mere visual portrait to present the spot as a sensorium that evokes complete spiritual ecstasy. The experience is not associated with any religion, instead, it is reminiscent of an immersive Sufi experience. The short staccato sentences take the readers deep into a third space separate from the city, where “neither the call of the *azān* (Islamic call to join in prayer) nor the tune from the temple is heard,” a place full of “divine light” (*nūr*),” a serene place replete with the emotion of divine love and mercy. In this spiritual sensorium, the visitor experiences a variety of embodied emotions that are evoked by the aura of the *saṅgam*: “The offering of pain and passion, burning and melting...the hurt suffered by the heart and string of tears...the agony of the soul, its restlessness...the impatience of viewing... the desired of the beautiful witness ...the curtain is lifted on reality...These are not the products of anxieties and endeavors but are blessings.”⁶¹

Samadani bolwarks his affective rendition of place with the scriptural authority of the Qur’an. Citing a particular verse of the Islamic holy book that reads “*maraja al-baḥrayni yaltaqiyāni*” (“He [god] released a meeting of two seas”).⁶² Samadani conjectures that there might be a number of contenders that would fit the Quranic description of the sacred confluence of two rivers. The reference could be to the confluence of the Nile and the Oxus, or the Tigris and Euphrates that jointly flow into the Persian Gulf, or the Ganga and Yamuna that drain into the Bay of Bengal and in the process, make a delta that stretches from Arakan to Chittagong.

⁶¹ Ibid., 4–5.

⁶² This is a verse from Surah ar-Rahman (Qur’an, 55: 19).

According to Qur’anic commentators, the reference to the two seas implies a “sea of salty water” and “a river of fresh water.” Based on his reading of this verse, Samadani contends that the Ganga and Yamuna have the greatest claim of being the earthly manifestation of this description because as per the Qur’anic specifications, until the very end, the two streams remain distinct; one is white and the other is dark, one has sweet water, and the water of the other is salty. And like the Qur’anic reference, even at the height of their union, a barrier remains between the two which retains their distinct identity.

Fully aware that his hypothesis may not meet modern standards of scholarship, he writes: “I am aware that European philosophy does not accept such views,” and admits that even other contemporaries might find his speculations an overreach.⁶³ Whatever the veracity of this claim that weds together affect, personal connection, speculation, and Islamic scholarship, for our purposes, the rhetorical and discursive move is significant as a crucial mode of literary and affective place-making. Samadani’s assertion carries significance because the author finds a mode of personalizing and testifying to the uniqueness of a place that he feels a strong spiritual attachment with. To do so, he refers to a framework that aids him in the process of meaning-making—Qur’anic authority. In so doing, he forges a path to bring about a meeting of two religious traditions, both of which hold the spot of the *saṅgam* to be sacred. Rather than a canonical expression of religious belief, a careful reader of this unexplored text will find that Samadani, a Muslim Allahabadi historian writing in the early decades of the twentieth century, cleverly deploys scriptures to validate what is essentially an affective claim of attachment to a

⁶³ Ibid.

place. Samadani might also have been influenced by the syncretic beliefs of Sufism in his dexterous merging of traditions.

For the next three hundred pages, Samadani focuses on the history of monuments of Allahabad, their architectural styles, the royals who lived in the city, and most significantly, the memories associated with them which continue to circulate in the local public sphere. The text also carries hand-drawn sketches of floor plans (*saṭahī bunyādī khāka*) of the monuments he describes. These illustrations would remind the reader of drawings of monuments by Sayyid Ahmad Khan's that were published in *Āṣār-us-Ṣanādīd*. Samadani's discussion of Mughal-era monuments of Allahabad engages with the history of royal dynasties like *tārikhs* do, but he deploys an anecdotal style highlighting the minor but significant role played by Allahabadis in these grand narratives. The living history of the monuments and ruins that highlights the connection between Allahabadis and these spaces, remains the central focus. In sketching biographies of royal personages, the spotlight is on forgotten figures like prince Khusrau (the eldest son of Jahangir and the brother of Khurram, later crowned emperor and known as Shah Jahan), his mother Shah Begum (Rani Maanbai, daughter of the king of Amber), and a mysterious character, a Tambulan Begum, all of whom were buried in Khusrau Bagh of Allahabad.

Farida Zaman's article on the history of the Jama Masjid of Allahabad examines the East India Company's policies towards Islamic built heritage over a period of sixty years. Zaman suggests that the Company read monuments as "stone-texts" replete with religious values of the dynasties who built them. Therefore, the Company's aim in appropriating these monuments was not merely empirical, but also a symbolic one, which was to exert control over the past and

legitimize their own rule.⁶⁴ We see that in contrast with colonial attitudes and policies towards monuments and thus the past, local authors display an intimate relationship with both natural and built heritage of their city. Even when they seemingly accept the colonial-era division of the city's history into epochs of reign of different "religious communities" (Hindu, Muslim, British but not Christian) or a temporal schema (ancient, medieval, modern), the lens of analysis in their textual discussion of heritage is intimacy and not power and domination. As a result, Srivastava and Samadani's narratives include "Buddhist and Hindu-era" ruins, Mughal tombs and mosques, and urban legends, within a seamless narrative of the life of the city and the personal relationship that residents share with it. In this process of personalization, the stone-texts were not markers of a violent past of conquest and control. Rather, in the writings of these authors, who I argue we should regard as early city historians, monuments function like memorial stones, gesturing towards a living and organic relationship between a people and a place. In these city histories, unlike travelogues and even guidebooks, the relationship of monumentality and a place is not negotiated through the gaze of a seeker of novel sights. Instead, monuments of a city are viewed as affective landmarks that endow a place its distinct identity. In turn, the city-dwellers draw on this particularized landscape to consolidate their own identity, in this case, as Allahabadis.

Writing the Self, Writing the City: Autobiographies and Memory-sketches

The discussion on the genres of autobiography and memoir continues the discussion on affective engagements between text and place which I trace in the last section. *Merī Dunyā*, *Khud Navisht Savānih-i-Hayāt* (My World: Autobiography and Account of Life, 1965) by prominent Urdu

⁶⁴ See Faridah Zaman, "Colonizing the Sacred: Allahabad and the Company State, 1797–1857," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 74, no. 2 (May 2015): 347–67.

literary scholar Syed Ijaz Husain (1898–1975) and *Kyā Bhūlūn, Kyā Yād Karūn: Ātmachitraṇa* (What Should I Remember, What May I Forget: A Self-Portrait, 1969), by renowned Hindi poet Harivansh Rai Bachchan (1907–1975) are two autobiographical works where Allahabad features as setting as well as an affective site. Bachchan went on to add three more volumes to his autobiography. In addition to the Hindi originals, I rely on Rupert Snell’s English translation of selections from all four volumes compiled under the title, *In the Afternoon of Time*.⁶⁵ Writing in this highly personal literary genre, both Husain and Bachchan strongly emphasize the symbiotic relationship between the self and the city. I show how these texts are of crucial historical significance and are unexamined textual sources that reflect the relationality between self, text, and place. Both these first-person accounts are a postcolonial reconstruction of early twentieth-century Allahabad wherein the city is explored at length. I show that the process of self-writing in these texts cannot be separated from city-writing.

In these works, the intrinsic life experiences of the authors are closely tied up with their physical and sensory experiences of physical space of Allahabad. In terms of the shifts of genres and gaze that I have traced throughout this chapter, self-writing marks the gaze coming a full circle wherein native inhabitants reflect on what gives them a sense of belonging to the city, marking them as Allahabadi. This limited discussion cannot exhaust the rich scope of these works and only covers the life events of the authors until 1940. Here, I analyze how the authors engage with Allahabad in two crucial ways. First, I draw attention to their narration of the intimate experience of everyday life in the life-worlds of city neighborhoods (*mohallas*); second,

⁶⁵ Bachchan, Harivansh Rai, *Kyā Bhūlūn, Kyā Yād Karūn: Ātma-citraṇa* (Delhi: Rajpal, 1969) is the first volume of Bachchan’s four-volume autobiography. This series won the prestigious Saraswati Samman prize in 1991. It has been translated into English as by Rupert Snell as *In the Afternoon of Time: An Autobiography* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1998).

I show how the cultural milieu of the city facilitated their literary journeys. It is noteworthy that both the autobiographies I discuss here were published in the 1960s, approximately twenty years after the twin events of 1947—the independence of the country from colonial rule and its partition into two independent nations, India, and Pakistan. These events impacted an entire generation of writers whose lives were forever marked by the division of the country along communal lines. Consequently, in my reading of the reflections of these authors on pre-partition Allahabad, I keep this context in mind

I conclude this section with a very brief discussion of Mahadevi Varma (1907–1987), one of the most important Hindi poets of the Chhayavadi school (literally, “Of the Shadow,” Neo-Romanticism) who lived in Allahabad as a single woman from the time she was a teenager and until her demise in 1987. She was also a prolific essayist and a path-breaking educator who dedicated her life to women’s education and social service. Varma published several collections of memory sketches (*rekhā chitra*) and reminiscences (*saṁsmaraṇa*) throughout her writing career. In my reading of her self-reflective works, I find that she made the authorial choice to highlight the portraits of people whom she met in her everyday life and who left a deep impression on her psyche. In the process, she occluded herself and did not provide a chronological autobiographical narrative, instead prioritizing descriptive impressions and biographies of ordinary people. Instances of direct engagement with place, of the kind that I trace in the two other autobiographies, are few and far between. Even so, I examine her writings and read between the lines to get a sense of her deep affective connection to the people around her and the environment of the city. She was a woman who made it in a city of men and held a towering stature in the literary establishment of Allahabad. In contextualizing her life and her

writings, I draw upon Karine Schomer's comprehensive biography and discussion of her oeuvre. In chapter four, I discuss Varma's life again to examine her life as a student in Allahabad in the 1920s.⁶⁶

Husain, Bachchan, and Varma were contemporaries, and it is quite likely that they knew each other. Husain and Bachchan were both born in Allahabad, and Varma was born in Farukhabad. All three were educated in city schools and at the University of Allahabad. Husain and Bachchan were employed as professors in the Urdu and English department, respectively, while Varma was the principal of the Prayag Mahila Vidyapith. Bachchan left Allahabad for Delhi in 1955 when he took up a position as an official at the Ministry of External Affairs.⁶⁷ Husain came from an *Ashraf* family from the Rajapur neighborhood. *Ashraf* are "the respectable people who could claim descent (often fictitious) from immigrants from the Islamic heartland."⁶⁸ Within the class and caste hierarchy among Muslims, they belong to the upper caste and constitute the Muslim elites of South Asia. From the second half of the nineteenth century, they constituted an important layer among the emerging middle-classes in the region and considered Urdu to be a crucial part of their cultural heritage. A large part of the leadership of the Muslim League as well as the vanguard of the Pakistan movement were drawn from among the *Ashraf* of

⁶⁶ Karine Schomer, *Mahadevi Varma and the Chhayavad Age of Modern Hindi Poetry* (University of California Press, 1983).

⁶⁷ Reflecting on the painful event of leaving Allahabad, he writes evocatively about the pathos of separation from the city where several generations of his family had led their life and where he had spent most of his life until then, apart from a couple of years at Banaras and two years at Cambridge. He left Allahabad feeling dejected and hounded by the jealousy and neglect that he was subjected to by his colleagues at the University upon his return from Cambridge with a doctorate degree. He was the second Indian scholar to earn this honor. Bachchan and Snell, *In the Afternoon of Time*, 421.

⁶⁸ Margrit Pernau, *Ashraf into Middle Classes: Muslims in Nineteenth-Century Delhi* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2013), 57.

north India.⁶⁹ Thus, Husain's autobiography is an important insight into this community and presents the perspective of a Muslim who did not align himself with the Muslim League's politics and chose to live in Allahabad and in independent India after 1947. Husain's lifelong engagement with Urdu marks a continuation of the *Ashraf* tradition of affinity with Urdu but also represents the modernization of this tradition. Like many from his background, he transformed his traditional affinity with Urdu language and literature into professional scholarship within the modern institution of the university. He is best remembered today as an important literary critic who compiled one of the earliest and most inclusive histories of the Urdu language.⁷⁰

Bachchan came from a lower middle-class Kayastha family who lived in Chak Mohalla and Katghar, neighborhoods in the old part of the city that were separated by railway tracks from the newer colonial settlement. Bachchan opens his autobiography with the narrative of his ancestors' migration few generations earlier from an adjoining mofussil, Pratapgarh.⁷¹

Bachchan's father was employed as a clerk at the Pioneer Press. As a child, he was educated at local municipal schools and later the Kayastha Pathshala school and college run by the Kayastha community. I discuss the Kayasthas and their institution in chapter three. Scanned through a sociological lens, Husain's background reflects the history of modernization of the traditional Muslim literati of the Allahabad region, while Bachchan's family history is an important illustration of education and employment as a means of modernization for rural and small-town upper-caste Hindu residents of this provincial city. At the core of both these narratives lies the

⁶⁹ Francis Robinson, *Separatism among Indian Muslims: The Politics of the United Provinces' Muslims, 1860–1923*, Cambridge South Asian Studies (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974). On the *Ashrafs* of Delhi, see Margrit Pernau, *Ashraf into Middle Classes: Muslims in Nineteenth-Century Delhi* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2013).

⁷⁰ Syed Ijaz Husain, *Mukhtaṣar Tārīkh-i Adab-i Urdū, Ba'd Mazīd Tarmīm-o-Izāfah* (Delhi: Azad Kitab Ghar, 1962).

⁷¹ Bachchan, "A Family from Pratapgarh," in *In the Afternoon of Time*, ed. and trans. by Rupert Snell, 1998, 3–23.

transformative power of urban space as a place of possibility which offered opportunities of upward mobility, especially to communities like the *Ashraf* and Kayasthas who had traditional access to literacy and to employment in administration. Varma too hailed from a Kayastha family of the region.

In Husain and Bachchan's observations on the life-worlds of *mohallas*, we get a glimpse into a rapidly urbanizing city which had not quite shed its provincial vestiges. In sharp contrast with the second half of their lives in the leafy avenues of the bungalows of Civil Lines, *mohallas* of provincial cities emerge as spaces which were an amalgamation of the rural and the urban. In his memoir, Husain recalls at length his childhood spent in the *mohalla* of Rajapur—a neighborhood which he described as a “*saṅgam*” of “*dihāt*” (rural environs) and “*shahr*,” (city), referring to their mixed rural-urban characteristics but also a reference to the meeting of two rivers in the city.⁷² Here, landowning Muslim families like his own lived alongside poor Hindu families in densely-inhabited, closely-built tenements. In the evenings, neighbors would assemble in informal gatherings (*nashist*), trade news of ongoing court cases, listen to traditional tales like *Ṭilism-i-Hoshrubā* (Tales of Amir Hamza) and share general information with each other. Husain emphasizes that the speech of everyday life was not Urdu which was spoken by men of the family only when receiving male visitors from families of equal standing. Rather, a mix of local dialects or Hindustani was the common tongue of the region. The knowledge of English was rare and considered praiseworthy. After Husain became a professor in the department of Urdu at the university, he moved from Rajapur to Civil Lines. This spatial shift documents for the readers the process of emergence of the Indian urban elite from within the

⁷² Husain, *Merī Duniyā*, 11–12.

Ashraf class. Even in its physical layout, Civil Lines embodied a new form of living and spatial organization. European-style bungalows nestled among verdant, leafy surroundings, and each family was a separate unit unto itself. It is apposite that the poet and literary scholar Arvind Krishna Mehrotra chose the name, *The Last Bungalow*, for the collection of writings on Allahabad that he edited.⁷³

In contrast to the relative comfort that Husain's family was able to afford, Bachchan's lifeworld during his childhood and youth was suffused with the everyday hardships of a lower-middle class family. Like Rajapur, the *mohallas* of Chak and Katghar were also not segregated by religion or caste. Unlike Rajapur, an erstwhile feudal estate which edged Civil Lines, these neighborhoods were situated in the old part of the city on the eastern side of the train tracks that continue to divide Allahabad into the old and new city until today. In Snell's translation, a chapter titled "Chak Mohalla" captures the in-between-ness that characterized not just spatiality but rather indicated the entire lifestyle of the *mohallas* that encompassed physical environment, linguistic texture, and socio-cultural life of these spaces. Bachchan writes that his *mohalla* "though full of variety, was not a big place; it was neither fully town nor fully village, but like a part of a village in the process of turning into a town, or rather a part of a town thrust forcibly into the midst of village fields and barns."⁷⁴ Without the reproduction of this textured and intimate sense of place in genres of self-writing, these particular historical life-worlds would be lost forever.

⁷³ Arvind Krishna Mehrotra, *The Last Bungalow: Writings on Allahabad* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2007).

⁷⁴ Bachchan, *In the Afternoon of Time*, 82.

For the residents of these *mohallas*, daily life revolved around local landmarks like an ancient temple (*prāchīn devī kā mandir*) and an old bungalow (*purānā baṅgla*).⁷⁵ Bachchan's account evinces how *mohallas* were the organizing structure of provincial urban life. These urban neighborhoods were also bridges of continuity between life in *mofussils* and *qaṣbas* and life in the city. Bachchan writes that in the 1920s, the Allahabad Improvement Trust requisitioned land to construct a new avenue called the Zero Road that was aimed to ease traffic. Bachchan's family had to move from one *mohalla* to another when their home was demolished as part of this urban renewal plan. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, Bachchan himself shuffled from one low-paying job to another as a sales representative, a clerk, and a teacher, all the time supplementing his meagre income by offering private lessons to students, while also continuing to write and publish. Frequent personal bereavements, debt, and poverty marked these years. Like Husain, it was only when Bachchan found stable employment as a professor at the university in 1941, that he too moved to the Civil Lines and to a different chapter of his life. In Bachchan's own words,

The composition of Allahabad's population is quite unusual—or, rather was, for I am talking of the Allahabad of my youth. The main part of the city, the old city of mohallas, lanes, and alleyways, was the southern part . . . Traditional Allahabad people were strongly attached to the land they had inherited from fathers and grandfathers, and the few newly rich families who sold hereditary land in one of the mohallas to move to Civil Lines or George Town could be counted on the fingers of two hands. The first three decades of my life were spent in the old Allahabad of lanes and byways. For various personal reasons I had sought to move away from it, and in a number of stages had come to find myself in Civil Lines like a newly transplanted tree.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ It is challenging to recreate the texture of these spatial referents in translations and the connotations they convey in terms of cultural specificity of place.

⁷⁶ Bachchan, *In the Afternoon of Time*, 333.

Even while confessing to the deep affinity that he felt for the *mohalla* and its people, Bachchan also indicates that these places were bound by traditional ritual life and caste divisions, and his own marriage to Teji Kaur in 1942, a Sikh from Lahore, severed his ties from his caste, family, and the community in his neighborhood. Civil Lines came as a relief, bringing “a chance to enjoy privacy and freedom from interference.”⁷⁷ Thus, we see how the recreation of an experiential spatial geography of the city emerges as a crucial tactic of self-writing and place-making in both these works.

Apart from the detailed depiction of *mohallas*, the city as a place of cherished cultural sites is rendered visible in several ways. Both authors mention several city institutions, landmarks, and organizations which create a mental map of socio-cultural life in the city for the readers. To catalogue just a few, Bachchan mentions the Pioneer Press, Arya Samaj, Indian Press, Unchamandi Municipal School, Kayastha Pathshala, Arya Kanya Pathshala, YMCA, Freemason Lodge, Theosophical Society, Gymkhana Club, Bharati Bhavan Library as well as prominent Hindi literary magazines such as *Satyārtha Prakāsh*, *Saraswatī*, *Hans*, *Mādhurī*, *Pratāp*, *Viśwamitra*, and *Abhodaya*. He also recalls with fondness his participation in the *ta‘ziyās* and *marṣiyās* during the month of Moharram along with other boys from Kayastha families like his own. His memory of the local instantiations and receptions of national and global events such as the First World War, the Home Rule, the Non-Cooperation Movement, the Jalianwala Bagh massacre in Punjab, the Civil Disobedience Movement, merits a separate discussion. Husain’s world parallels Bachchan’s to some degree in terms of their mutual educational experiences, but Husain’s points of cultural references were slightly different. They comprised poetry

⁷⁷ Ibid.

organizations (*anjuman*), poetry gatherings (*mushāi'ras*), and Moharram and Nouruz ceremonies hosted by Shia landlords of the city at their estates. In a reflection of multilingualism as a key defining characteristic of Allahabad, it is noteworthy that the life-worlds of both authors were constituted by Hindi, Urdu, Persian, and English and their memoirs reflect an ethos of religious and cultural pluralism.

On the matter of language, we see some divergence between the two authors but a confluence in their advocacy of multilingualism and multiculturalism. Husain was a scholar of Urdu and an advocate of Hindustani, an intermediate spoken register between Hindi and Urdu in the region, which was projected as the unifying language for all communities. From the late 1930s onwards, Gandhi lent support to Hindi-Hindustani written in both Nagari and Perso-Arabic script as the national language of an independent India. The Hindi lobby, however, accused Hindustani of being Urdu in a different guise.⁷⁸ Husain writes with pride about the efforts of prominent Allahabadis like Professor Tara Chand who promoted the cause of Hindustani. Chand went on to establish the Hindustani Academy in Allahabad in 1927, a cultural institution which promoted Hindustani as well as syncretic cultural ethos which sought to bridge the divide between Hindi and Urdu. Husain was also closely associated with the Progressive Writers Association's (PWA) activities in Allahabad. The PWA too advocated a non-divisive linguistic and literary politics and prioritized literary radicalism and left-wing critique over sectarianism in the field of literature.

⁷⁸ For a discussion of the Hindustani movement and the role of the Hindustani Academy of Allahabad, see David J. Lunn, "Looking for Common Ground: Aspects of Cultural Production in Hindi/Urdu, 1900–1947" (PhD Diss., SOAS, University of London, 2012).

Bachchan, having learned the rudiments of Urdu and Persian at home from his mother, and later from a Maulvi, like other boys of the North India Kayastha community, mentions that in high school, he made a deliberate choice to study Hindi over Urdu, in the face of some opposition from his family who prioritized knowledge of Urdu. Bachchan stuck to his stance; his choice inspired by hearing a pro-Hindi speech. Despite his choice of Hindi, there seems to be no explicit rejection of Urdu. He frequently mentions friends who were Urdu poets and throughout this narrative, generously cites Persian and Urdu couples alongside Awadhi, Braj, and Hindi verses. The greatest testament to a multilingual and plural ethos is available in the collection of poetry that established his popularity and critical status, *Madhuśālā* (written between 1932 and 1934, published 1935), containing 135 verses. In the same year, he also published his Hindi adaptation of Omar Khayyam’s Persian quatrains (*rubā’iyāt*) under the title, *Ḳhayyām kī Madhuśālā* (1935).⁷⁹ These works attest to Bachchan’s cultural familiarity with the Indo-Persian poetic tradition and idiom. In fact, Bachchan’s *Madhuśālā* adaptation and recreation of the *rubā’iyāt* genre and form into Hindi remains an unparalleled act of marvelous transculturation. This work is attestation to the fact that the Sanskritized idiom of Hindi, favored by the Hindi-Hindu lobby of Madan Mohan Malviya and Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi, had not overtaken the entire literary milieu of the city. In contrast to this form of Hindi, Bachchan opted for an amalgamated vocabulary that freely drew upon the entire range of languages and dialects in usage in North India at the time.

⁷⁹ G. P. Johari, “Introduction to First English Edition, 1950,” in Harivansh Rai Bachchan, *Madhushala: The House of Wine*, translated by Marjorie Boulton and Ram Swaroop Vyas, ix–xvi (New Delhi; New York: Penguin Books, 1989).

Mahadevi Varma was also a poet of the Chhayavad school like Bachchan, but unlike him she wrote in a register of Hindi which was more formal and more influenced by Sanskrit, the language in which she obtained her master's degree. Even so, as the following discussion shows, she held no animosity towards other religious communities or languages. In two sections of her work on Varma and Chhayavad—"City of Literary People: Allahabad" and "Mr. Varma's Daughter," Karine Schomer provides a striking portrait of a young Mahadevi Varma as an out-station student in Allahabad and the milieu she found herself in.⁸⁰ Following her birth in Farukhabad, Varma had grown up and been educated in a small princely state of the Central Provinces where her father, a well-educated and liberal minded man from the Saxena Kayastha caste, was employed. But her education was interrupted by an arranged marriage at a very age. As per the custom of her times and her community, she was not expected to cohabit with her husband until attaining puberty. But when the time to commence conjugal life arrived, Varma refused to live with her husband. In 1918, when Mahadevi was sixteen, her father enrolled her in grade five of Crosthwaite College as she had lost some time due to the turbulence caused by her early marriage. Mahadevi had some aversion to missionary schools owing to a traumatizing childhood experience at a Catholic school in Indore. Crosthwaite was one of the only two privately-run institutions in Allahabad that was not under a Christian mission's supervision.⁸¹ In Schomer's description, Crosthwaite appears to have been an exceptional institution in the sphere of education for Indian female students. It was founded in 1895 by progressive Hindus and

⁸⁰ Schomer, *Mahadevi Varma*, "Mr. Varma's Daughter," 150–195.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 168–169. At Allahabad, there were a number of schools for girls. But only two of these were not run either by missionaries or by the government and were a result of indigenous initiatives. These were the Arya Kanya Pathshala and Crosthwaite Girls College. The Pathshala was established by Sangamlal Agrawal, a local business magnate from the Agarwal mercantile caste. In the 1930s, it was led by the charismatic principal and litterateur, Mahadevi Varma. The Crosthwaite College was established by Indian and European initiative.

Muslims of the region and run as a non-denominational institution where the medium of instruction was Hindi though lessons in English were offered, and the atmosphere was not anglophile but nationalist. Schomer writes,

A succession of very able principals, all from outside the United Provinces and all to some extent involved in the nationalist movement, worked to instill in the mixed group of Brahmin, Kayasthas, Rajput, Bengali, Muslim, and Christian girls who came through the school an abiding sense of identity with the ideals of the movement.⁸²

By all accounts, Varma was a brilliant student. She passed the eighth-grade exam in 1922 and matriculated in 1925 with high marks. She went on to study for a BA along with only eight other students from her school.⁸³ Afterwards, she studied for an MA degree at the university. I return to Varma's life as a student in Allahabad in chapter four.

Varma published a number of works in the genre of memoir, memory sketches, and reminiscences. Some of these are: *Atīt ke Chalchitra* (1941), *Smṛti kī Rekhāyem* (1943), *Smṛti Chitra* (1973, anthology which includes sketches from *Merā Parivār*, 1972 and other works), and *Mere Priya Saṁsmarana* (1981, anthology). In her reflection on her own practice of writing in these genres, she writes, "My reminiscences are memories of memorable [characters], whether humans or plants and animal, whose absence I experience deeply."⁸⁴ In the process, she deliberately occluded herself and her own engagement with place and events, choosing to highlight the lives of those who touched her deeply. Allahabad is visible only in glimpses in the background of the rich cast of characters who form the subject of her ruminations: "Bhaktin," her domestic help and companion who lived with her for fifty years; "Ghisa," a small boy from a

⁸² Ibid., 170.

⁸³ Ibid., 172

⁸⁴ Varma, *Smṛti Chitra*, "Preface: Chintan ke Kshan," 8.

village in Jhusi that lay across the river from Allahabad; “Chīnī Pherī Wālā,” the unnamed Chinese hawker who sold silk scarfs and clothes; and a peacock she named “Nilkanṭha,” among a score of some sketches. As a preface to one such sketch, she writes about a distinct neighborhood of the city, Nakkhaskona, an area prone to violence but also a place where she found peace. My translation of Varma’s description of the neighborhood will indicate the range of her descriptive prose and how she evokes a sense of place through it:

In a peaceful and culturally rich holy town (*āshram-nagar*) like Prayag, Nakkhaskona presents a peculiar situation. All the incidents of riots, disturbances, and stabbings that take place in city find their beginning in Nakkhaskona. This place has other qualities too. Here, shops sell everything from large tools for the threshing of harvest to smaller sharp-edged tools like axes, hoes, and knives. As a result, one doesn’t have to go too far to sharpen one’s knives.

The government hospital for the treatment of eyes is also located here. If one loses the discernment of vision to judge between friends and foes, one can easily find a cure here so that there is no room left for such error. Apart from this, there is another hospital in the same corner which holds a historic status. This one is particularly useful for the injured and dying. If one cannot find a room in the wards of the hospital, if one remains deprived of the sight (*darshan*) of doctors and nurses, then one might rest in the verandahs and porticos. If the paucity of space persists even there, then might take some satisfaction in dying within the premises of the hospital . . .

This is also the center of trade in fish, as well as flowers, as if a ceremony of harmony between odor and fragrance were being held. But the cause of my attraction to Nakkhaskona is not due to these reasons. In fact, this place is also the prison for my rabbits, pigeons, peacocks, partridges, and other living creatures. In front of the hospital, there is a row of small houses with balconies where these creatures and their jailors live their lives.⁸⁵

In Varma’s writings, the ironic and sensitive idioms mingle together to recreate an ordinary corner of the city. While it is not possible to read a full-fledged engagement with place in these stray fragments, this brief discussion indicates the rich life led in Allahabad by one of the most important female litterateurs of the twentieth century.

⁸⁵ Varma, *Mere Priya Saṁsmaraṇa*, 56.

This brief discussion by no means exhausts the rich engagement with place that is available in autobiographical works and in memoirs. The discussion is a gesture towards the significance of first-person accounts as repositories of historical and sociological insights into the lived experience of provincial city life. Read adjacently, these texts yield a sense of a city with multiple layers—the physical, the literary, the cultural, the social, the political, and the affective. At the same time, their experiential value as insider accounts transcends discursive concerns and resuscitates the everyday life of Allahabad as a lived place.

Conclusion

Until the 1860s, Allahabad was a desolate place, a small town, its significance inscribed onto three aspects of its identity—its location at the confluence of rivers that held immense significance within Hindu and Buddhist sacred geography; its central location within the geographical terrain of the Indian subcontinent that made it strategically important for travel, trade, and territorial security; and third, the remains and relics of the past. By the turn of the century, Allahabad's eminence grew by leaps and bounds first as the capital of one of the most important provinces. Several texts discussed here anticipate and register this change. Alongside cultural institutions, an entire physical apparatus of urban life and colonial modernity transformed space into place. In examining texts that engage with the city from 1820s until the 1940s, I highlight a rich range of impressions and representations. As a result, the relationship between textual genre, phases of physical growth of the city, and temporal layers of the city suggest a chronological diachronic progression. The early years of colonial modernity in the city

are reflected in travel narratives and guidebooks. They give way to indigenous experiences of modernity that are seen in the writings of city historians, autobiographers, and memoirists.

The different genres produce different modes of engagement with the city and generate for their reader varied senses of place. Place, in other words, is not static and pre-given. It acquires identity through experience. The travel writings by visitors and guidebooks mediate the various spectacular identities of the city—a “*faqīrābād*,” a place of picturesque ruins, a pilgrimage town, a provincial capital, and a modern city of trade, business, and technology. In the city histories, we get the ground-level perspective and affective engagement of the non-academic public historian who doubles up as a local raconteur. Srivastava and Samadani combine historiography with the presentation of Allahabad as a *yādbād*—a place of many small histories made up of its monuments and people. In this genre, the spectacular is rendered the subject of lengthy scholarly analysis; the city as a place of impressive monumentality and *longue durée* history is made visible. At the center of these narratives lies a personal pride and sense of urban identity derived from a place of personal significance. With the autobiography, an affective and experiential layer of the city is unearthed. Neighborhoods emerge as much more than mere names and as lived spaces. The old city, beyond the glamor of the monuments and polish of the Civil Lines comes to life as a place connected with the hinterland through histories of middle-class migration. These inner-city neighborhoods were also places of immense aspiration. Inhabitants, mostly male, upper-caste Hindus and Muslims, sometimes women, of these *mohallas* took part in the opportunities afforded by a host of urban institutions: government and private non-profit institutions, libraries, cultural organizations, publishing houses, newspaper offices, coffee shops, bookstores, and the university.

Chapter Two

The Indian Press of Allahabad: A Multilingual Publishing House in a Divided Public Sphere

Never in the history of the world was there such a time when languages and learning were made the target of humiliation. Rather, in religion and among worthy people, it has always been considered a standard of civilization (*me 'yār-e tamaddun*) to acquire more than one language. Associating any special kind of prejudice with any language is detrimental to the progress of civilization (*taraqqī-e-tamaddun*). In fact, it is the worst kind of moral crime [*akhlāqī jurm*]. The need of the hour is that not only should the two factions learn each other's language, but that they should also participate in mutual progress of these languages. In this manner, they should lighten the load of their ethical duty [*akhlāqī farā'iz*].

— Pyaare Lal Merathi Shaakir, “Urdu-Hindi,”
Adīb, February 1911¹

In his op-ed for February 1911, Shaakir, editor of the Urdu journal, *Adīb*, lamented the fact that in the tense terrain of the twentieth century, languages and literary cultures had become the unfortunate battlegrounds of identity politics. But he also reminded readers that historically, the opposite had been the case; that acquiring “more than one language,” in other words, bilingualism and multilingualism had always been the hallmark of civilizational ethos and a cosmopolitan identity. This chapter examines the many layers of this complex cultural debate by focusing on an underexamined aspect of print culture in Allahabad—its history as a site of multilingual publications.

The city of Allahabad at the turn of the twentieth century has been perceived by scholars as a key site of the conservative nationalist “Hindi-Hindu-Hindustan” movement, or as a place

¹ My translation.

where the nationalist politics championed by the Indian National Congress thrived.² This chapter moves the focus away from Allahabad's history as a center of anti-nationalist politics as well as its significance as a center of Hindi publishing. Instead, by highlighting the city's most prolific publishing house which published in a number of languages—the Indian Press (est. 1884)—I gesture towards a complex history of linguistic and cultural politics prevalent in the city. In exploring the entanglements between print culture and linguistic debates, this chapter breaks new ground from which to investigate the city's identity which was caught up in the contestations between ideas of cultural homogeneity and heterogeneity.

In order to understand why a publishing house like the Indian Press thrived in Allahabad and took up publications in a number of languages, the first section of this chapter discusses the cultural shifts during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—periods of immense historical changes in the socio-cultural landscape of the city. As I mention in the introduction, a series of inter-regional migrations not only led to demographic diversity and transformed Allahabad into a “cosmopolitan” place, to cite Arvind Krishna Mehrotra, but also endowed the city with substantial linguistic diversity.³ I also discuss the rise of Hindi and Hindu nationalism in Allahabad in this period, both of which were growing in strength alongside the growth of the city's cosmopolitan milieu. In the next section, my examination of the print records of this period presents a ground-level view of the history of publishing in Allahabad. We find that at the turn

² For Allahabad's political history and the history of the rise of the Indian National Congress in the city, see C. A. Bayly, *The Local Roots of Indian Politics: Allahabad, 1880–1920* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975). For the role of Allahabadis in the growth of Hindu movements, see Prabhu Bapu, *Hindu Mahasabha in Colonial North India, 1915–1930: Constructing Nation and History* (Routledge: London and New York, 2013); for an outline of the Hindi-Urdu controversy, see Christopher R. King, *One Language, Two Scripts: The Hindi Movement in Nineteenth Century North India* (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1994) and Alok Rai, *Hindi Nationalism* (Orient Longman: Hyderabad, 2001).

³ Mehrotra, *The Last Bungalow*, 2.

of the century, several presses were publishing books and journals in more than one language and script. Consequently, the domain of print was able to retain some degree of autonomy that set it apart from the growing hegemony of Hindi and Hindu majoritarianism.

The history of the Indian Press and its enterprising founder, Chintamani Ghosh, is set against this complex background. In the absence of personal correspondence or publisher's records, I reconstruct the press and its owner's intellectual and socio-cultural commitments on the basis of their book lists and the journals they produced—*Saraswatī* in Hindi, *Prabāsī* in Bengali, *The Modern Review* in English, and *Adīb* in Urdu—between 1900 and 1915. Due to limitations of this archive, it has not been possible to trace the reception of the journals among the urban publics of Allahabad. Even so, an analysis of the rich archive of public discourse that is available in the pages of the four journals, provides an unparalleled insight into the complex cultural politics of the city. Methodologically, I show that only a multilingual lens allows this level of granular and detailed access to the varying opinions of a wide cross-section of the literate publics of the city, which a monolingual focus would screen and obfuscate.

Migration and Multilingualism in the Colonial-era Provincial Capital

Even though the sub-continent is famed for its linguistic diversity, multilingualism as a theoretical concept and its practice in colonial India have not garnered enough attention.⁴ Some exceptions are Ulrike Stark's research on the multilingual publications of the Naval Kishore

⁴ For scholarship on the Marathi public sphere, see Veena Naregal, *Language Politics, Elites, and the Public Sphere* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2001); for Bengali, Anindita Ghosh, *Power in Print: Popular Publishing and the Politics of Language and Culture in a Colonial Society, 1778–1905* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006); and for Tamil, Sascha Ebeling, *Colonizing the Realm of Words: The Transformation of Tamil Literature in Nineteenth-Century South India* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010).

Press of Lucknow in the nineteenth century, Francesca Orsini's discussion of popular, commercial publications which she calls "texts of pleasure," and Rochelle Pinto's study of the Konkani, Marathi, and Portuguese print and political cultures of Goa.⁵

In the scholarship on the early modern period, however, there are several studies of multilingualism and its' prevalence in courtly milieus. In a series of recent articles, Orsini explores the various instantiations of multilingual practice in early modern India. In her articulation, adopting a multilingual perspective means "taking a circumstantial and historicized approach to multilingualism that rejects the opposite poles of claiming that mixing languages and tastes was the cultural norm ('composite culture') and surprise at any instance of mixing of Perso-Urdu and Hindi demotic or Sanskritic traditions."⁶ She presents early modern Awadh as an instance of a "multilingual local," which stretched from the inland *darbārs* (courts) of the Nawab of Lucknow where the poet Raslin was in residence, to the "mud-brick courts" of *qasbas* (small towns) of Arwor/Arwar, where the poet Bhikharidas was located.⁷ In a similar vein, Thibaut d'Hubert's work depicts the flourishing of "multilingual *adab* (Islamicate cultural ethos)" at the court of the coastal kingdom of Arakan in the seventeenth-century, best

⁵ Ulrike Stark, *An Empire of Books: The Naval Kishore Press and the Diffusion of the Printed Word in Colonial India* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2007); Francesca Orsini, "Lithography and Multilingual Publishing," in *Print and Pleasure: Popular Literature And Entertaining Fictions In Colonial North India*, 10–20 (Ranikhet: Orient BlackSwan, 2017); Rochelle Pinto, *Between Empires: Print and Politics in Goa*, (Oxford University Press, 2007). Also see Ruth Vanita, "Gandhi's Tiger: Multilingual Elites, The Battle for Minds, and English Romantic Literature in Colonial India," *Postcolonial Studies* 5, no. 1 (2002): 95–110. In order to draw attention to the ability of Indian elite to selectively receive the English literary canon in India in period of colonial modernity, Vanita gestures towards the importance of prevalence of multilingual textual culture among literate members of pre-colonial India.

⁶ See Francesca Orsini, "Between Qasbas and Cities: Language Shifts and Literary Continuities in North India in the Long Eighteenth Century," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 39, no. 1 (May 2019), 70. See this article for an overall picture of multilingualism in pre-colonial South Asia. On how this approach posits a new approach to world literature, see Orsini, Karima Laachir, and Sara Marzagora, "Multilingual Locals and Significant Geographies: For a Ground-up and Located Approach to World Literature," *Modern Languages Open* 1, no. 19 (2015): 1–8.

⁷ Francesca Orsini, "Between Qasbas and Cities."

exemplified in the works of the poet Alaol.⁸ Keeping these insights from early modern India in mind, my discussion of the Indian Press is a case study of the phenomenon of multilingualism during the period of colonial modernity after avenues of court patronage had dried up and when literary culture had to survive under conditions of print capitalism and contentious cultural politics.

Multilingualism flourished in Allahabad since the sixteenth century after the Mughal emperor Akbar anointed the city as the capital of the newly established *ṣubah* (province). The presence of the governor's (*subedār*) court in the city ensured that Persian found patronage. At that time, Persian was a significant cosmopolitan language of the Indo-Islamic world. It was also the main medium of administration and of literary expression. The city's cultural growth could also be attributed in large part to the arrival of Sufis who went on to establish twelve prominent *dā'iras* (circles, centers). From the eighteenth century onwards, Rekhta/Urdu poetry developed. With the arrival of the East Indian Company, Urdu received a further boost when it became the administrative language of the region in 1837 and replaced Persian.⁹ Beginning in the nineteenth century, the influx of a large number of migrants implied that they also brought their own languages—Bengali, Kashmiri, Kumaoni, etc—to this region. Migration into Allahabad from neighboring *mofussils* and *qaṣbas* as well as from other regions of India had another crucial

⁸ Thibaut D'Hubert, *In the Shade of the Golden Palace: Alāol and Middle Bengali Poetics in Arākan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 5. Both Orsini and D'Hubert emphasize that multilingualism was not an elite phenomenon and that its practice was widespread. Multilingualism prevailed in popular genres like *bārahmāsa* songs in Awadh and in poetic texts which circulated in the countryside of the Arakan region.

⁹ See King, *One Language*, 23–52. Also see Shamsur Rahman Faruqi, "Urdu and Persian Literature in Allahabad, September 2007, "Some of Shamsur Rahman Faruqi's Works in English." Website maintained by Prof. Emerita Frances W. Pritchett, Columbia University, http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00fwp/srf/txt_allahabad.html.

consequence; it changed the linguistic landscape of the city and led to a substantial diversity of languages and experiences among the city's inhabitants.

The first chapter of Jawaharlal Nehru's iconic autobiography gives a sense of the transformation that Allahabad underwent in the second half of the nineteenth century with the arrival of migrants from other regions. Published in 1936, Nehru opens with a reflection on his family's past, a narrative of origins and arrivals outlined in a chapter titled "Descent from Kashmir." Nehru recalls a crucial episode of family lore about a series of migrations: first from Kashmir to Delhi in the late eighteenth century when an ancestor was invited to join the court of the Mughal emperor, Farrukhsiyar. This was followed by the family's escape from Delhi to Agra in the mid-nineteenth century when Agra was captured by the forces of the East India Company in the aftermath of the Rebellion of 1857. Finally, Nehru's uncle and father arrived in Allahabad after the High Court shifted from Agra in 1868.

My uncle attached himself to the newly established High Court and when this court moved to Allahabad from Agra, the family moved with it. Since then, Allahabad has been our home and it was there, many years later, that I was born. My uncle gradually developed an extensive practice and became one of the leaders of the High Court Bar. Meanwhile, my father was going through school and college in Cawnpore and Allahabad.

—Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography*, 1936¹⁰

This extract from Nehru's autobiography speaks to the demographic, political, and social transitions that took place in Allahabad when it became the capital.¹¹ Similarly, Syed Maqbul Ahmad Samadani, whose writings I discuss in chapter one, recalls his arrival in the city as a

¹⁰ Jawahar Lal Nehru, *An Autobiography* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2017), 3.

¹¹ See the Introduction of this dissertation for details regarding this shift and the motivations of the colonial government behind the move. In 1877, Oudh was merged with the North-Western Provinces and administered by a single Lieutenant-Governor. In 1902, the North-Western Provinces & Oudh was renamed the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh. In 1937, the province was renamed United Provinces.

student in 1886 and his permanent return in 1918 when he finally became “of Allahabad” (*Ilāhābādī*).¹² The frequent appearances of these narratives of arrival in the city and the subsequent acquisition of a local *Ilāhābādī* identity in the writings of Allahabadi authors, reflect that these were significant tropes in the memory-bank of the inhabitants of the city.

The profiles of Ramananda Chatterjee, the editor of *Modern Review* and *Prabāsī* (printed by the Indian Press), and C. Y. Chintamani, the editor of the political newspaper *Leader* and a member of the moderate Liberal Party, reflect the backgrounds of another kind of Allahabadi, one who had migrated from metropolitan cities like Calcutta and Madras, armed with English education and a desire for professional success. The presence of a significant number of professional migrants who were interested in opinion-building activities and participation in public discourse had a major impact on book publishing and journalism. The majority of Allahabad’s literate classes comprised these professional migrants as well as locals drawn from mercantile and scribal castes like Kayasthas, Khattris, Agarwals, as well as Kashmiri Brahmins.¹³ Unlike what Christopher Bayly’s work on Allahabadi politics suggests, the socio-political investment and range of intellectual opinions prevalent among this group was not exhausted by their participation in anti-colonial nationalist activities.¹⁴ This diversity in political thought

¹² Syed Maqbul Ahmad Samadani, *Tārīkh-i-Ilāhābād*, Allahabad: Star Press, 1938, 2.

¹³ Scholars have demonstrated that from its very inception, the Indian middle classes were a fractured entity, defined by the constitutive differences that informed their formation. For a thorough discussion of the history of the middle classes in India, see, Leela Fernandes introductory chapter (“The Historical Roots of the New Middle Class”) in Leela Fernandes, *India’s New Middle Class: Democratic Politics in an Era of Economic Reform* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006). For a portrait of north Indian middle classes, see Sanjay Joshi, *Fractured Modernity: Making of a Middle Class in Colonial North India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001). My dissertation complicates this claim. See the discussion in the Introduction.

¹⁴ Bayly, *The Local Roots of Indian Politics*.

beyond the struggle for an independent nation-state is reflected in the minutiae of Allahabad's print culture.

On the one hand, some Allahabadis were engaged in stridently championing the cause of Hindi in public discourse, such as prominent nationalist leaders Madan Mohan Malviya and Purushottam Das Tandon. On the other hand, on the ground and in quotidian life, publishers continued to publish in a variety of languages, including Urdu. In scrutinizing the socio-political trends in all the major languages prevalent in the city, both these aspects rise to the surface and remain in a state of tense contestation in the public sphere of the city.

Hindi in Allahabad

Under conditions of colonial modernity, multilingualism of the pre-colonial variety waned to some degree. Traditional literary registers of the region like Braj Bhasha and Awadhi were being subsumed and set aside by the incessant fracturing of Hindi and Urdu into two different languages.¹⁵ Scripts such as Kaithi and Mahajani were also sidelined by the dominance of the Nagari script.¹⁶ This ground-altering, decades-long conflict between Hindi/Nagari and Urdu/Perso-Arabic came to be known as the Hindi-Urdu controversy. In 1900, in response to an extended campaign, a landmark ruling was passed by the Lieutenant Governor of the province, Antony MacDonnell, who granted Nagari and Perso-Arabic equal status for administrative and

¹⁵ For the fate of Braj Bhasha, see Allison Busch, *Poetry of Kings: The Classical Hindi Literature of Mughal India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

¹⁶ Urdu and Hindi, both of which were outcrops of Khari Boli, were also written in the Kaithi script in this region. The script controversy between Nagari and Perso-Arabic effectively marginalized the Kaithi and Mahajani writing systems. See Ulrike Stark, "Letters Beautiful and Harmful: Print, Education, and the Issue of Script in Colonial North India," *Paedagogica Historica*, Vol. 55, No. 6 (15 July 2019): 829–853.

judicial purposes. Hereafter, Hindi became the second language of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh.

Madan Mohan Malviya of Allahabad, Hindi publicist and Hindu nationalist leader, played a leading role in shaping the course of events. It is largely owing to Malviya's initiatives that Allahabad gained its reputation as a center of Hindi. Malviya was one of the foremost proponents of the Nagari-Hindi movement and the compiler of a crucial memorandum titled *Court Character and Primary Education in the N. W. Provinces & Oudh*. The document was published in 1897 and printed (but not published) by the Indian Press.¹⁷ To read more into the relationship between the "Hindi lobby" and the Indian Press might be speculative and an extended discussion about the press and its Hindi journal, *Saraswatī*, will be taken up later in the chapter. Here I focus on this field-changing document—a compilation of pro-Hindi petitions that forcefully expressed the arguments of this long campaign.

Commenting on the document, Stark notes that the memorandum made a compelling argument which turned the tide in favor of Hindi—that the masses were familiar with Hindi and Nagari and not with Urdu. If Urdu were to continue as the medium of education in the schools of the region, the masses would suffer. In so doing, the memorandum reframed Hindi and Nagari as the only means of imparting an effective education at the primary level in the North-Western Provinces.¹⁸ It is noteworthy that one of the documents included in the memorandum was a petition in favor of Nagari/Hindi that was submitted by the inhabitants and residents of the "City

¹⁷ [Madan Mohan Malviya (ed.)], *Court Character and Primary Education in the N.-W. Provinces & Oudh* (Allahabad: Printed at the Indian Press, 1897).

¹⁸ Stark, "Letters Beautiful," 852.

and District of Allahabad” in 1882 to the Education Commission led by W. W. Hunter.¹⁹ While the Hunter Commission refused to rule in favor of Nagari, the efforts of Malviya and other advocates of this cause, among them many Allahabadis, continued. Finally, in 1900, this memorandum found success. Sir Anthony MacDonnell, the Lieutenant-Governor of the province in 1900, was already sympathetic to the cause. Alok Rai refers to this momentous decision to make Hindi/Nagari the second official language of the North-Western Provinces as the “MacDonnell moment.”²⁰

In the wake of the 1900 ruling, the next step in the consolidation of Hindi’s hold on the region came with the establishment of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan. The Nagari Pracharini Sabha of Banaras passed a resolution on May 1, 1910 proposing the establishment of an institution that would function as an umbrella organization for all bodies involved in the promotion of Hindi. Malviya was nominated and unanimously chosen as the first president by the attendees.²¹ The first session was held in the same year, on October 10, 1910, in Banaras, and was presided over by Malviya who delivered the keynote speech.²² The second session was held in Allahabad in 1911 and it was decided that the institution would have its permanent home in this city. Purushottam Das Tandon, also an Allahabadi citizen and a staunch advocate of Hindi, played an important role in making sure that the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan stayed in Allahabad.²³ These developments demonstrate two notable aspects of the movement in Allahabad: that the

¹⁹ [Malviya], *Court Character*, 85–93.

²⁰ Rai, *Hindi Nationalism*, 17.

²¹ Naresh Mehta, *Hindī Sāhitya Sammelan kā Itihās* (Allahabad: Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, 1996), 46–48.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., 46–60 and 211–217. In the reports of the first and second sessions of the meeting of the Sammelan, no direct evidence is available about the role of Malviya and Tandon in making Allahabad the permanent home of this institution. But given their seminal role in its establishment, it is likely that they had a hand in this decision.

Hindi lobby had a small but strong urban base among the elites centered around Malviya, and that to a large extent, they found a favorable breeding ground among the Hindu professional elites of Allahabad. Consequently, we see that a Hindi-Hindu nexus was forming in Allahabad with Malviya at the center.

Malviya and the other leaders of the Hindi movement were active in both the Hindi literary-cultural networks and the political domain of the city.²⁴ The Nagari Pracharini Sabha of Banaras, the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan of Allahabad, and subsequently, the activities of the Hindu Mahasabha in the city, were the nodal points of this nexus. The Hindu Mahasabha originated in a number of local organizations, the first among them was the Punjab Hindu Mahasabha (est. 1909), a gathering of upper-caste Hindu traders and professionals. Malviya presided over their first sessions in Lahore in 1909. Prabhu Bapu writes in this regard, “In Allahabad, he started the Hindu Samaj in 1880, and was the publicist of the Bharat Dharma Mahamandal, and the ‘prime mover’ of the Hindu University Society, the movement that led to the establishment of the Banaras Hindu University with Malviya as the first Vice-Chancellor.”²⁵ In this regard, the close association between the Congress and the Mahasabha at the turn of the century is also worth noting.²⁶ In fact, the formal move to form an all-India Hindu Sabha was made at the annual session of the Indian National Congress held in Allahabad in 1910. This initiative failed but the Hindu Mahasabha was formed five years later on February 13, 1915, in Haridwar, with Mahatma Gandhi in attendance. Meanwhile, the uneasy relationship between one faction of the Congress and the Hindu organization continued until the Mahasabha emerged as a separate organization

²⁴ For a detailed discussion on this relationship, see Bapu, *Hindu Mahasabha*.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 19.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 19-20.

under the leadership of V. D. Savarkar. A decisive break between the Congress and Mahasabha came in 1926.²⁷ Malviya continued to actively champion the cause of Hindi and the activities of the Hindu Mahasabha in Allahabad.

How were these trends reflected in the city's textual and journalistic culture, which were related to the political domain but also maintained a certain degree of distinction and autonomy? Christopher King's analysis of publishing figures for the cities of the North-Western Provinces shows that between 1868 and 1925, Allahabad published more books in Hindi than in Urdu, with a steady decline in the share of Urdu over the years. To cite one set of statistics, in 1900, 63 percent of the publications were in Hindi and 15.7 percent were in Urdu.²⁸ However, Stark cautions against drawing conclusions on the basis of King's otherwise comprehensive and informative data. She states that due to lack of information on the particulars of publications, educational and non-educational titles were not segregated in this data set, nor were reprints separated from originals. The higher numbers for Hindi titles could be a result of the fact that publishing houses published a large number of Hindi textbooks since they might have acquired lucrative government contracts to do so. She writes,

A major drawback of King's otherwise very useful analysis is that he is interested only in the overall picture and does not attempt to relate the statistical data to the activities of official or privately owned presses in specific locations. His failure to mention, for example, that Allahabad was the seat of the government press, which continuously churned out large numbers of Hindi textbooks for use in formal education, makes his data subject to misinterpretation.²⁹

²⁷ Richard Gordon, "The Hindu Mahasabha and the Indian National Congress, 1915 to 1926," *Modern Asian Studies* 9, no. 2 (1975): 145–203.

²⁸ See in particular, Table 2, "Trends in the Growth of Publications in Various Languages in Selected Cities of the United Provinces between 1868 and 1925," in King, *One Language*, 43.

²⁹ Stark, *Empire of Books*, 430.

Stark’s research demonstrates that the data is especially fluid when original titles in Hindi and Urdu are taken under consideration. For instance, 560 Urdu titles were registered in the North-Western Provinces during the year 1895, in comparison with 354 in Hindi. These figures do not quite support the proposition of Hindi’s preponderance in the region.³⁰

In paying attention only to the statistical figures and the tussle between “Hindu-heritage” and “Muslim-heritage languages,” as King reads the situation, we miss a world of other languages in the public sphere of Allahabad, such as Bengali and English.³¹ This chapter attempts to rectify the overt focus on the competition between Hindi and Urdu by turning to the micro-history of one prolific press. By analyzing the Indian Press’s publication history, we find the robust presence of languages that lay beyond the polarized situation of Hindi and Urdu. Despite the fractures, many languages co-existed, competed, and created their own niches in the public sphere of Allahabad, creating what I refer to as a multilingual publishing phenomenon.

Trends in the Print Culture of the City: Multilingual Publishers and Journals

From the 1840s onwards, a number of developments took place in Allahabad’s print culture: the establishment of the Allahabad Presbyterian Mission Press (est. 1840), the shift of the Government Press to Allahabad in 1858, and the emergence of private printing and publishing firms from the 1860s onwards.³² These developments transformed Allahabad into a major hub of publishing. Publishers’ catalogues and records from this period have not been preserved.

Consequently, *Quarterly Lists*—records that were created by the colonial government in order to

³⁰ Ibid., 429–432 and table 7.1, 431.

³¹ King, *One Language*, 98–99.

³² Stark, “Letters Beautiful and Harmful,” 834; on the shift of the Government Press, see Stark, *Empire of Books*, 53.

regulate, control, and censor publications— despite their various shortcomings, are the best sources to get an overview of the Indian publishing market for the period under review.³³

In my reading of the *Quarterly Lists*, yet another unexplored role of this colonial document emerges. The Hindi-Urdu controversy, which I discuss in the previous section, became yet more affectively charged when Perso-Arabic and Nagari scripts were endowed with moral and religious associations. Within this schema, Hindi and Nagari were projected as straightforward, simple, and upright expressions of ancient Hindu culture while Urdu was cast as villainous, immodest, and associated exclusively with Islam.³⁴ By extension, the users of these languages were also seen to constitute two groups sorted by their language and religion. But names of authors, editors, compilers, translators, and publishers from the *Quarterly Lists* shows that the user base for these scripts and languages was truly diverse. Read carefully, the *Quarterly Lists* unintentionally brings to life a vibrant multilingual landscape of printing, publishing, and writing that goes against the segregationist, taxonomic impetus behind its creation. Robert Darnton's analysis of this colonial surveillance tool also points to aspects of the *Quarterly Lists* that were hidden in plain sight, even from the eyes of the compilers of the document:³⁵

As casual observers, the British projected their own prejudices onto the 'natives' instead of entering sympathetically into what anthropologists call 'the native's point of view.' But when they collected statistics, the officials of the ICS came up with results that went beyond their range of vision. Even then, after their laborious compilation, they failed to see what shows through their reports: *the emergence of a vital literary culture*.³⁶ [Emphasis added.]

³³ These multi-series records comprise of thousands of pages of data segregated by language, genre, publisher, and authors, and arranged in chronological tables. For a discussion of its shortcomings, see A. R Venkatachalapathy, *The Province of the Book: Scholars, Scribes, and Scribblers in Colonial Tamilnadu* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2012).

³⁴ See Stark, "Letters Beautiful and Harmful," for a discussion of these affective charges for and against scripts.

³⁵ Robert Darnton, "Book Production in British India: 1850–1900," *Book History* 5 (2002): 239–262.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 258–259.

Thus, in reading against the grain of this source, a more diverse field reveals itself to the eyes of the contemporary scholar than might have been apparent to individual ground-level actors.

Table 1, compiled on the basis of these sources, lists the publishers who were active in Allahabad in the last decade of the nineteenth century.

Table 1: Publishing Houses in Allahabad, 1894–1899

MONOLINGUAL PRESSES

English Presses

Name of Press	Genres of Publications (Including Journals)	Proprietor (if the information is available)
City Press	Educational	
Educational Press	Educational, mainly Science	
Liverpool Press	Miscellaneous, Journal: <i>The Allahabad Parish Magazine</i>	
Pioneer Press	Military Field Manuals Fiction, Miscellaneous Newspaper: <i>The Pioneer</i> Journal: <i>The Indian Sporting Gazette and Public Form at a Glance.</i>	
Indian Herald Press	History, Science	

Hindi Presses

City Albion Press	Educational; Journal: <i>Ratnākar</i>	
Queen's Press	Not available	
Vidya Dharma Vardhak	Not available	

Urdu Presses

Aini Press	Poetry	Basit Ali
Barkat Ahmadi Press	Educational	Wahid Ali
Matla-ul Ulum Press	Biography	
Mufid-ul-Anam Press	Miscellaneous	
Lala Ram Narayan,	Educational, Mathematics	Lala Ram Narayan
Zubdat-ul-Nazair Press	Miscellaneous	
Rashid Press	Educational, History, Geography	Hamid Husain

Table 1, continued

MULTILINGUAL PRESSES

General Presses

Name or Press	Languages of publication	Genres of publications (including Journals)	Proprietor (where information is available)
Anwar-i-Ahmadi Press	Urdu, Persian	Religious, Educational	
Exchange Press	English, Urdu	Religious, Fiction	
Indian Press	English, Urdu, Hindi, Sanskrit, Kumaoni, German	Educational, Miscellaneous	Chintamani Ghosh
Kaisar-i Hind Press	Persian	NA	
National Press	English, Roman-Hindustani	Educational including versified primers, Law books	
Namwar Press	Urdu, English, Arabic, Persian	Educational, Calendars and Almanacs	
Nazair Kanun-i Hind Press	Urdu, Hindi, English	Law books, Educational, Religious, Journal: <i>Tafrih-ul-Uqalā</i> (Urdu)	Keshav Chandra
Nisar Press	Persian, Urdu, Arabic	Poetry, Science, Quran translation	
Morning Post of India Printing Works	Urdu and Hindi	Maps	
Saraswati Press (Moved to Etawah around 1897)	Hindi and Sanskrit	Philosophical texts, Musical treatises, Poetry, Religious, Journals: <i>Ārya Siddhanta</i> (Sanskrit); <i>Hindī Pradīp</i> (Hindi)	
Satyahitaishi Press	Urdu and Persian	NA	Narayan Das
Union Press	English, Hindi	Educational, mainly Mathematics, Fiction	Kampta Prasad
Zinat-i-Hind Press	Urdu, Persian	Poetry, Miscellaneous, Language	

Table 1, continued

Missionary Presses

Allahabad Presbyterian Mission Press	Hindi, English, Urdu, Roman-Hindustani	Religious, Educational Journal: <i>Makhzan-i-Masīhī</i>	Presbyterian Church of India
Church Mission Congregational Press	Urdu, English	Religious, Educational	Church Mission Society
Indian Christian Press	Hindi, Urdu	Educational	North India Christian Tract and Book Society

SOURCE: Compiled on the basis of *Quarterly List of Publications, United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, 1894–1899; 1899–1904*.

As these tables reveal, by the last decade of the nineteenth century, there were nearly forty presses active in the city, several of which published in two or more languages, though some were far more prolific than others. Some catered to a specific linguistic audience. For instance, among the English presses, the Pioneer Press (est. 1864) functioned as the voice of the European population in Allahabad and published only English-language titles. It also published the foremost English newspaper of the region, *The Pioneer*. The Queen’s Press and Vidya Dharma Vardhak only published Hindi titles. Meanwhile, Urdu publishing continued to flourish in the city with a representation of publishers and writers from various religious communities. Some of the prominent Urdu presses were the Anwar-i Ahmadi Press, Zubdat-un-Nazair Press, Zinat-i-Hind Press, and Lala Ram Narayan Press. By contrast, the approach of missionary organizations was more expansive and open. The North Indian Christian Tract and Book Society, North Indian Bible Society, and Christian Literary Society, ran their own press like the Allahabad Presbyterian Mission Press and the Indian Christian Press. They had adapted the approach of publishing educational as well as religious titles in various languages to reach a wide variety of socio-linguistic audiences who had varying degrees of literacy in different languages. Apart from the

Indian Press, the Dharmik Press, Namwar Press, and Nazair Kanun-i-Hind Press also published in different scripts and languages. Thus, a healthy trend existed in the city at the turn of the century with many publishing houses producing texts in a variety of languages.

Productivity in terms of numbers and multilingualism seemingly went hand-in-hand.

Table 2 also reflects that Allahabad was one of the foremost leaders in the arena of publication of periodicals. It also shows that a multilingual trend is visible in the realm of periodicals in Allahabad. By the end of the nineteenth century, there were at least ten periodicals in the city (if not more) that published in the various languages prevalent in the region. All the journals were published by book publishing houses.³⁷ Investing simultaneously in books and periodicals also seems to have been a rewarding commercial strategy, as is borne out by the case of the Indian Press which I discuss in the next section.

Table 2: Periodicals Published in Allahabad during 1894–1899

Name of Periodical	Language	Editor	Printer and Publisher
<i>Ā'īna-i Tandrustī</i> (The Mirror of Health)	Urdu, Hindi, Sanskrit (focused on health)	Jagannatha Sharma Raj Vaidya	Dharmik Press, Ram Gopal Sharma
<i>Ārya Siddhanta</i> (Arguments for the Aryan (religion))	Sanskrit and Hindi (focused on religious discourse)	Pandit Bhimsen Sharma	Saraswati Press, Balkrishna Bhatta
<i>Hindi Pradīp</i> (The Lamp)	Hindi (general interest)	Pandit Balkrishna Bhatta	Saraswati Press, Balkrishna Bhatta
<i>Makhzan-i-Masāhī</i> (The Christian Treasury)	English and Roman-Hindustani (religious journal)	Rev W. F. Johnson of American Presbyterian Mission	Mission Press, Rev W. F. Johnson

³⁷ The patterns of proprietorship, control over editorial decisions, share of profits, and other such crucial questions of all these presses are beyond the scope of this chapter. However, I reflect on these to the extent that is relevant for the Indian Press, and when the information is available.

Table 2, continued

<i>Ratnākar</i> (The Mine of Jewel)	Hindi (information not available)	Pandit Sivaram Pande, Vaidya	City Albion Press
<i>The Allahabad Parish Magazine</i>	English (focused on the Christian community of the city)	The Venerable Archdeacon of Lucknow, editor. Senior Chaplain, Allahabad, editor (1897 onwards)	Liverpool Press
<i>The Allahabad Review</i>	English and Urdu	Munshi Hamidullah, Barrister at law	Church Mission Congregational Press
<i>The Indian Sporting Gazette and Public Form at a Glance</i>	English (focused on sports)	E. E. Bulkeley, General Manager, Pioneer Press	Pioneer Press
<i>Tafriḥ-ul-^ṣ Uqalā</i> (Recreation for the Learned)	Urdu, (focused on fiction)	Munshi Durga Prasad, Translator at the High Court	Nazair Kanun-i Hind Press, Munshi Sambhudayal

SOURCE: Compiled on the basis of *Quarterly List of Publications, United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, 1894–1899; 1899–1904.*

Building up on the vibrant culture of Urdu journals in north India, periodicals in Hindi appeared in the region from the 1860s onwards. Banaras led the way with the publication of *Kavivachansudhā* (1868–1885) and *Harishchandra's Magazine*, later renamed *Harishchandrikā* (1873–1885) both of which were edited by Bharatendu Harishchandra.³⁸ Allahabad was not far behind. Two Hindi periodicals, *Vrittānt Darpaṇ* and *Prayāg Dūt*, were launched in Allahabad in 1868 and 1871, respectively.³⁹ The first Hindi journal to attract a significant readership in

³⁸ For details, see Dalmia, *The Nationalization of Hindu Traditions*, 1997.

³⁹ “Hindi Locations,” *Chapakhana Project*, <https://chapakhana.rcc.uchicago.edu/hindi-locations/>, locates 58 Hindi and Hindi-Urdu periodicals in Allahabad between 1868 and 1922, in comparison with 42 in Banaras between 1844 and 1900.

Allahabad was Pandit Balkrishna Bhatt's *Hindī Pradīp* which was published between 1877 and 1910, followed by Pratapnarayan Mishra's *Brāhmaṇ*, published between 1883 and 1895.⁴⁰ Both were vociferous advocates of the Hindi-Nagari campaign. Bhatt was an eminent pioneer of Hindi journalism and publishing. He owned the Saraswati Press and along with *Hindī Pradīp*, his press also produced *Ārya Siddhānta* in Sanskrit. Both languages were published in Nagari in north India and publishing in Hindi and Sanskrit was also in line with Bhatt's political and cultural beliefs.

Makḥzan-i Masīḥī (est. 1868), which went on to become one of the foremost Christian publications in the region, was also one of the first Urdu journals of the city. It was published in the Roman-Hindustani script, i.e., "Hindustani" in the Roman script, which was not uncommon in the nineteenth century. In the 1890s, it was edited by Rev. W. F. Johnson of the American Presbyterian Mission and published by the Mission Press. This press also played a pioneering role in the use of the Hindustani-Roman script.⁴¹ *Ā'īna-i Tandrustī* (date of establishment not available), a journal focusing on health, was trilingual (Urdu, Hindi, and Sanskrit) and its editors and publishers were Hindu. *The Allahabad Review* (est. 1890) was edited by a barrister, Hamidullah Khan, who was evidently proficient in both Urdu and English. It was a general-interest bilingual journal which carried articles in Urdu and English. The articles, however, were not translations. The Urdu and English sections published separate content but both sections focused on poetry, philosophy, local, contemporary affairs, and local concerns of Allahabad.

⁴⁰ Sujata Mody, *The Making of Modern Hindi: Literary Authority in Colonial North India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2019), fn 19, 16.

⁴¹ The American Presbyterian Mission was the driving force behind the use of the Roman-Hindustani script. Along with this Christian journal, this press published a number of missionary writings as well as educational works in Romanized Urdu.

Thus, *The Allahabad Review* targeted two linguistic readerships with some degree of overlap. Letters from readers based in the United Kingdom that were published in the journal show that *The Allahabad Review* enjoyed a small overseas readership as well.

This brief overview of publishing houses and journals in Allahabad demonstrates the overall multilingual scenario of Allahabad at the end of the nineteenth century. English, Urdu, Hindi, and other vernaculars co-existed alongside the limited use of older cosmopolitan languages like Persian and Sanskrit and the literary registers of the pre-colonial period like Braj Bhasha and Awadhi. On the ground, linguistic practice was not bound by the script and language divide at least until this period. What is noteworthy is that even in the 1890s, as the names of authors and publishers in the tables 1 and 2 show, Allahabadis showed no marked preference for Urdu or Hindi, Nastaliq, or Nagari. In Allahabad, like in other parts of north India, Urdu continued to be used by educated urban denizens; and a wide number of users from different religious and racial backgrounds employed the language for literary, pedagogical, religious, and quotidian purposes. During a time when multilingualism was withering in cities like Lucknow and Banaras, it is noteworthy that the multilingual ethos endured in Allahabad for a longer period as did a vibrant Urdu print culture. In order to examine the complicated contours of this history of multilingualism in Allahabad, we turn to the Indian Press which continued to invest in books in all the languages prevalent in the region, and produced journals in Hindi, Bengali, English, and Urdu.

The Rise of the Indian Press under Chintamani Ghosh's Stewardship

The rise of the Indian Press occurred against the background of the shifting socio-political and linguistic situation that I outline above. It was established in 1884 by Chintamani Ghosh (1854–1928), a self-made print capitalist whose life is a proverbial rag to riches tale. His father had migrated from the Hooghly district of Bengal to take up a clerical job in administration of the North-Western Provinces possibly around the early 1860s.⁴² Orphaned at the age of ten, Ghosh did not get a formal education beyond the middle school. Consequently, his life trajectory differed significantly from that of elite migrants mentioned earlier. In contrast with other men of letters, Ghosh was a self-taught entrepreneur who was first exposed to the world of print as a thirteen-year-old apprentice in the offices of the Pioneer Press, where he worked on a monthly salary of ten rupees, a meager amount even by the standards of those times.⁴³ As the son of migrants to the region, Ghosh essentially grew up bilingual and matured into a multilingual intellectual. His natural talents were possibly encouraged by the environment he found himself placed in. Ghosh learned English by reading the *Pioneer*, the leading English-language newspaper of the city while he was employed at the Pioneer Press. Given his association with the Urdu journal, it is likely that he knew Urdu as well.⁴⁴ His next job was as a clerk in the Meteorological Department. As a young man in his twenties, Ghosh used his small savings of Rs 250 and in collaboration with a friend, established a publishing house in a humble building on Kachhari Road.⁴⁵ After that building was destroyed in a fire, the press moved to the

⁴² Charubala Saraswati, “Sneha Smṛiti” “Śrāddhaṅka,” *Saraswatī*: 397–400.

⁴³ Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi, “Babu Chintāmaṇī Ghosh (Smṛiti),” *Saraswatī*, “Śrāddhaṅka,” Padumlal Pannalal Bakshi and Devidutt Shukla, eds, Bhāg 29, Khand 2 (September 1928), 283.

⁴⁴ Bidar, *Naubat Rāi Nāzar kā Adīb, Ilāhābād, 1910–1913*, 2.

⁴⁵ Ibid. Dwivedi emphasizes how low this amount was and hardly enough to support Ghosh’ mother and younger siblings.

neighborhood of Katra near Ghosh’s residence, by which time Ghosh had bought over his friend’s investment in their business. The growing success of the press was mirrored in the shifts in premises of the press. By the 1910s, the Indian Press occupied an impressive building at 3, Pioneer Road.⁴⁶ The success of the press can also be gauged by the grandeur of the Ghosh residence in the Georgetown neighborhood of Allahabad, portrayed in one of the photographs. This house could easily rival in style, size, and grandiosity the most famous residence of the city, Anand Bhavan—the home of the Nehru family which was built in 1926.⁴⁷

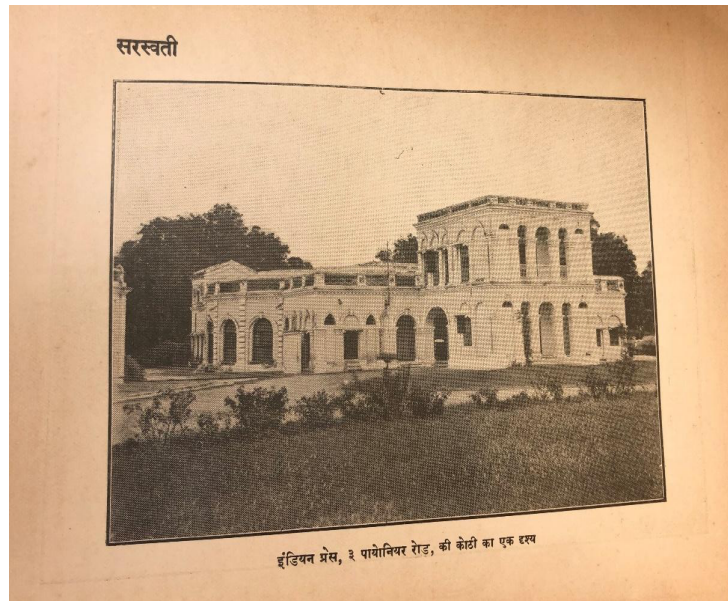
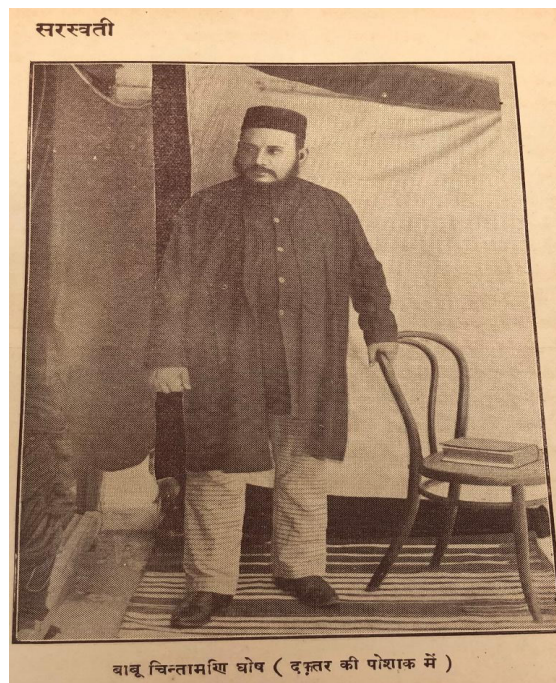


Figure 3: The Indian Press, 3 Pioneer Road, Allahabad, 1928
SOURCE: Śrāddhānka,” *Saraswatī*, 1928

⁴⁶ Pandit Ganganath Jha, “Mitravar Chintāmaṇī Ghosh,” *ibid.*, 288. Jha, at that time the Vice-Chancellor of Allahabad University, along with G. Thibaut, a professor at the university, co-edited a journal called *Indian Thought: A Quarterly Devoted to Sanskrit Literature* (1907–1909), which was published by the Indian Press.

⁴⁷ Anand Bhavan, the Ghosh residence, and the Allahabad University were all built in a similar architectural style known as Indian revivalist architecture. Allahabad is home to many other buildings in this style.

Within his lifetime, Ghosh had built up one of the province's finest publishing houses of the early decades of the twentieth century, a site that also became an intellectual powerhouse in the city's cultural landscape. Ghosh's choice of naming this venture "The Indian Press," could be read as a statement of his vision of indigenous ownership and multilingual publishing. For one, the name and the kinds of titles published presented a stark contrast with Ghosh's former employer, the Pioneer Press, which was owned by George Allen, an Englishman, and published exclusively in English. The *Quarterly Lists* suggests that at least in its early years, the Pioneer Press published only European authors.⁴⁸



⁴⁸ In my analysis of the publication records until 1900, I did not come across a single mention of an Indian author. The press started off with *The Pioneer*, an influential English newspaper which was published thrice a week from 1865 onwards. From 1869, it was published daily. For more details on *The Pioneer*, see Uma Dasgupta, "The Indian Press 1870–1880: A Small World of Journalism," *Modern Asian Studies* 11, no. 2 (1977): 213–235. This article presents an overview of publications in India of this period and is not a discussion of the Indian Press owned by Ghosh, which was established only in 1884.

Figure 4: Chintamani Ghosh, Founder of the Indian Press as a Young Man, 1928
SOURCE: "Śrāddhaṅka," *Saraswatī*, 1928

In tracing the history of the Indian Press, we see that it inherited Allahabad's multilingual milieu and in return, left its own distinct signature upon the city. The press flourished by publishing in English and in the vernaculars. The latter were emerging in this period as the languages of the market, of creative expression, social life, and political affairs. Even while Persian's popularity was fading, the press made the decision to continue publishing in this language. Nothing remains of the Indian Press's publishers' records.⁴⁹ However, a special issue of *Saraswatī* titled "Śrāddhaṅka" (obituary issue) that was published in September 1928 following Ghosh's death on August 11, functions as an important archive of the history of the Indian Press and its proprietor's life, as well as the textual and journalistic culture of Allahabad. The articles and photographs of the "Śrāddhaṅka" along with the journals of the Indian Press and the records available in the *Quarterly List*, give a sense of the legacy of the press and its founder.

The "Śrāddhaṅka" also carried photographs of writers, editors, and intellectuals associated with Ghosh and the Indian Press. These portraits of eminent Allahabadis furnish a glimpse into the city's hall of literary and political fame—Ganganath Jha (scholar and Vice-Chancellor), Ramananda Chatterjee (journalist), Sir Sundarlal Dave (lawyer), and Major Baman Das Basu (military officer and author), among others. They also provide an overview of the network of intellectuals who had contributed to the press's success. The existence of such a network explains to some degree why a cultural site like the Indian Press was able to flourish in Allahabad more than in any other city. The press was able to draw upon a thriving nexus of

⁴⁹ Information confirmed by Supratik Ghosh, the current proprietor-manager of the press (personal communication, January 2020).

migrants, professionals, intellectuals, and politicians who had coalesced around some key institutions: the administration of the North-Western Provinces, the High Court, and the university, among others. The presence and activities of several leaders of the Indian National Congress, the Hindu Mahasabha, and other political parties also strengthened the Allahabadi public sphere.

The “Śrāddhāṅka” also featured photographs of the pressroom, machinery, and workers who fueled this efflorescence in print (see figures 5 and 6). The visual evidence combined with the articles demonstrate that the press envisioned itself as a modern, corporate firm with regional branches and a large-scale industrial operation. For instance, the press had built up a wide distribution network beyond Allahabad by establishing offices in Banaras and even outside the North-Western Provinces, in Calcutta. Photographs titled the “Power-House,” “Hindi and English Composing Division,” “Letter Press Division,” “the Offset Machine Division,” “Linotype Division,” and “Lithography Division,” attest to an expanding and efficiently run business enterprise. The articles in the special issue narrate how the press built a reputation for itself not just on the basis of its sophisticated content but also for its excellence in producing fine artifacts due to the quality of paper, ink, and even, typeface that were used. The Indian Press was also one of the earliest publishers to publish impressive photographs and color images of artwork by important contemporary artists in the pages of its journals. The existence of departments like the “Camera Division,” “Photo Etching Division,” and “Fine Arts Division” are a testimonial to how seriously the press regarded its aesthetic role as a purveyor of art. The storage, distribution,

and sale of printed items were handled by the “Godown Division” and “Book Depot Division.” There was even a post office on the premises of the press.⁵⁰



Figure 5: View from Inside the Press, 1928— the Letter Press Section
SOURCE: Śrāddhaṅka,” *Saraswatī*, 1928



Figure 6: View from Inside the Press, 1928— the Hindi Composing Section

⁵⁰ The Haripada homeopathy clinic, a charitable medical unit dedicated to the memory of Ghosh’s late son Haripada Ghosh, also operated out of the press building.

SOURCE: Śrāddhanka,” *Saraswatī*, 1928

These photographs provide a rare behind-the-scenes portrait of the daily operations of an Indian printing and publishing house in the early decades of the twentieth century. They also establish the fact that within forty years, Chintamoni Ghosh had built up another “empire of books.”⁵¹

These obituaries and photographs memorializing the Indian Press and Ghosh appeared in the Hindi journal, *Saraswatī*, which followed a specific Hindi-centric agenda (discussed below). As a result, Ghosh and the Indian Press’s connection with Hindi is the only aspect of publishing history that is highlighted in this source, with almost no mention of their contribution to other languages. In contrast, a sample of the non-Hindi titles of the Indian Press extrapolated from the *Quarterly List* and presented here shows that the press’s range of publications went far beyond this limited monolingual portrayal. In the absence of a publisher’s catalogue, once again we get a sense of Indian Press’s multilingual book list from this source. Within this sample period of just five years, we see that the India Press had published and printed around seventy-five titles in languages other than Hindi, with several titles in Urdu and some in Persian. Many of these titles were textbooks. Table 3 lists just a few of these. The information demonstrates that from the early years of its establishment, the Indian Press had conceptualized itself as a multilingual printer and publisher and had invested in printing titles in every language in which there was a demand.

⁵¹ “An Empire of Books” is the fitting epithet that Stark uses to describe Lucknow’s hugely successful publishing house, Naval Kishore Press, in her work, *An Empire of Books*.

Table 3: Indian Press—Select Publications in Languages Other than Hindi, 1894–1899

Title (in order of appearance)	Author, Compiler, Editor	Number of Copies	Language and Genre
<i>Brought to Bay</i>	H. D. E. Forbes	1500	English, Fiction
<i>Questions and Answers to Hill's First Book of Geography</i>	S. Dev	1000	English, Educational
<i>Third Book of Geography</i>	S. A. Hill	10,000	English, Educational
<i>Intikḥāb-i-Tārikḥ-Hind (Extracts from the History of India)</i>	Maulvi Sayyid Ali Bahadur	2000	Urdu, History, Educational
<i>Risāla-i-ilm-i Ḥiṣāb, Ḥiṣṣa-i-Dovum (An Arithmetical Tract, part II)</i>	W. N. Boutflower	500	Urdu, Mathematics, Educational
<i>Sophocles' Antigone with Notes</i>	A. C. Majumdar	500	English, Educational
<i>The Book of Wisdom</i>	Alopidin Rantji	1000	English, Philosophy
<i>Jugrafiya-i-Hind Shimālī (Geography of the North-Western Provinces)</i>	Sayyid Alibahadur	1000	Urdu, Educational, Geography
<i>Saṃskṛit Shikshā (Lessons in Sanskrit)</i>	Pandit Adityaram Bhattacharya	1000	Sanskrit, Educational
<i>The Aṣṭādhyāyī of Panini (sic)</i>	Sirisa Chandra Vasu	NA	English and Sanskrit
<i>Catechism of the Outlines of the English History by Mutti</i>	B. F. Mutti	1000	English, Educational, History
<i>Fārsī ki Pahlī Kitāb kī Sharḥ (Key to the Persian First Book. In Persian and Urdu)</i>	Abdul Ali	1000	Polyglot Educational, Miscellaneous

SOURCE: Compiled on the basis of *Quarterly List of Publications, United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, 1894–1899; 1899–1904*

Stark's examination of print culture in Lucknow in the nineteenth century underlines a recurrent pattern among publishing houses that depended on the colonial government for patronage and managed to turn profitable by fulfilling contracts for textbooks and government publications. Before branching out into journals and a wider range of titles in various languages,

in its early years, the Indian Press imitated Naval Kishore Press' formula for success by printing textbooks. Ghosh correctly estimated the commercial potential of the market for textbooks and maintained a close association with the Education Department. He also focused on improving both the quality of printing and the publications issued from the press. For instance, instead of relying on a generalist for writing textbooks for schoolchildren, the Indian Press commissioned a specialist like E. G. Hill, a professor of science at the Muir Central College, to write a series of science textbooks.⁵²

The curious mention of kumaoni, Gujarati, and German book titles in the Indian Press's list of publications, all of which could be printed using typefaces already available for Nagari, Nastaliq, and Roman, could possibly indicate another interesting phenomenon unfolding at the press. It is possible that the demands of the multilingual market and the ready availability of technology allowed a profit-minded entrepreneur to venture into publication in these languages too, albeit in a limited way. The richness of the Indian Press's multilingual book list and the institution's phenomenal success were surely connected; a multilingual repertoire and investment in diversity made good commercial sense.

Thus far, I have demonstrated that the Indian Press and its entrepreneurial proprietor, Chintamani Ghosh, operated much like the print capitalist of Lucknow, Naval Kishore, in not siding with any linguistic or political camp but adapting according to the direction in which the

⁵² Dr. E. G. Hill was educated at Oxford and joined the Indian Educational Service in 1895. He subsequently taught Chemistry at Muir College and served as Dean of Science and Principal. From Dr. Gilbert Walker's speech, "On Teaching of Science," 1918, Lahore, *The Shaping of Indian Science: 1914–1947: Indian Science Congress Association Presidential Speeches* (Hyderabad: Universities Press, 2003), 46. Interestingly, Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi, prolific Hindi author and editor of *Saraswatī*, wrote perhaps with reference to Hill: "A big Englishman first wrote the textbook in English, then another translated it into official Hindi. I stayed away from this mess." *Saraswatī*, "Śrāddhañka," 1928, 284.

market was moving. As a result, the Indian Press's book list reflects the multilingual efflorescence of the demographic constituents of the city and its intellectual life. The Indian Press's journals shed a different light on the conversations in the city's public sphere and complicates our understanding of multilingual practices in the city.

Uneven Voices of the Multilingual Press: The Journals of the Indian Press, 1900–1915

The Indian Press ventured into journal publication a few years after its establishment in 1884. It printed the short-lived *Allahabad Review* which was edited and published by Hamidullah Khan from 1890 until possibly 1894. It was only from 1900 onwards that the Indian Press decided to invest heavily in journals. These journals contributed in no small measure to its reputation as a serious and intellectually inclined publishing house. In chronological order of appearance, the journals published by the Indian Press in the first two decades of the twentieth century were: *Saraswatī* in Hindi (est. 1900), *Prabāsī* in Bengali (est. 1901), *The Modern Review* in English (est. 1907), *Indian Thought* (est. 1908–1910, an English-language philosophical journal), *Adīb* in Urdu (est. 1909/1910), and *Bālsakhā* (est. 1917, a Hindi journal for children). Unlike textbook publication, journals were not always profitable ventures and often had to be bankrolled by the publisher in the initial years.⁵³ In the absence of any personal correspondence, diaries, publications by Ghosh—an ironic situation for an agent of print—it is not possible to definitively pin down Ghosh' motivations for his heavy investment in the world of journals and his venture into multilingual publications.

⁵³ Obituaries written for Ghosh attest that this was indeed the case with the Indian Press and its journals. *Saraswatī*, "Śrāddhaṅka," 1928.

Given this situation, the best source of information about proprietorial intent and the press's political and cultural vision is available in the pages of the journals themselves. In fact, the four general-interest journals in four different languages give us an insight that goes further than the history of the press. They also function as a crucial archive and documentation of the diversity among the contending cultural voices in Allahabad, all fostered under the aegis of the Indian Press. The history of reception of these journals in the city and the region is beyond the scope of this inquiry but remains an important avenue of future investigation.⁵⁴ Here, in my examination of the journals, the focus is on the contents (including the genres and scope of articles), the editors and editorial policy, and ideological inclinations reflected in the pages especially on the fraught issue of language. In other words, I read the journals as an archive of the multilingual and multivocal discourse produced by the public sphere of Allahabad. Like I discuss in the previous sections, the press's decision to publish journals coincided with the crucial shift in the linguistic and socio-political history of the North-Western Provinces. Therefore, the four journals, with their differing ideologies, marked important moments of intervention in this shifting scenario. The Indian Press played a seminal role in place-making through its journals—creating a formal discursive space in the city for the discussion of current socio-political ideas. By analyzing these journals, I show how multilingualism operated at the Indian Press and by extension, in the public sphere of Allahabad.

⁵⁴ These four general-interest journals have been examined by scholars to a limited extent. However, they have never been put together side-by-side and the role of the Indian Press as their common printer-publisher has not been examined.

Saraswatī

The Indian Press ventured into the world of journals in 1900 with *Saraswatī* which went on to become the foremost Hindi journal in the country. Ghosh's decision to invest in a journal of Hindi before any other language indicates that he had observed the success of previous Hindi periodicals and astutely gauged the increasing popularity of Hindi in north India. To a large extent, the journal's success depended on Ghosh's connections with the network of Hindi *littérateurs* and publicists in the city and region. For example, it was initially edited by Babu Shyam Sundar Das (ed. 1900–1902), the founding secretary of the Nagari Pracharini Sabha of Banaras—the foremost organization for the promotion of Hindi language and Nagari script in the region. Two years later, the editorship was passed down to Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi on Das's recommendation.⁵⁵ Dwivedi steered *Saraswatī* for the next twenty years (1903–1920). In the early years of publication, *Saraswatī* published between five to eight articles covering about 35 pages which gradually increased to about 40 to 50 pages by 1905.⁵⁶ Initially, *Saraswatī* had a modest circulation of 600; by 1911 it increased several folds to 1700.⁵⁷ Furthermore, the elevation of Hindi/Nagari to official status in 1900 might have had a robust effect on readership. Sujata Mody attributes this impressive increase to Dwivedi's forceful personality and the changing nature of the public sphere.

During this time, Dwivedi shaped both the journal and through it, the Hindi literary scenario. Before taking over as the editor of *Saraswatī*, Dwivedi had already published several authoritative works on the history of Hindi literature and had translated Sanskrit classics for the

⁵⁵ See Dwivedi, "Smṛiti," *Saraswatī*, "Śrāddhaṅka," 282–287.

⁵⁶ Mody, *The Making of Modern Hindi*, 8, 18.

⁵⁷ *Selections from the Native Newspapers* 1900, 250; 1911, 6.

Indian Press. Through his close association with the Press and *Saraswatī*, Dwivedi rose to the highest echelons of the Hindi literary establishment. So powerful was his influence that the early years of the twentieth century subsequently came to be known as the “Dwivedi Yuga” (Dwivedi era). Courtesy the efforts of Dwivedi and *Saraswatī*, Hindi and Nagari became successful at the regional stage and emerged as the prime contender for the status of “national” language. Mody comments on the seminal role Dwivedi played in cementing Hindi’s future:

In 1900 then, the very idea of a “Hindi literature” was still in the process of radical transformation. Its political import as a means of laying claim to a modern, national identity was just gaining ground and its conceptual boundaries were as yet un-theorized in public discourse. Though Harishchandra had undoubtedly initiated the process, Hindi literature would emerge as a modern category with clearly defined boundaries only after the turn of the century, in the period between 1900 and 1920.⁵⁸

To do so, Dwivedi had to ensure that only one register, Khari Boli, “the upright tongue,” could pass muster as modern Hindi. Allison Busch writes in this regard: “He implemented a draconian editorial policy for *Saraswatī* magazine, accepting only Khari Boli poetry submissions. He generally frowned upon dialectical variants, promoting a new kind of standardized, and frequently Sanskritized Hindi.”⁵⁹ This straitjacketing of Hindi under nationalist conventions was also reflected in the narrow base of authors, most of whom were drawn from the upper-caste Hindu-Hindi masculine establishment of the city. The names of only one or two women appeared as contributors in the early years, and even then, at least one wrote under a pseudonym—“Ek Baṅgamahilā,” (A Bengali Lady).

⁵⁸ Mody, *The Making of Modern Hindi*, 3.

⁵⁹ Allison Busch, *Poetry of Kings: The Classical Hindi Literature of Mughal India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 19.

For our purposes, two important shifts were brought about by *Saraswatī*'s success. One is summarized in Orsini's observation that *Saraswatī* emerged as Hindi's first "commercially viable miscellaneous journal" and "helped move the center of Hindi journalism from Calcutta to the United Provinces."⁶⁰ Second, after Hindi's successful ascension in this region, the language moved forward with its attempts to claim the spot as the national language of the country. Thus, we see that from the time of *Saraswatī*'s establishment, Dwivedi and the journal were closely aligned with the Khari Boli Hindi project and played a seminal role in Hindi's campaign to establish itself as the representative language of the region, and subsequently, of the nation. It was through its association with *Saraswatī*, that the Indian Press, together with the city of Allahabad, gained a reputation as the center of a nationalist, authoritarian version of modern Hindi that was beginning to emerge in this period. However, this portrait is complicated when *Saraswatī* is viewed alongside the other journals produced by this press.

Prabāsī

In 1901, one year after the launch of *Saraswatī*, the Indian Press and Ghosh collaborated with Ramananda Chatterjee (1865–1943) to publish *Prabāsī*, a periodical for the Bengali community of the city. Bengalis were one of the earliest communities to migrate to the North-Western Provinces in the wake of the shift of the colonial administration to the city and the availability of a variety of jobs. As an educated and professional community, they were a significant and

⁶⁰ Orsini, *The Hindi Public Sphere*, 53.

powerful presence in Allahabad.⁶¹ Chatterjee too was one such professional who had moved from Calcutta to Allahabad in 1895 to take up the position of principalship of the Kayastha Pathshala Intermediate College that was run by the powerful Kayastha community of the city.⁶² Existing scholarship on *Prabāsī* has highlighted how the journal was crucial for the formation and consolidation of a middle-class “bhadralok” nationalist identity within Bengal in the twentieth century.⁶³ I wish to highlight an unexamined aspect of this journal by paying attention to its nascent formative stage in north India. Viewed from the prism of its origins outside Bengal, I show that this journal represents one of the earliest instances of the discursive formation of a regional identity that developed in north India.

The title of the journal translates as “one who lives outside of one’s home.” The word *prabāsī* (Hindi, *pravāsī*) also implies that such a person continued to maintain a connection with their homeland.⁶⁴ The journal emphasized both these experiential aspects from the very outset. Today, *prabāsī bāṅgālī* is the moniker for any Bengali who lives away from Bengal. By giving voice to the experience of *prabāsī* life, the journal and the coinage were borrowing from each other and reifying the concept further in the public imagination. Many of the contributors were from the migrant Bengali community who lived in Allahabad and neighboring cities and wrote about their experiences. At the same time, the journal published poems, articles, and advertisements from Bengal which provided an important connection to the “homeland” left

⁶¹ The travel narratives of Reginald Heber and Bholanauth Chunder mention the Bengali community of Allahabad. See chapter one. Also see chapter four, for the theme of competition between Bengal and the North-Western Provinces.

⁶² I discuss both the institution and the history of the Kayasthas in the next chapter.

⁶³ Samarпита Mitra, “Periodical Readership in Early Twentieth Century Bengal: Ramananda Chattopadhyay’s *Prabāsī*,” *Modern Asian Studies* 47, no. 1 (2013): 204–249.

⁶⁴ See the entry for this word in Sailendra Biswas, *Samsad Bengali-English dictionary*. 7th ed. (Calcutta, Sahitya Samsad, 2004).

behind and brought the public sphere of home closer to the migrant. Alongside *prabāsī* authors, the list of contributors featured many well-known intellectuals from Bengal.

In its first year, *Prabāsī* comprised an average of 38 pages per monthly issue, totaling up to 466 pages per year. The discussion on the migrant condition was distributed across many genres such as poetry, prose, and satire. In fact, the genres seemingly performed an affective division of labor, wherein poetry was the medium of choice for expressing the affective facets of the migrant's experiences while prose was used to explore the socio-cultural and political aspects of the phenomenon. For instance, the inaugural issue of the journal featured a poem by Rabindranath Tagore, also titled "Prabāsī." The poem speaks in the first-person, self-reflective voice of a migrant addressing himself and emphasizes a liberal humanistic view of placelessness, not as dislocation but as a cosmopolitan celebration of being at home in the universe. The poet's advocacy of humanistic universalism over narrow nationalism became more pronounced over time and is reflected in this poem. Quotidian concerns of the migrant Bengali community found expression in prose columns such as "Baṅger Bāhire Bāṅgālī" (Bengalis Outside Bengal) and a monthly humorous column—"Prayāge Kamalākānta" (Kamalākanta in Prayag)—presumably written by the editor in his guise as a well-known fictional character from Bengali literature. One of the recurring themes in the journal were pleas asking for Bengali medium education for the children of Bengali government employees who lived in north India, instead of education imparted in the local vernacular.⁶⁵ Next in frequency of occurrence were discussions on Bengali literature, language, and culture, including the growth of Bengali literature outside Bengal.

⁶⁵ Kamalākanta is the eponymous character in Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya's novel *Kamalākānter Daptar* ("From the Desk of Kamalākanta," 1875) and the reference would be easily recognized by Bengali readers.

Therefore, in its initial years of existence, the journal prominently gave voice to the affective condition of this migrant community as well as their material concerns.

For a journal that opened with a cosmopolitan statement of purpose conveyed in the words of Tagore, the situation had changed by 1905–06 with the onset of the Swadeshi movement in Bengal and its subsequent spread to the rest of the country. Presumably, Chatterjee's own political and intellectual position had also evolved. By 1906, the national or *jātiyā* became the prime lens for the journal. While *Prabasi* maintained its strident anti-colonial stance, a comparison of the themes of articles published in the first year of publication in 1901 with the articles in its sixth year of publication in 1906, shows the dwindling focus on the local. The initial aim of giving voice to the migrant community in the region took a backseat. Instead, there was a growing support for a conservative nationalist position. With nationalism assuming the leading role in *Prabāsī*'s journalistic vision, from this period onwards, the journal made consistent efforts to reconcile the claims of Hindi as a national language for its all-Bengali readership.

Saraswatī in Hindi and *Prabāsī* in Bengali enjoyed substantive readerships in the city and in the region. These journals, written in the foremost Indian vernaculars of the twentieth century became the main mediums of expression and opinion-building in this period. As the discussion has shown, they also became the vehicles and voices of majoritarian cultural nationalism.

The Modern Review

Ramananda Chatterjee established this monthly journal to address a nation-wide audience and furnish a space for the expression of anti-colonial sentiments that were growing in the city in the wake of the Swadeshi movement. Like *Saraswatī* in the Hindi public sphere and *Prabāsī* in the

Bengali public sphere, *The Modern Review* also went on to become one of the most important English-language journals with a wide circulation. In the process, the journal further cemented the reputation of the Indian Press. Each issue of *The Modern Review* contained an average of seventy-five pages. In its first year, it offered readers around 115 prose pieces including open letters, opinion pieces, book reviews, editorial notes, and a series of stories by Sheikh Chilli, a legendary storyteller of Indic folklore, which were translated into English as “Folk Tales of Hindustan.” In addition, readers were exposed to a visual feast with approximately ninety illustrations comprising a mix of photographs and reproductions of artworks. The editorial section was titled “Notes” and carried several short comments on contemporary socio-political affairs. Given the fact that English was not the language of any specific regional group in India, *The Modern Review*’s target readership was clearly a pan-Indian English-literate audience who were not tied down to a particular region or its interests. In addressing a diverse audience united only by English and a shared interest in current affairs, *The Modern Review* pitched itself as the voice of the “modern,” suggesting a nexus between knowledge of English, varied political interests, and modernity.

The many local and national intellectuals who published in *The Modern Review* reflected Chatterjee’s wide-ranging associations from his Calcutta days as well as the network that he had developed in Allahabad. The public spheres of both cities had a profound influence on Chatterjee’s political thought even as he influenced them through his opinion making. For instance, Brahma Samajists of Bengal like Akshay Kumar Mitra and Shibnath Sastri who were also Chatterjee’s mentors, contributed to both the Bengali and English journals.

In Allahabad, Chintamani Ghosh was presumably a crucial part of Ramananda Chatterjee's circle. Both men were Bengali migrants to Allahabad and it is likely that they had connected via the Indian Press. Chatterjee also maintained a formal association with the Indian National Congress from the time when he was a student in Calcutta. His political connections most likely brought many Congress stalwarts into the fold of *The Modern Review*. As a result, many prominent Allahabadi intellectuals regularly contributed to the journal. At the national level, Chatterjee's *Modern Review* attracted regular contributions from prominent women leaders like Sister Nivedita and Annie Besant who supported the nationalist cause. Like many others associated with the Congress, Chatterjee also maintained a long association with the Hindu Mahasabha, culminating in him assuming the position of president of the organization in 1928. Chatterjee's editorial persona as reflected in his two journals, *Prabāsī* and *The Modern Review*, displays his strong anti-colonial leanings but also his marked proclivity for cultural nationalism and majoritarianism which only grew with time. Like Chatterjee, the Hindu nationalist leader Madan Mohan Malviya (whom I discuss earlier in this chapter) also maintained an active association with both the Congress and the Mahasabha. It is likely that Chatterjee and Malviya were acquainted with each other through their shared connections and ideologies and influenced each other. In this brief discussion of the two crucial journals edited by Chatterjee, I have drawn attention to the growth of majoritarian nationalism in the intellectual networks of Allahabad in the early years of the twentieth century, even within platforms that were ostensibly liberal and secular.

A change of circumstances led to Chatterjee's exit from Allahabad in 1908. According to biographies, Chatterjee's anti-colonial rhetoric attracted the threat of censorship from the

provincial government of the North-Western Provinces.⁶⁶ As a result, he moved back to Calcutta. This implied that *Prabāsī*, and the English-language journal that Chatterjee founded in 1907, *The Modern Review*, also exited the public sphere of the city. Chatterjee continued to edit both journals until his death in 1943.

Adīb

There was a gradual hardening of Hindu nationalist cultural mores in *Saraswatī*, *Prabāsī*, and *The Modern Review*, three of the journals printed or published by the Indian Press. While these journals gave voice to the linguistically diverse population of Allahabad and added to its multilingual culture, they also mirrored the socio-political trends of the city which were moving in a homogenous direction and found reflection in the cultural politics of these three languages. By contrast, the Urdu *Adīb* was one of the few voices that resisted the trends of Hindi-Hinduization made a strong case for liberal cosmopolitan values. In fact, unlike the other journals of the Indian Press stable, *Adīb* has garnered minimal attention within English-language scholarship on north Indian culture and the politics of opinion-making.⁶⁷ In exploring *Adīb* at some length, the following discussion offers a corrective to both gaps and sheds light on the seminal significance of this journal.

⁶⁶ Nemaī Sadhan Bose, ed. *Ramananda Birth Centenary Number*. Calcutta: Prabasi Press, 1965.

⁶⁷ The journal left a significant impact within the Urdu public sphere. *Adīb*'s importance and popularity has been assessed by Urdu scholar Abid Reza Bidar. In his introduction to a collection of select articles from *Adīb*, Bidar opines that the short-lived *Adīb*, alongside Munshi Daya Narain Nigam's Kanpur-based *Zamāna* (1903–1949), represented the best in Urdu journalistic standards. See Bidar, *Naubat Rāi Naẓar kā Adīb*, 7.

Adīb's first issue was published in January 1910. Each issue contained 50 pages, adding up to a yearly total of 600 pages. The journal enjoyed a robust circulation of 1,500 in 1912.⁶⁸ Its name translates as “the learned/the civilized” and as the content reflects, it sought to attract and cultivate an erudite audience. A short article titled “Rules of *Adīb*” (*Adīb ke Qavā'id*) states that the journal targeted an educated readership which explicitly included female readers.

This illustrated monthly journal is the foremost example of the progress of Urdu learning and literature . . . Its articles are particularly suited for men and women. No article on religious debates (*mazhabī mubāḥaṣa*) or on the current state of politics (*maujūdah politics*) will be printed.⁶⁹

None of the other Indian Press journals explicitly mention a female readership. Thus, the reference to female readers was noteworthy during a period when general-interest journals mostly presumed and addressed a male audience even if on the ground, women were a part of the readership.⁷⁰ There seems to have been, however, no women contributors. By the early twentieth century, across languages and regions, male authors vigorously debated the “women’s question” through the prism of reform. In keeping with this trend, male authors of *Adīb* also discussed topics such as women’s education and the history of female rulers of India. For example, an article titled “The Matter of Women’s Education in Hindustan” (*Hindustān meim Zanānā Ṭālīm kā Maslah*) discussed the contemporary state of education for women.⁷¹ Similarly, in alignment with the artwork featured in the other journals of the Indian Press stable, *Adīb* too featured

⁶⁸ Even though it is listed, there is no data for *Adīb* in the *Selections from the Native Newspapers Published in the United Provinces, 1911*, 3. The data for 1912 is from the *Quarterly List of Publications, 1909–1914, United Provinces of Agra and Oudh*, 40.

⁶⁹ “The Rules of *Adīb*,” The Manager, *Adīb*, Indian Press, Allahabad, July 1910.

⁷⁰ None of the other journals explicitly mention a female readership.

⁷¹ Munshi Tirath Ram Sahib Firozepuri, August 1912, 57–60.

portraits of Hindu goddesses as well as female characters from Hindu epics like Sita and Draupadi. In addition, female figures from the Christian tradition such as the Madonna and Virgin Mary were also portrayed. The rich potential for an analysis of the gender politics and ideology signaled in such choices would require a separate discussion.⁷²

Adīb's disclaimer about eschewing commentary on religious and political issues must be interrogated further, since it was not borne out by the evidence provided by the contents of the journals. In a place like Allahabad which was the capital of the province from 1858 until the 1921 and which emerged as the center of politics of this region, print culture and politics were distinct yet interconnected domains. The politics of print culture did not merely mirror the political culture of the city but was rather a space for objective analysis and corrective pedagogy. As far as the stance of distance from politics was concerned, the reason might be found in the history of the Indian Press. Ghosh invested in *Adīb* in late 1909 after Ramananda Chatterjee's *Prabāsī* and *Modern Review* were hounded out of the city due to the censorship they faced from the administration of the North-Western Provinces.

Moreover, as I discuss in the earlier sections, Urdu was under severe attack by the strident Hindi establishment in the city. In this, the Hindi camp was supported by the Hindu reformist groups who were bent on identifying Urdu and the Perso-Arabic script exclusively with a Muslim religious identity. Ghosh was well-acquainted with the Hindi literary establishment and shared a professional association with them through his press. Consequently, it is possible that Ghosh wished to steer clear of these political quagmires even as he showed faith in the cause

⁷² Sumathi Ramaswamy sheds light on the gendered religious iconography in popular art of this period, see her book, *The Goddess and the Nation: Mapping Mother India* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2010).

of Urdu by sponsoring and establishing *Adīb*. Even so, as the brief lifespan of the journal indicates, *Adīb* could not survive the many impediments it faced from the tense scenario of which it found itself to be a part.

In its short lifetime of less than five years, however, it marked an important intervention in the public discourse and cultural politics of the period. During its years of publication, *Adīb* was helmed by three different editors who were, interestingly, from three different religions: Naubat Rai Nazar Laknavi a Hindu (January 1910–May 1911); Pyaare Lal Shaakir Merathi, a Christian (June 1911–December 1912); and Hasan Azimabadi, a Muslim (January 1913–Dec 1913). The case of *Adīb* presents what I call a curious “Amar, Akbar, Anthony” scenario within modern north Indian print culture.⁷³ As their second names show, they hailed from various parts of the North-Western Provinces and it is their association with the world of words that brought them to Allahabad.⁷⁴ The list of authors is similarly diverse and suggests that readers were not aligned with any particular language or religion and were identified in the columns of the journal by their educational, regional, and professional affiliations, and through their pen names or *takhalluṣ*. Among the Hindu authors, Kayasthas and Kashmiri Pandits—the Hindu communities that traditionally used Urdu—were prominent. This diversity within the production team of *Adīb* is worth bearing in mind as it speaks to the diverse user base of the language and presented a variance from the case of modern Hindi.

⁷³ I refer here to the title of a popular Hindi film released in 1977 (dir. Manmohan Desai) that delivered entertainment along with a feel-good message of harmonious co-living. It featured three brothers who had been separated at birth and adopted by families from three different religions—Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity. The names of the three brothers reflect the faiths they grew up in. This was an obvious metaphor for the nation and its diverse constituents.

⁷⁴ Laknavi, i.e., “of Lucknow;” Merathi, i.e., “of Meerut;” and Azimabadi, “of Azimabad.”

On the issue of frequent turnovers in the position of the editor, Abid Reza Bidar in his introduction to a collection of articles from *Adīb* indicates that there were differences in opinion between the proprietor of the press and the editors.⁷⁵ It might be likely that the publisher or one of the editors themselves wished to avoid being considered the mouthpiece of partisan political opinion or even avoid censorship. Furthermore, *Adīb* definitely steered clear of expressing an explicit anti-colonial stance, which is different from the case of *The Modern Review*. Ramananda Chatterjee and his journals fate might have influenced *Adīb*'s course in this matter. Perhaps because of this negative experience, Ghosh was both the proprietor and publisher of *Adīb*, an arrangement that was different from the one he had shared with Chatterjee. As a result, management and, to some degree, even editorial decisions, seemed to have rested with the Indian Press.

An analysis of the contents of the journal shows that apart from articles which engaged with literary and philosophical issues, most issues contained two to four important articles which held forth on the socio-cultural and linguistic debates of the day. These were deeply politicized and political matters such as the role of Urdu and its potential as a language, the Hindi-Urdu controversy, Hindu-Muslim relations, the nature of the Indian past, and trends in historiography. An analysis of some of these articles reflects that in discussions on the language question, growth of sectarian sentiments, and the emergent issue of national identity, *Adīb*'s civilizational ethos and humanistic vision approximated Tagore's poem "Prabāsī." For instance, in the article titled "Hindu-Muslim Differences are Superficial" (*Hindū-Muslim Tafrīq Saṭaḥī Hai*) by Munshi Tirath Ram Firozepuri, the writer emphasizes that differences between Hindus and Muslims are

⁷⁵ Bidar, *Naubat Rāi Nazār kā Adīb*, 2.

visible to all precisely because they catch public attention so easily. In Ferozepuri's estimation, the surface-level tensions implied that in reality, the differences were superficial. He claimed that on a sustained engagement, the observer would notice that beyond differences, there exists "a thread of Hindustani color that binds everyone."⁷⁶ Despite the declaration of separation between the *'ilmī* (scholarly) and *adabī* (literary, civilized) domain on the one hand, and the *siyāsī* (political) arena on the other, in articles like this one, the journal took a clear stance on religion and contemporary politics. Such a strategy can be understood by viewing it as a double move of disavowal of anti-colonial politics while embracing a critique of socio-cultural issues beyond the domain of nationalism.

Jennifer Dubrow has argued that Urdu periodicals played an important role in democratizing access to literary discourse and widened the base of its participants to include writers from different backgrounds.⁷⁷ As the discussion here reflects, *Adīb* extended Urdu's cosmopolitan base beyond literary readership and into the domain of socio-political discourse by publishing discussions on a wide variety of topics such as contemporary events, and current social and political thought. Thus, *Adīb*'s contribution was not exhausted by the frameworks of regional or national identity which have been the dominant frameworks of analysis of several textual and journalistic writings of this period. This distance from the national framework also indicates that while the exchange of political and print energies was a significant aspect of the city's place-making, yet print culture in the city and publishers like the Indian Press seem to have maintained some degree of autonomy.

⁷⁶ March 1912, 142–147. For a detailed profile of this author, see C. M. Naim, "An Extraordinary Translator: Tirath Ram Ferozepuri (1885–1954), *Annual of Urdu Studies* 28 (2013):1–37.

⁷⁷ Dubrow, *Cosmopolitan Dreams*, 7.

Adīb intervened on behalf of Urdu in the linguistic debate in a series of articles titled “Urdu as the National Language of India” (*Urdū: Hindustān Kī Qaumī Zabān ki Haisīyat Se*). Citing the authority of linguists, the article claimed that Urdu held the status of *lingua franca* since it enjoyed a pan-India presence that no other language had.⁷⁸ Whatever the merits of the claim, Urdu was indeed unique in having an identity as an Indian language that was not fully moored in regional or ethnic affiliations and could claim to have a cosmopolitan pan-Indian presence. Dubrow uses the term “Urdu cosmopolis” to describe this formation. She writes: “Urdu readers and writers imagined themselves as citizens of an Urdu-speaking, transregional, yet nonnational community that was global in outlook and consciously resisted national borders or religious identities.”⁷⁹ The endurance of Urdu in north India among a wide readership despite socio-political pressures to conform is a significant moment of cultural and social resilience. It is a noteworthy fact that this pushback came not just from the Muslim literati who were increasingly identified as the main adherents of the Urdu language but also from journals like *Adīb* of Allahabad and *Zamāna* of Kanpur, which were produced by a diverse team helmed by editors of different religions. It serves as an important archive and record of Urdu literary culture and socio-political discourse in Allahabad which was under erasure. In examining *Adīb*’s role in the public sphere of Allahabad, this discussion has demonstrated that Urdu continued to be used by a diverse group of people and remained a language of literary and intellectual discourse in the city even during a time of increasing division. Moreover, the fact that the defense of the ethos of multilingualism as a civilizational value and moral imperative, as reflected in Shaakir’s editorial

⁷⁸ Syed Mohammad Farooq Sahab Shahpuri, March 1912, 129–137.

⁷⁹ Dubrow, *Cosmopolitan Dreams*, 7.

piece with which this article opens, came from the corner of Urdu rather than any other language, marks an important intervention in this seminal cultural debate.

Conclusion

Through this micro history of the Indian Press and the analysis of its four journals, this chapter indicates a number of contestations animating the public sphere of the city. The Press's multilingual book list reflects that Ghosh was more invested in ensuring commercial success and sealing the intellectual reputation of his business than in taking sides in the divisive linguistic politics of the day. The multilingual milieu he fostered at his publishing house, however, ensured that multilingualism continued to flourish in Allahabad in the early decades of the twentieth century. Even while print culture maintained a certain degree of autonomy from the political arena, some highbrow journals began to adopt trenchant opinions on the political-cultural issue of "national language," marking the incursion of cultural nationalist trends within the seemingly liberal and progressive platforms like *The Modern Review* and *Prabāsī*.

In such a scenario, the normative potential of multilingualism as a long-standing cosmopolitan cultural ideal of South Asia began to fray. The discursive space of opinions created by high-brow journals of Allahabad were the voices of competing claims about languages and cultures. However, as this discussion has demonstrated, it was one of the Indian Press journals, the Urdu-language *Adīb*, that emerged as a prominent voice of defense of syncretic values and offered significant resistance to the homogenizing trends. In conclusion, this chapter indicates that the presence of linguistic diversity does not imply an a priori presence of liberal and cosmopolitan values. Instead, by tracing the multilingual field of opinions of a city, I show that the existence of a multilingual and multivocal public sphere in Allahabad implied that its cultural

politics in the early decades of the twentieth century cannot be encompassed within binaries as its discursive publics were riddled with contestations. The next two chapter will explore others textual publics and their internal contestations.

PART II

Chapter Three

The Place of Caste in the Provincial City: Texts and Institutions of the Kayasthas and the Kalwars

A small, dusty, and locked room adjoining an equally dusty library at the Kayastha Pathshala Inter College in Allahabad is the repository of the personal papers and books of the founder of the school, Munshi Kali Prasad “Kulbhaskar” (1840–1886), considered to be the father of the modern Kayastha community. Prasad, during his short but illustrious life, rose from the position of an ordinary clerk (*munṣarim*) in the Revenue Department of Oudh and went on to become one of the most successful and wealthiest lawyers of Lucknow. Even while he continued to live in Lucknow, he left a seminal impact on Allahabad after he moved the *Kāyastha Samāchār*, a caste journal, and the Kayastha Pathshala, an educational institution for Kayastha boys, to Allahabad in 1873. Today, this caste journal, which continued publication at least until the 1950s, is defunct. But the school has grown into a consortium of several educational institutions run by the Kayastha Pathshala Trust, which claims to be the largest private trust in Asia.¹ In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Kayasthas of north Indian sought to consolidate their caste into a modern community by using the facilities offered by Allahabad, the capital of the North-Western Provinces. Their efforts mark the beginning of my enquiry into the relationship between caste and the provincial city.

¹ The most prominent educational institutions among these are: Kayastha Pathshala Intermediate College (high school) and the Kayastha Pathshala University College (an undergraduate institution affiliated with the University of Allahabad).

The Kayasthas, who have traditionally had a strong presence in education and administration in north India, were the most successful *jāti* in their efforts to gain upward mobility. At least two other *jātis* followed a similar pattern of mobilization in Allahabad. The Khatri—an upper-caste *jāti* of the North-Western Provinces and Punjab traditionally associated with trade and professions—founded the Khatri Association and a Khatri Pathshala in Allahabad. The latter was established in 1921 and remains in operation today. The Khatri left behind almost no textual trace of their activities; therefore, I do not include their history in this chapter. It is likely that a *jāti* whose identity faced no external threat and little internal ambiguity, textual production also remained low. Distinct from the Kayasthas and Khatri, the Kalwars were a Shudra community associated with the distillation of alcohol. In the late nineteenth century, the literacy rate among male members of the caste was very low and almost non-existent for Kalwar women. They also had little to no access to cultural or sociopolitical capital. A few Kalwars, however, had acquired land and wealth in urban areas owing to their success in the business of alcoholic products.² Like the Kayasthas and Khatri, the Kalwars also formed an association in Allahabad, the Kalwar Mahasabha (1902), followed by the establishment of an educational institution in the city, the Kalwar Pathshala (1905). Therefore, in early twentieth-century Allahabad, a clear pattern of connection between caste groups and their mobilization strategies in the city is visible.

² As per the *Census of United Provinces* of 1921, Kayasthas enjoyed the highest rate of literacy among all the castes across the region (585 per 1000 men and 102 per 1000 women), followed by the Agarwals. Along with Brahmins, Mughals, and Syeds, the Kayasthas were classified as a caste with “Professions” as their main occupation. Among the Kalwars, there were 144 literate men per 1000 and 6 literate women per 1000. They were classified as a “Commercial” caste, along with Agarwals, Agraharis, and Sonars. In comparison with the Kalwars, the rates of literacy for “Agricultural,” “Artisan and Industrial,” and “Menial” castes (who are today classified among the Scheduled Castes of the region) were in single digits. Today, the Kalwars are classified as an Other Backward Class in Uttar Pradesh while both the Kayasthas and Khatri are considered upper-caste communities.

In the 1970s, the institution of caste and the history of colonial-era cities garnered much scholarly attention. But the history of caste as an institution and case studies of particular castes, and urban history, were approached as discrete domains. As a result, despite significant works on, for example, the Kayasthas of Allahabad and Hyderabad, the interface between the cultural specificity of the city and the history of urban caste-based communities remains underexplored.³ By focusing on the texts, associations, and institutions of the prominent Kayasthas as well as the relatively understudied Kalwars, this chapter brings the histories of two disparate *jātis* of the city into conversation. I revisit the history of Kayasthas of north India half a century after Lucy Carroll’s work (1976) and draw extensive attention to the Kalwars for the first time.⁴ In so doing, I examine caste as an essential factor of discursive place-making in the provincial city.

I show that urban mobilization for the Kayasthas and Kalwars was a two-step process. The first step involved the publication of caste texts and journals, a process that I term ‘textualization of caste’ whereby caste groups made use of all aspects of print culture—writing,

³ Juned Shaikh, *Outcaste Bombay: City Making and the Politics of the Poor* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2021) is a recent exception to this claim. It focuses on how caste was seminal to the production of the physical space and infrastructure of metropolitan Bombay, distinct from my focus on a provincial city and the role caste organizations played in socio-cultural place-making.

⁴ On the Kayasthas, see Lucy Carol [sic] Stout, “The Hindustani Kayasthas: The Kayastha Pathshala, and the Kayastha Conference, 1873–1914,” (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1976); and several important articles which I cite later in this chapter. Karen Isaksen Leonard, *Social History of an Indian Caste: The Kayasths of Hyderabad* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978); Ronald B. Inden, *Marriage and Rank in Bengali Culture: A History of Caste and Clan in Middle Period Bengal* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976). On the history of Kayasthas of Bengal, see Rochona Majumdar, “Looking for Brides and Grooms: Ghataks, Matrimonials, and the Marriage Market in Colonial Calcutta, circa 1875–1940,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 63, no. 4 (November, 2004): 911–35; on the Kayasthas of western India see Rosalind O’Hanlon, “The Social Worth of Scribes: Brahmins, Kayasthas and The Social Order in Early Modern India,” *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 47, no. 4 (2010): 563–595. In comparison with the scholarly attention paid to the Kayastha community, no comprehensive examination of the history of the Kalwars is available. A brief mention in Christopher Bayly’s writings is an illuminating but limited enquiry into the city’s political culture. I discuss it later in the chapter. See Christopher Bayly, “Patrons and Politics in Northern India,” *Modern Asian Studies* 7, no. 3 (1973): 349–388. Charu Gupta’s work on the representation of Dalit and other lower-caste women in north Indian print culture also refers to the Kalwars. See Charu Gupta, *The Gender of Caste: Representing Dalits in Print* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2018).

publishing, advocacy, and associational activity. By examining the archive of such advocacy texts and journals published in Allahabad, I show that caste advocates were speaking to a dual audience: the colonial authorities but also their own caste members and a larger Hindu public.⁵ Coalescing caste members around reformatory ideals as well as motivating them towards education and professionalization through the medium of print was a key strategy of establishing caste identity and forming urban caste-based communities. Textualization was followed by institution building, which involved establishing what I call a ‘school to profession pipeline,’ whereby caste groups harnessed urban facilities such as the printing press, associations, and institutions to put in place a pipeline between community-building, education, and professionalization. Both *jātis* also attempted, with varying degrees of success, to harness donations and funds from their caste members who lived outside Allahabad in order to strengthen Allahabad as the primary center of community formation.

M. S. S. Pandian has argued that upper castes typically subsumed their privileged caste identity into the rubric of a “national” and public culture while lower castes were perceived as speaking only in the name of caste.⁶ By tracing these two modes of caste entering the public sphere in the colonial and postcolonial period, Pandian challenges the definition and limits of culture in the modern public sphere.⁷ In examining the histories of the Kayasthas and the

⁵ A rich body of scholarship on lower-caste mobilization in north India has emerged in the last two decades. See Nandini Gooptu, *Swami Acchutanand & the Adi Hindu Movement* (New Delhi: Critical Quest, 2006); Badri Narayan, *The Making of the Dalit Public in North India: Uttar Pradesh, 1950–Present* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2011); Ramnarayan S Rawat, *Reconsidering Untouchability: Chamars and Dalit History in North India* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011).

⁶ M. S. S. Pandian, “One Step Outside Modernity: Caste, Identity Politics, and the Public Sphere,” in *Caste in Modern India: A Reader, vol. II*, ed. by Sumit Sarkar and Tanika Sarkar, 880–91 (Ranikhet, Permanent Black: 2014).

⁷ Also see Sumit Sarkar, “Identities and Histories: Some Lower-Caste Narratives from Early Twentieth-Century Bengal,” 880–913, and Sekhar Bandhopadhyaya, “Popular Religion and Social Mobility in Colonial Bengal: The

Kalwars, I remain attentive to these distinctions between two groups of disparate ritual status and how they made a place for themselves in Allahabad. Building on this idea, I compare and examine the strategies through which these castes attempted to mediate their community-building efforts in the city. The Kayasthas were the most successful caste in establishing well-organized, well-funded educational institutions which remain in operation. In so doing, they ensured that they were able to maintain their traditional hold over employment, especially in administration. At the same time, education also helped them branch out into other professions, in particular, law. The presence of the High Court in Allahabad was crucial to this shift. Kalwars followed a similar schema and gained a modicum of success in the strategy of textualization but failed to achieve the prominence or longevity that the Kayasthas had achieved when it came to institution-building.

The place-making activities of various castes in Allahabad left a deep impact on the cultural politics of the city. The emergence of textually mediated caste publics implies that the city's identity came to be entangled with Kayastha and Kalwar associational activities, especially in the domains of education and employment. Even as Allahabad's identity as a city that facilitated learning and professionalization was cemented, education and employment were marked by contestations and competitions of caste status. A further layer of complexity emerges in my discussion of the two castes. On the one hand, the avenues of mobilization that Allahabad provided for a lower-caste community like the Kalwars laid out a path of progress for them, even

Matua Sect and the Namasudras," both in *Caste in India*, in Sarkar and Sarkar, eds. Sarkar's analysis of caste movements of lower-caste communities of Bengal who mobilized under the new nomenclature of "Namasudra," has also been illuminating in this regard. In shedding the pejorative label of "Chandal," these communities sought a more just social status. The discussion of caste names among Kalwars is reminiscent of this move.

if in a limited way, and challenged the hierarchies of caste. On the other hand, Kayasthas consolidated their caste privilege through urban associational activities. In addition, they acted as gatekeepers of caste privilege by restricting the entry of lower-caste students into their institutions, at least until 1940, if not longer. This chapter parses out these asymmetries of access to texts, print culture, and institution-building in the city. In so doing, I show that provincial urbanity was an arena of deep caste-based contestations.

Textual Strategies

Scholars of the history and sociology of caste in India have established that Hindus of various castes experienced deep anxiety about the status of their caste under conditions of colonial modernity. In this regard, Charu Gupta comments:

Caste associations in UP proliferated, particularly after the 1901 census when a decision was made to rank castes according to “social precedence.” Even relatively better-off castes and jatis like Kayasths, Khattris, Agarwals, and Marwaris started claiming Kshatriya status, wanting a greater share in public appointments and political representation. Intermediate castes such as Ahirs and Yadavs too launched their caste associations and journals. Print helped foster caste interests: various caste associations published genealogical caste tracts and started their own journals.⁸

While Gupta’s pioneering scholarship at the intersection of caste and print culture in north India is crucial to this study, her explanation about the rapid uptake of print culture by caste-based communities needs further interrogation. Similarly, Karen Leonard’s work on the Kayasthas of Hyderabad in the 1970s also gives sole credit to colonial pressure as the major cause for the production of advocacy texts by caste groups. Leonard writes, “Responding to the British Census

⁸ Gupta, *The Gender of Caste*, 19–20.

classification of castes, such histories argue for the ‘correct’ ranking of a particular caste in the classical four-varna system, citing Sanskrit texts, the opinion of learned pandits, and specific regulations and customs.”⁹

My close reading of Kayastha and Kalwar texts, however, reveals motivations for writing that can be attributed to internal shifts within castes that go beyond the framework of response to the colonial regime. Without undermining the role that colonial projects of knowledge formation played in causing textual production, I draw attention to the role texts and journals played in shaping their own caste publics. Caste advocacy texts have also been dismissed by earlier generation of scholars like Leonard as insufficiently historical. For instance, Leonard writes that “most of the indigenous family and caste histories produced since the 18th c also *have limited historical value*” (emphasis added).¹⁰ These texts were not seen as the proper repository of the modern history of the Kayasthas which was supposedly located elsewhere. In the discussion that follows, I show that reading these texts for genres, styles, subject-positions of the authors, and audiences is, in fact, of immense historical value. By attending to the specific rhetorical strategies that caste groups used in texts in order to mediate multiple relationships—with colonial authorities, with the rest of Hindu society, and primarily with their own caste members—I highlight insights that have not been fully explored in scholarship so far.

Textual advocacy among castes, especially, on the question of ritual status, began around the 1860s. It coincided with the period of efflorescence of print culture in the region. In line with the high level of literacy within their communities, castes like the Hindustani Kayasthas and

⁹ Leonard, *Social History of an Indian Caste*, 5.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Agarwals produced the first texts of caste advocacy in north India.¹¹ The following tables provide a list of texts published by Kayasthas in the late nineteenth century and by the Kalwars in the early twentieth century. The tables are organized by date, language, author, and place of publication. In the case of the Kayasthas, I separate the printed works from periodicals and reports in order to showcase the entire range of publications by this caste and the various genres they wrote in. But I include all these publications within the broad category of textual strategy (see introduction for a discussion of this method). Between 1860 and 1900, the Hindustani Kayasthas published at least fifty texts, including books and printed reports, and several periodicals. This number was far larger than publications by all the other castes of the region put together, including texts by other literate and privileged castes like Brahmins, Khattris, and Agarwals. In contrast, beginning in the early twentieth century, Kalwars produced only a handful of texts which numbered in the single digits.

Table 4: Kayastha Textual Advocacy I: Books and Tracts, 1860–1900

Date	Title	Genre	Language	Author/Editor	Place of publication and Publisher (when known)
1868	<i>Aqvām al-Hind</i>	Caste treatise	Urdu	Kishori Lal	Lucknow: N/A
1868	<i>Kalpadruma</i>	Caste genealogy	Urdu	Ganesi Lal	Lucknow: N/A
1869	<i>Kāyastha Dharma Pothī</i>	Caste genealogy and myth in prose and verse	Urdu	Din Dayal	Agra: N/A
1870	<i>Kewal Khanḍ</i>	Caste genealogy and myth	Urdu	Bakshi Kewal Ram	Moradabad: N/A
1871	<i>Ḳhulāṣah-i-Taḥqiqāt</i>	Caste treatise	Urdu	Lala Saligrama	Allahabad: N/A

¹¹ Bharatendu Harishchandra wrote one of the earliest works of caste advocacy, *Agarwāloṃ kī Utpatti*, published by E. J. Lazarus and Co. of Banaras in 1871.

Table 4, continued

1871–72	<i>Chitragupta Vaṃshavalī, Parts I and II</i>	Caste treatise	N/A	Chhaju Mal Das	Fatehgarh: N/A
1871	<i>Kāyastha Dharma Darpaṇa</i>	Caste treatise	Urdu	Ramcharaṇ, Lalji (trans.)	Lucknow: N/A
1872	<i>Āṭina-i-aqvām</i> , also called, <i>Tārīkh-i-‘Ajīb</i>	Caste treatise	Urdu	Ganesi Lal	Meerut: N/A
1873	<i>Chitragupta Vaṃsī</i>	Caste genealogy	N/A	N/A	Lucknow
1875, 1897 (reprint)	<i>Kāshif-i-Daqā’iq-i-Mazhab-i-Hind</i>	Caste treatise	Urdu	Makkhan Lal	Lucknow
1875	<i>Kāyastha Bans Pradīp</i>	Caste genealogy	Urdu and Sanskrit	Tara Prasanna Ghose	Allahabad: Sadasukh Lal
NA	<i>Itihās Gaur Kāyastha</i>	Caste history	Hindi	Kishori Lal	N/A
1877	<i>Kayastha Ethnology</i>	Caste genealogy and treatise (See discussion below)	English	Kali Prasad and associates	Lucknow: American Mission Press
1879	<i>Kayastha Ethnology</i> (possibly, a separate text with the same title as Kali Prasad’s work)	Caste genealogy and treatise	Urdu	Ram Saran Das	Lucknow: Aman Ali
1888	<i>Tuhfat-ul-Mulāzīmīn</i>	Caste advice manual on employment	Urdu	Bhola Nath (Secretary, Kayastha Literary Association, Allahabad)	Allahabad: Namwar Press
1888	<i>Chashma-i-Faiẓ</i>	Caste advice manual on education	Urdu	Jhumak Lal	Jaunpur: Azam-ul-Matabi Press
1889	<i>Kāyastha Utpatī</i>	Caste genealogy	Urdu	Sambhu Saran	Jaunpur: Azam-ul-Matabi Press
1889	<i>Kāyastha Sangūt</i>	Kayastha songs in verse	Urdu	Ram Sahai Tamanna and Dwarika Prasad Ufuq	Lucknow: Lucknow Press

Table 4, continued

1890	<i>Kāyastha Upadeshak Manzūm</i>	Caste advice manual	Urdu	Ram Sahai Tamanna and Dwarika Prasad Ufk	Lucknow: Nazm-i-Akhbar Press
1890	<i>Kāyastha Sankshep</i>	Caste history	Urdu	Shyam Lal Bismil	Moradabad: Mihr-i-Hind Press
1890	<i>Kāyastha Hitkārī Nāṭak</i>	Caste-based drama	NA	Visheshwar Dayal	Agra: Chitragupta Press
1890	<i>Kāyastha Kulbhūshaṇ</i>	Caste history	Hindī and Sanskrit	Saligram	Allahabad: Sukhsambad Press
1891	<i>Kāyastha Param Mitra Ma'rūf va Fasāna-i-Dilāwez</i>	Caste narrative	Urdu	Jhumak Lala	Jaunpur: Azim-ul-Matabi Press
1892	<i>Tawārīkh-i-Aqvām al-Kāyastha</i>	Caste history	Urdu	N/A	Allahabad: N/A
1894	<i>Kāyastha Chandrikā</i>	NA	Hindi	Jaṭa Shankar	N/A: Satya Pracharak Press
1895	<i>Kāyastha Varṇa Mimansā</i>	Translation of the <i>Kayastha Ethnology</i>	Hindi	Sita Ram	Allahabad: Zubdat-un-Nazair Press and Indian Press
1895	<i>Report Conference Jismānī Dastūr-ul-'Amal Daḡātīr-i-Ruḡānī</i>	Caste allegory	Urdu	Kali Charan	Kanpur: Kayastha Sadar Sabha Hind Press
1895	<i>Naṣīḡat Nāma</i>	Caste advice manual	Urdu	Har Dayal Singh	Kanpur: Kayastha Sadar Sabha Press
1895	<i>Tārīkh-i-Aqvām-i-Kāyastha</i>	Caste sub-sect history	Urdu	Jagannath Prasad	Kanpur: Kayastha Sadar Sabha Press
1895	<i>Fālnāma Ism-i-Az'am Kāyasthān</i>	Caste astronomy	Urdu	Chhaj Mal	Muzaffarnagar: Faiza-i-Aam
1897	<i>Aqvām-i-Hind</i>	Caste history with a focus on Kayasthas	Urdu	Gouri Lal	Kanpur: Nawal Kishore Press
1897	<i>Chitragupta Kathā Kāyastha Utpattī</i>	Caste origin in verse	NA	Kali Charan	Sultanpur: Jubilee Press
1898	<i>Tuḡfa-i-Nāyāb-Barādarī</i>	Caste advice manual on marriages	Urdu	Pyare Lal	Misrikh, district Sitapur: Baranprakash
1898	<i>Kāyastha Bans Prakāsh</i>	Caste genealogy	Urdu	Umrao Singh	Farrukhabad: Chintamana Press

Table 5: Kayastha Textual Advocacy II: Periodicals, Pamphlets, Proceedings of Meetings, 1860–1900

Date	Title (Corrected for diacritics and transliteration)	Genre	Language	Author/Editor	Place of publication and Publisher (when known)
1870	<i>Fehrist Pehchān Şāhib-i-Membrān-o-Committee-i-Anjumanān Insidād Fizūl Kharchī Shādī Qaum-i-Kāyasthān Mu'ammil Maghrib-o Shumālī-o Sharqī Awadh-Bangāl</i>	Rules of marriage and curtailment of expenditure among Kayasthas of North-Western Provinces, Bengal, and Oudh	Urdu	Pyare Lal	Allahabad: Thakurprasad,
1870	<i>Dastūr-al-'Amal Shādī Chitragupta Bans</i>	Rules of marriage	Urdu	Harbans Lala, et al.	Ramdhan Lal
1870	<i>Paddhati Prayāg Chhetra ke Kāyasthom ke Vivāh ki</i>	Rules of marriage	Hindi	Pyaare Lal	Allahabad: Govt. Press
1870	<i>Dastūr-ul-'Amal Zawābat Shādī Firqa-i-Kāyastha Srivāstav</i>	Rules of marriage	Urdu	Pyaare Lala	Allahabad: Govt. Press
1871	<i>'Ahadnāma wa Dastūr-al-'Amal Bābat Sarf-i-Shādī wa Insidād-i-Rasm-i-Bād Kāyastha Saksena</i>	Rules of marriage and curtailment of expenditure	Urdu	Ishwariprasah and Kalyan Rai	Meerut: Mohammad Hayat
1873	<i>Kāyastha Samāchār</i>	Monthly journal	Urdu, later English	Various	Allahabad: Lalta Press, and Shadi Lal
1892	<i>Kāyastha Mitra</i>	Monthly journal	NA	NA	Lahore: NA
1893	<i>A Short Account of the Aims, Objects, Achievements, And proceedings of the Kayastha Conference and Letters of Sympathy from Eminent Rulers and High Government Officers</i>	Rules of caste association	English	Conference Reception Committee, Mathura	Mathura: Nazair-i-Kanun Press
1893	<i>Dastūr-al-'Amal Kāyastha, Awadh</i>	Rules of caste association	Urdu	Thakur Prasad	Lucknow: Gulshan-i-Faiz Press, Lucknow

Table 5, continued

1894	<i>Rules of Self-Improvement Society</i>	Rules of caste association	English	Kayastha Pathshala, Allahabad	Allahabad: Nazair-i-Kanun Press
1894	<i>Dastūr-i-ʿAmal-i-Kāyastha Ṣadar Sabhā Hind</i>	Rules of caste association	Urdu	Hargobin Dayal	Lucknow: Kayastha Sadar Sabha Hind Press
1894	<i>Report Sālāna Panjum Kāyastha Provincial Sabhā Awadh Maqām Lucknow</i>	Report of caste association	Urdu	Thakur Prasad	Lucknow: Gulshan-i-Faiz Press
1894	<i>Majmaʿ-i-Qawāʿid-Jamāʿt-i-Mudabirrān Kāyastha Pāthshālā</i>	Rules of educational institution	Urdu	Members. Kayastha Pathshala	Allahabad: Zubdat-un-Nazair Press
1895	<i>Payām-i-Kāyastha Conference</i>	Report on caste association in verse	Urdu	NA	Lucknow: Kayastha Sadar Sabha Hind Press
1895	<i>Dastūr-ul-ʿAmāl Shādī Qaum Kāyastha, Firqa Saksenā Kharanā</i>	Rules of marriage, Kharana sub-sect of Saksena Kayasthas	Urdu	Ganga Dayal	Farukhabad: Chintaman Press
1895	<i>Āghāz-o-Maqāsīd Kāyastha Conference wa Chiṭṭiyāt-i-Hamdardī Hukkām-wālā</i>	Report on meeting of caste association and letters of support from officials	Urdu	Kali Charan, editor	Kayastha Sadar Sabha Hind Press, printer and publisher, Cawnpore
1895	<i>Report Kāyastha Nigam Conference Duvam wa Sevom Muqāmābad</i>	Report on meeting of caste association Nigam sub-sect	Urdu	M. Radhe Behari Lal and M. Partap Narain	Rae Bareili: Whish Press
Jan 1896	<i>Kayastha, (Vol. 1, No. 1)</i>	Caste journal	English	Avadha Behari Lal	Agra: Moon Press
1897	<i>Annual Report of the Kayastha Temperance Societies in India for 1895-96</i>	Report on temperance	English	Kamta Prasad	Agra: Moon Press
1897	<i>Report Nahum Kāyastha Conference, Moradabad</i>	Report on meeting of caste association	Urdu	Brij Ballab Kishore and Baldeo Sahaya	Moradabad: Bidya Bhushan Press

Table 5, continued

1898	<i>Kāyastha Pāthshālā, Ilahābād kī Ibtidā, Āghāz, Taraqqī wa Vāṣiatnāma Munshī Kali Prashad Bani-i-Kāyastha Pāthshālā</i>	Report on the Kayastha Pathshala and Will of Kali Prasad	Urdu	Kayatha Sadar Sabha Hind	Allahabad : Kayastha Pathshala
1898	<i>Report Sālāna Kāyastha Mutual Family Pension Fund Bābat san 1897–98</i>	Report of the Kayastha Mutual Family Pension Fund for the year 1897-98	Urdu	Sankatha Prasad	Lucknow: Kayastha Sadar Sabha Hind Press
1898	<i>Report Ijlās Kāyastha Conference Yāzdahum, Gaya</i>	Report on meeting of caste association	Urdu	NA	NA
1899	<i>Report-i-Sālāna Kāyastha Marriage Provident Fund, India</i>	Report on Kayastha Marriage Provident Fund, India	Urdu	Radhe Bihari Lala	Lucknow: Kayastha Sadar Sabha Hind Press

Table 6: Kalwar Textual Advocacy: Books, Tracts, Journals, Pamphlets, and Proceedings of Meetings, 1900–1930

Date	Title with Translation and Comments from the QLP (Corrected only for diacritics)	Genres	Language	Author/Editor	Place of publication and Publisher
1903	<i>Vaishya Varṇa Prakāsh</i>	Caste genealogy	Hindi text with Sanskrit quotations	Bhagwan Prasad Gupta	Banaras: Byapari and Karigar Press
1905	<i>Kalwār Kalār kī Utpattī</i>	Caste genealogy and myth	Hindi	Sanatan Dhamra Kalwār Bansha Sabha, Allahabad	Allahabad: Bakhtiyari Press,
1905	<i>Kalwār Kshatriya Mitra</i>	Journal	Hindi	Various editors	Allahabad
1912	<i>Kalwār Saṃhitā</i>	Caste genealogy and myth	Hindi translation of <i>Sāhā Saundhik (Kalwār) Saṃhitā</i>	Narayan Chandra Saha, Prem Nath Yogishwar (trans.)	NA
1913	<i>Kalwār Kshatriya Purāṇa</i>	Caste genealogy and myth	Hindi text with Sanskrit quotations	Prem Nath Yogishwar	Allahabad: Sultan Husain Bakhtari Press

Table 6, continued

1913	<i>Kalwār Kshatriya Kuludbhav Kalwār Vamśāvalī</i>	Caste genealogy and myth	Hindi text with Sanskrit quotations	Prem Nath Yogishwar	Allahabad: Babu Lal, Sri Raghavendra Press Allahabad: Author, Colonelganj, publisher
1923	<i>Kalwār Kesarī</i>	Journal	Hindi	Chandrikaprasad Jigyasu	Lucknow: Manager, Kalwar kesari Press
1928	<i>Jaiswāl Jāti kā Itihās</i>	Caste history and genealogy	Hindi	Pandit Jaidev Sharma Vidyalankar and Durgasharan Lal Jaiswal	Calcutta: Ghosh Press

SOURCE: Tables compiled on the basis of *Quarterly List of Publications, United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, 1889–1894, 1894–1899; 1900–1904; 1905–1909; 1910–1914; 1914–1919, 1919–1924*, India Office Library and James Fuller Blumhardt, *Catalogues of the Library of the India Office of Hindustani Books*, vol. 2, part 2, 1900; *Catalogues of the Library of the India Office of Hindi, Panjabi, Pushtu and Sindhi Books*, vol. 2, part 3, 1902 (London, Eyre & Spottiswoode, printers, 1888–1937); Publishers' advertisements in various Kayastha and Kalwar texts; Vernacular Tracts, British Library.

The publication history charted in these tables reflects significant trends in textual advocacy by caste groups such as the languages and scripts used in these works, the genres in which they were written, and the volume of texts produced by each caste. The Kayasthas took to advocacy with gusto from the late 1860s onwards. By the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, caste publics had begun to emerge within many other castes. Initially, other communities with traditional access to literacy resorted to textual advocacy but they never quite achieved the same degree of success as the Kayasthas who were possibly among the earliest castes to employ this strategy.¹²

¹² The Kanyakubja (Kannauj) sub-sect of Brahmins who were close allies of the Hindustani Kayasthas and also shared similar cultural affinity to literacy and education, published a work of caste advocacy quite early, in 1889. For example, *Kānyakubja Maṇḍal Prayāg, Kānyakubja Brāhminon kā Jātiya Patra* (The Caste Journal of Kanyakubja Brahmins), edited by Jwaladutt Sharma, published by Dharmik Yantralaya Prayag, Allahabad, 1889.

Shudra castes associated with trade or agriculture also participated in textual advocacy, but only to a limited degree, as we see in the case of the Kalwars. Moreover, it was only in the twentieth century, almost three decades after privileged castes had made space in the print sphere, that Kalwar textual activity came into its own. Shudra castes produced texts that focused on claiming Kshatriya or Vaishya status. This was particularly true of castes, including Kalwars, who were led by a small number of urban, educated, and propertied elites.¹³ It is interesting to note that even while Shudra castes took to textual advocacy as self-representing subjects quite late, other communities wrote about them as objects of critique or inquiry much earlier. For instance, Jwala Prasad, a Brahmin from Agra, wrote and published *Kutark Khandam* (Refutation of the Claim of Brahminism by the Dhusar Banias) in Sanskrit in 1872, which was classified as “a Controversial Pamphlet,” by the colonial publication records. Writing in a different vein, the Christian Vernacular Education Society of Allahabad wrote and published an advice manual, *Baniā Dharma* (Advice to Shopkeepers) in 1876. In this regard, Vajpeyi’s discussion of the corpus of Sanskrit texts by Brahmin scholars composed between fourteenth and seventeenth centuries, which the author calls the “Śūdradharmā archive” provides a fascinating insight into how strictly Brahminism continued to define and police the Shudras and their socio-cultural life world even in the era of the decline of Sanskrit.¹⁴

¹³ For the situation in Bihar, see William Pinch, “Becoming Vaishnava, Becoming Kshatriya,” in *Peasants and Monks in British India*, 81–115 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); Pinch writes that in the Gangetic plains, largely in areas corresponding to modern Bihar, the Kurmi, the Kushwaha, and the Yadav Shudra castes claimed Kshatriya status and were highly active in caste mobilization in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Also see K. K. Verma, “The All-India Kurmi Sabha: Historical Perspective,” in *Changing Role of Caste Associations*, 13–35 (New Delhi: National Publishing House, 1979).

¹⁴ See Ananya Vajpeyi, “Śūdradharmā and Legal Treatments of Caste,” in *Hinduism and Law: An Introduction*, ed. by Timothy Lubin, 154–166 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

In addition to publishing caste association journals, Kayasthas published in a variety of textual genres: history (*tārīkh*, *tuḥfa*), genealogy (*vaṃsavalī*, *vaṃsapradīpa*), religious treatise (*dharma pothī*), legend or religious story (*kathā*), myths (*purāṇa*), conduct books (*naṣihat nāma*), rule books about marriage and other rituals (*dastūr al-‘amal*, *vivāha paddhati*), enquiry or description (*khulāṣa*), ethnology, as well as a book of divination based on the twelve subsects of the caste (*fālnāma*). Conference reports and printed proceedings of associational meetings were also an important genre of community formation. They served informational and didactic purposes and were also a form of outreach and transregional networking. Kalwars sought to emulate this multi-genre strategy of publication. In publishing in so many genres, we see that caste-based communities made full use of access to print technology and exploited various possibilities of wide dissemination in order to reach the Hindu public.

Most Kayastha texts published in the 1860s and 1870s were in the Perso-Arabic script and as a result, they were categorized under Urdu by colonial taxonomic sources. The language used in some of these texts did not approximate the high-register Persianized Urdu prevalent in literary works and official correspondence of this period. It is possible that some of these early texts were addressed to an audience attuned to orality. For instance, the language of the *Kāyastha Dharma Pothī* (1868) by Munshi Din Dayal of Agra is a mix of versified Awadhi and Braj Bhasha, easily comprehensible to the large community of Kayastha ‘home audiences.’ For example, this couplet that appears alongside an illustration (see Figure 7 below), reads,

*bārāh sat dev bābāt ke chitgupta santān
pragaṭ bahe saṃsār rahem tunkī kehtā bakhān*

Twelve divine beings, the children of Chitrugupta
Appeared on earth, I narrate their tale

As a result, these texts also give us a rare taste of commonplace prose used within the community.¹⁵

Kayastha access to multilingual literacy is reflected in their textual corpus. The last decades of the nineteenth century saw the rise of the Nagari script movement and the popularity of English education. As a result, the Kayastha community embraced literacy in Hindi and English alongside its traditional knowledge of Urdu and Persian in order to maintain its strong professional position. Roughly from the turn of twentieth century onwards, more Kayastha texts were composed in Hindi or were translated into Nagari and English by members of the community.¹⁶ For instance, *The Kayastha Ethnology* was translated as the *Kāyastha Varṇa Mimāṃsa* by Lala Sita Ram and published in Allahabad. In contrast with the prolific textual advocacy by the multilingual Kayasthas who wrote in Urdu, Hindi, and English, Hindi was the language of choice for the Kalwars who lacked traditional access to elite education in Persian and Urdu. As the discussion to follow will illustrate, Kalwars aligned themselves not just with Hindi and Nagari, but also with the purificatory ideals of the Arya Samaj in order to gain upward mobility and fashion themselves as an urban community. Consequently, their textual production was entirely in Hindi. For two caste groups who were both deemed to be of Shudra origin by

¹⁵ It is important to mention here that the Kayasthas had innovated the Kaithi script, but it does not make an appearance in the texts that are extant and which I have examined so far. See Anshuman Pandey, *Proposal to Encode the Kaithi Script in ISO/IEC 10646* (UC Berkeley: Open Access Publication, 2007), <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4kx764tb>. Also see Ulrike Stark, “Letters Beautiful and Harmful: Print, Education, and the Issue of Script in Colonial North India,” *Pedagogica Historica* 55, no. 6 (July 2019): 829–853 for an explanation of why Kayastha’s might prefer Perso-Arabic and Nagari script in some of their publications.

¹⁶ The trend continues to this day, and Kayastha advocacy continues to some degree. For instance, *Kāyastha Kul Nirṇaya* by Khoob Chand, which was originally published in Hyderabad in 1892 was translated by a descendant, Narayan Raj, in 2018. Khoobchand, *Kayāstha Kul Nirṇaya: Determination of Kayastha Community—Select Genealogies of Renowned Kayastha*, translated and edited by Narayan Raj (New Delhi: Gyan Publishing, [1892] 2018).

colonial authorities, this stark difference in textual advocacy can only be explained in terms of their acute difference in socio-economic and ritual status and traditional access to education. Significant clusters of both the Kayastha and Kalwar castes were native to the North-Western Provinces. The Hindustani Kayasthas were historically a highly literate caste with a long history of employment and access to hereditary positions at all levels of administration, including under the Mughals and the British.¹⁷ As per customary practice, for centuries the Kayasthas of north India were able to access upper-caste ritual practices like the thread-ceremony and work in close association with high-caste elites.¹⁸ As a result, until the nineteenth century, Kayastha *jāti* position, which did not neatly align with a clear status within the four-rung *varṇa* system, had not raised any red flags within the Hindu community.

The temporal and spatial dimensions of Kayastha activity are also noteworthy. The initial center of such advocacy was Lucknow, the erstwhile Nawabi capital of the princely state of Awadh and an important center of Urdu publishing. By the 1870s, however, the rise of Allahabad's status as the capital city of the region, led to a gradual shift or rather expansion in the base of Kayastha activities. The most important piece of evidence of this spatial expansion eastward towards Allahabad can be found in the fact that soon after the foundation of journal, the *Kāyastha Samāchār* (1873), and a few years after the establishment of a Sanskrit school in Lucknow, (est. approximately in 1869), Munshi Kali Prasad moved these institutions to

¹⁷ J. A. Bellenoit, *The Formation of the Colonial State in India: Scribes, Paper, and Taxes, 1760–1860*, Routledge Studies in South Asian History (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2017).

¹⁸ While a full discussion of this point is outside the scope of this chapter, these privileges point to the possible origin of Kayasthas in a variety of literate and touchable castes. See Leonard, *Social History of an Indian Caste* for this theory of origin of the Hindustani Kayasthas.

Allahabad in 1873.¹⁹ With the decline of Lucknow as the center of political power in the region, Prasad seemed to have deliberately chosen Allahabad—the new center of colonial bureaucracy and judiciary—as the future seat of Kayastha advocacy and activism. In the following section, I discuss the implications of these shifts for Allahabad, as well as Allahabad’s influence on Kayastha mobilization.

Part I: Kayasthas of Allahabad

Binding Myths to Texts

The earliest texts written by both the Kayasthas and the Kalwars sought to pin down scriptural sources and orally transmitted myths as printed texts. Below, I discuss a few of these texts which find repeated mention within caste journals and have been advertised widely over years, indicating their reception history and the importance they came to hold within the community. Allahabadi men (with almost no exception, men were at the forefront of caste-based activities), Allahabadi associations, and Allahabadi publishing houses played a starring role in these narratives of mobilization.

***The Kayastha Ethnology* (Lucknow, 1877) and *Kāyastha Varṇa Mīmāṃsā* (Allahabad, 1906)**

Textual advocacy was a double-pronged strategy which targeted a dual audience comprising colonial authorities as well as the Kayastha public. The best-known among Kayastha advocacy texts is *The Kayastha Ethnology*. It was compiled by Munshi Kali Prasad and his associates. In his introduction to the text, Prasad writes, “The aim of the present treatise being to show clearly

¹⁹ See the discussion of this shift in the section on Kali Prasad, p. 164 onwards.

the origin of the Kayastha caste, and *to remove the obscurity which hangs about it*, it becomes of importance to introduce the subject by tracing the creation of the world in accordance with the Vedas and other Hindu religious authorities” (emphasis added).²⁰ A number of other Kayasthas from the same Srivastava sub-sect as Prasad aided him in putting together the text. Many of them were also legal professionals like Prasad. His colleagues in this venture were: “Babu Brij Bhookhan Lal, Gour (Registrar, Judicial Commissioners Court, Oudh); Sri Ram Srivastava Dusre, MA, BL; Ram Saran Das Varma, Srivastava Khare, BA; and Hargobind Dayal, Srivastava Dusre, FA.” The text was first published by the American Methodist Mission Press of Lucknow in 1877. In 1895, it was reprinted by the Zubdat-un-Nazair Press of Allahabad. In 1906, Lala Sita Ram translated it into Hindi as *Kāyastha Varṇa Mīmāṃsā*. It was printed at the Indian Press on behalf of the Kayastha Pathshala. The translator added a preface in English as well as one in Hindi. The content of these two prefaces were somewhat different. In addition, Sita Ram’s edition included a biography of Kali Prasad. Sita Ram also rearranged the section of Kali Prasad’s English text and liberally added his own sections and insights, making this a somewhat independent text in its own right—a recreation rather than a translation. Sita Ram’s translation of this seminal text into Hindi and its publication by a publishing house in Allahabad also bears witness to the expansion of Kayastha activities eastward towards Allahabad from Lucknow. While the English text was written as an appeal to and clarification for colonial authorities about Kayastha caste status, the text’s translation into Hindi implied that a Hindi literate audience would be able to read it.

²⁰ Prasad, *Kayastha Ethnology*, 10.

***Kāyastha Dharma Pothī* (Agra, 1869) and *Kāyastha Bans Pradīp* (Allahabad, 1875)**

As is evident from Tables 4 and 5, a number of Kayastha advocacy texts were published in the North-Western Provinces in the period before Munshi Kali Prasad's authoritative work appeared in 1877. The issue of language and script of these texts is significant as they indicate the identity of the audience. Prasad's work was composed in English and mainly targeted colonial authorities as well as a transregional English-literate Hindu public. The language and content of the earlier texts indicate that they were addressing a regionally limited north Indian audience. As the dates of publications of these lie outside the temporal framework of my project, I forgo a detailed discussion. Even so, a very brief sketch of these texts clarifies my argument about the process of textualization. These texts also constitute the basis of myths, genealogies, ritual practices, and assertions that continue to appear in recent Kayastha publications and remain in circulation within the Kayastha community until today.²¹

The *Kāyastha Dharma Pothī* was published Agra in 1869. It was written by the thirty-one-year-old Munshi Din Dayal. Even though the text is not from Allahabad, I mention it here as it was one of the earliest works of Kayastha advocacy to appear in print. It is also a rare instance of an illustrated text of Kayastha mythology and genealogy. Similarly, *Kāyastha Bans Pradīp*,

²¹Akhil Bhartiya Kayastha Mahasabha, Allahabad, *Mahāsaṅgam—Akhil Bhārtiya Kāyastha Mahāsabhā Smārika* (122nd Kayastha Conference, 25 and 26 December, Allahabad, 2000); *Udghosh* (Allahabad: 2018).

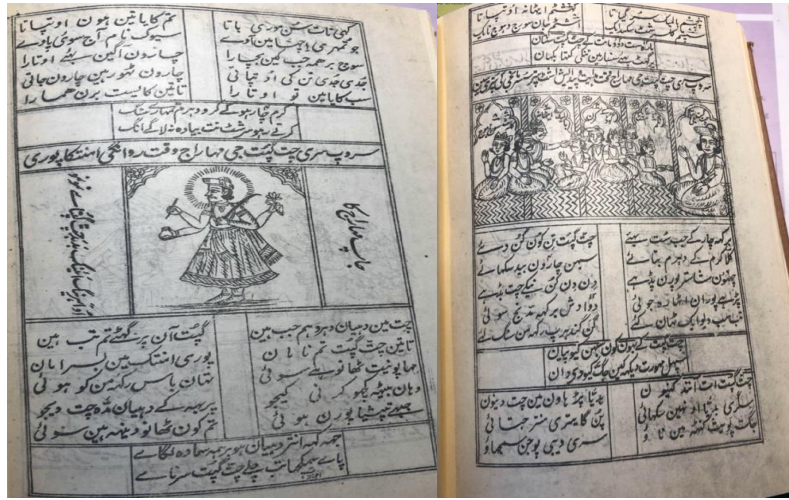


Figure 7: Pages from the illustrated *Kāyastha Dharma Pothī*, Agra, 1869²²
SOURCE: British Library, London

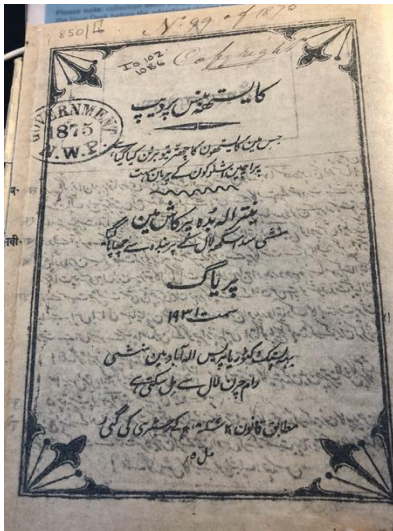


Figure 8: Cover of *Kāyastha Bans Pradīp*, Allahabad, 1875
SOURCE: British Library, London

composed in Urdu by Munshi Ram Charan Lal and published in Allahabad in 1875, is noteworthy as the first Kayastha work to be published in the city. Both texts lay out the Kayastha

²² The illustration on the right depicts the semi-divine Chitrugupta from whom many Kayasthas trace their lineage. The one on the right depicts Chitrugupta's twelve sons who became the progenitors of the twelve Kayastha sub-sects.

origin myth by citing a range of scriptures as sources. All versions of the Kayastha origin myths hinge on the tale of Chitrugupta, the divine being created by Brahma to act as the scribe for Dharmaraj/Yamaraj, the god of death. As per legend, Chitrugupta's provenance lay outside the four-rung caste system since he was created as a fifth entity. Yet, legend goes that he was filled with the scholarly skills of the Brahmins and the heroic virtues of the Kshatriyas, the two highest castes. Chitrugupta's two divine wives bore twelve sons who were married off to twelve suitable wives. These sons were taught the Vedas and allowed to undertake all the rituals sanctioned only for the twice-born castes. When they came of age, they were sent off to the mortal world to establish the twelve sub-sects of the Chitrugupta Kayastha caste: Ambasthas, Ashthanas, Balmikis, Bhatnagars, Gaur, Karan, Kulshrestha, Mathurs, Nigams, Saksenas, Srivastavas (Dusre and Khare), and Surajdhvaj.²³

Tales of Chitrugupta as the *ur*-Kayastha and of fraternity among the twelve sub-sects were a common trope in these texts. For instance, there are several illustrations of the twelve sons of Chitrugupta in the *Kāyastha Dharma Pothī*. These illustrations are followed by verses that instruct the sons to conduct themselves on earth as befits divine-born, ideal scribes (see Figure 7). While the myths about the origins of the caste had been passed down and orally disseminated for centuries, the act of putting down these myths in printed texts from the mid-nineteenth century onwards held specific intentionality. In tracking these strategies, we begin to glean Kayastha motivations.

²³ Many of these sub-sects exist only on paper and do not correspond to any existing sub-sect among the Kayasthas today. It is interesting that in these early north Indian texts, there is no mention of the Chandraseni Kayasthas from whom the Marathi Kayasthas trace their origin. Kali Prasad, who was more cosmopolitan and astute, and aimed to create and consolidate a pan-India Kayastha community, refers to them and includes their origin myths in his text.

Lucy Caroll has demonstrated that even in the late nineteenth century, there was little sense of a consolidated “Kayastha” identity among the twelve sub-sects of this caste. They did not practice inter-marriage or inter-dining; hence, they were more a “caste-cluster” than one consolidated caste.²⁴ Even in the early years of the twentieth century, when these caste advocacy texts had circulated for years and association building activities had become widespread, factionalism among the sub-sects of the Kayastha continued. For instance, in-fighting for power manifested itself on the question of which sub-sect would control the administration of the Kayastha Pathshala.²⁵ Similarly, as the titles of texts and reports in Tables 4 and 5 suggest, assertions of identity among sub-sects like the Nigams or Saksenas continued in parallel with Kayastha associational efforts. Keeping this context in view, early Kayastha texts were a direct and crucial medium of internal address to fellow caste members and were instrumental in herding the dispersed flock of twelve sub-sects into a united Kayastha community. Through print production and circulation, the texts were imagining a consolidated caste identity into existence for a group of scattered sub-sects engaged in a range of scribal and administrative jobs.

Leonard also suggests that the Kayasthas were a group of occupationally homogenous people who had emerged from various upper castes groups over the centuries and had taken up similar occupations in royal households and administration. Over time, and often retrospectively, they began to identify themselves as “Kayasthas” based on occupational homogeneity.²⁶ Given this possible diversity of origin, the vehement assertion of a consolidated origin tale across

²⁴ Caroll, “The Hindustani Kayasthas.”

²⁵ Caroll, “Ideological Factions in a Caste(s) Association—The Kayastha Conference: Educationists and Social Reformers,” *South Asia: Journal of Asian Studies* 1, no. 2 (1978): 11–26.

²⁶ Leonard, *Social History of an Indian Caste*, 2.

regional differences is all the more interesting and takes on a new layer of urgency in the colonial era. Textual advocacy played a major role in bringing together the various sub-sects and in shaping the in-group identity of the community. The propagation of a homogenous tale that was widely accepted and believed within the community also increased the chances of the rest of the Hindu community accepting this new identity. Such a strategy also served to counter the threat posed by meddling colonial officials. My intention here is not to engage with the accuracy of these claims and counterclaims, but rather to track the strategies deployed by Hindustani Kayasthas. These strategies made full use of the urban facilities of print culture and educational institutions. Even though the authors made a variety of claims about Kayastha origins, not always adhering to a single script, this strategy of textual argumentation worked like a legal defense—cutting off the many heads of the hydra rather than propping up a singular consolidated narrative. Therefore, this flurry of texts was more than a defensive strategy. A unified “Kayastha” identity was also essential in generating the significant funds required to develop the Kayastha Pathshala, and education was crucial for setting up the pipeline to professional jobs. In these ways, the educated and empowered section among the Kayasthas marshaled caste as the main locus of their modern-day identity. In so doing, the classic conditions for a conflicted identity were set up, whereby tools of colonial modernity such as the printing press and commercial distribution of texts were harnessed without a true interrogation of the category of caste and its limitations.

Kāyastha Samāchār in its Various Iterations: Education, Reform, and Property

From its foundation in 1873 and until the 1960s, even while the *Kāyastha Samāchār* took on various avatars, it remained the most important organ of the community. Its prestige and power stemmed from its identity as the first journal of the Kayastha community of Allahabad and indeed of the region. Kali Prasad conceived the school and the journal as twin institutions for the advocacy and progress of the community. The first twenty years of the journal are not well-documented, and the early issues of the journal have not been preserved.²⁷ In contrast, the history of the journal for the period between 1899 to 1905 is well known and has been discussed by Lucy Carroll extensively.²⁸ Hence, I do not discuss it here. During this time, the *Kāyastha Samāchār* was published in two iterations: in Urdu and in English. Copies of the Urdu version are no longer available. Between 1907 and 1915, the *Kāyastha Samāchār* is not mentioned in the colonial records. Instead, the *Kul Bhāskar* (The Sun of the Kayastha Clan), described by the publication records as “a monthly devoted to the interest of the Kayasthas, in general, and Kayastha Pathshala, Allahabad, in particular,” edited by Sridhar Prasad was published from January 1909 until 1914. No copies of this publication are available. But based on the

²⁷ The English journal was placed under Ramananda Chatterjee in 1899, at that time the principal of the Pathshala. As discussed in chapter two, Chatterjee later became one of the leading editors and journalists of the country. See Carroll, “Caste, Social Change,” 70, for a discussion of Chatterjee’s resignation. In January 1901, Sachidananda Sinha, a Kayastha barrister from Bihar, took over as editor of the English journal and changed the name of the journals to *Hindustan Review and Kāyastha Samachar*. Sinha’s appointment was likely motivated by the fact that the administration felt that only a Kayastha could be the editor of the community’s main mouthpiece. Chatterjee resigned as the principal of the school as well, possibly in 1905. Under Sinha’s editorship from 1901 to 1905, the publication emerged as an English language journal that targeted a general public. Only a small section of ten pages titled “Kayastha World,” addressed the Kayasthas and relayed news of the community to them.

²⁸ Lucy Carroll has examined this archive extensively. She traces the various shifts in the journal’s editorship and ideology during these years. But her archive is limited to an examination of issues from 1900 and 1905 with a focus on Sinha’s stature as an independent thinker beyond his caste identity. See Lucy Carroll, “Kayastha Samachar: from a Caste—to a National Newspaper,” *The Indian Economic & Social History Review* 10, no. 3 (1976): 280–292. In fact, most of the scholarship on the Kayasthas focuses on this period in the journal’s history. Issues published after 1905 were believed to be unavailable. I was able to access some issues of the *Kāyastha Samāchār* from the 1930s and 1940s at the Kayastha Pathshala Trust.

information gleaned from the *Quarterly Lists*, it is likely that this publication replaced the *Samāchār* for a few years.²⁹

By examining the extant copies of the *Kāyastha Samāchār* journal from 1935 to 1942, I was able to continue tracking the history of this publication and the Kayastha community in Allahabad. When read alongside earlier issues from 1901 to 1905, these later issues indicate the change in vision that occurred in the intervening years. By the 1930s, the *Kāyastha Samāchār* completely turned into a Kayastha mouthpiece. It became a platform dedicated to sharing news about the financial status of Kayastha institutions and the educational achievements of students from the community. Unlike its early years of publication, the aim of opinion-making and consolidation of the community around common causes gave way to dissemination of information about the many educational institutions run by the Kayastha Pathshala. Issues of the journal from these later years furnish us with a wealth of information about the income, expenditure, and investment of the Pathshala. They also shed light on the ideological debates within the administration, revealing fissures within the community. In addition, we get a sense of the caste and religious composition of the students enrolled in Kayastha institutions.

As per the reports of the proceedings of the Kayastha Pathshala Executive Committee, by the 1930s, the Kayastha Pathshala went on to own three estates, one near Lucknow, and one in the Kara, and one in Atherban. Groves, houses, and grounds in Lucknow, Allahabad, and

²⁹ The *Kul Bhāskar* was first published by the Anwar-i-Sabiri Press, Allahabad and, from 1910 onwards, it was published by the Kul Bhaskar Press, Allahabad. Colonial publication records, though not an entirely reliable or comprehensive source of information, reflect that the issues of the *Samāchār* in 1915 were classified as Volume 32, which attests to theory that there was a gap of at least two years (1907–1909) in publication. From 1915 onwards, the editor was Ganesi Lal, and the publishers were Baldeo Prasad followed by Kunj Behari Lal. Publication continued uninterrupted until at least 1929, as the records reflect that the 46th volume of the *Kāyastha Samāchār* was published in “Anglo-Sanskrit and Urdu” “Anglo-Urdu and Sanskrit” and “Hindi-English” with Ganesi Lal still at the helm as editor.

Nimabra generated further income. In addition, donations and special endowments were made by influential Kayasthas across north India, several of whom were legal professionals.³⁰ The annual income from all these sources amounted to approximately Rs 80,0000. The main heads of expenditure were scholarship funds, stipends for widows, aid-in-marriages, expenses incurred in the running of educational institutions, and the Kayastha Pathshala Press and Printing School.

In examining the membership list of the Governing Council, we find that about 90 per cent of the members were Kayasthas from Allahabad and others were Kayasthas from the surrounding region. Separate reports were furnished for all branches of the Kayastha Pathshala which included the K. P. University College (undergraduate and masters), the K. P. Intermediate College (grades eight through twelve), and the K. P. School (grades three to six). At this time, Dr. Tara Chand, eminent historian, founder of the Hindustani Academy, and professor at the University of Allahabad, held the post of principal of the K. P. University College, Allahabad.³¹ The annual report of the college written by Chand elucidates the institutional aspects of the Kayastha pipeline. For instance, at this time, 221 students were enrolled, 140 being undergraduates and 81 graduates. Good results and ranks in various university exams and public service exams were repeatedly mentioned in the reports and celebrated.³² Most of the students came from the various Kayastha sub-sects, along with a few from other twice-born castes (*dvij dharmis*). Gokal Chand, the principal of K. P. Intermediate College mentioned in his report that

³⁰ In 1939, donations came from Devi Prasad, Advocate, Bahadurganj, Allahabad; Kailash Chandra Varma, Kashmir Gate, Delhi; Ram Lal Srivastava, pleader, Hardoi; and Baldev Prasad Zar Saksena, Bijnor.

³¹ For a history of the Hindustani Academy, an important Allahabadi institution, see David J. Lunn, "Looking for Common Ground: Aspects of Cultural Production in Hindi/Urdu, 1900–1947" (PhD diss., SOAS, University of London, 2012).

³² During his tenure, the infrastructure was further expanded. For instance, two bungalows were hired to accommodate the growing student body. A new dining room was inaugurated. *Kayastha Samachar and Pathshala Magazine*, 1939.

the number of Kayastha students were 563 and “non-Kayasthas” were 297. A caste-wise list of twenty-one students who held government scholarships shows that the non-Kayasthas were Brahmin, Kshatriya, Marwari, and Bhumihar. With the exception of one Jaiswal student who was from the Kalwar caste, the rest belonged to various upper castes.³³ Awadh Behari Lal was the headmaster of the K. P. School during this period and furnished a separate report for his institution. Lal’s report reveals that even at the stage of primary education, the same strict adherence to caste principles is on display.

The Pathshala did not merely record the religion and caste of students, it also carefully maintained a list of the Kayastha sub-sects to which students belonged. For instance, among the recipients of the Special Scholarship from the Intermediate College, all the students were Kayasthas, with their place of residence and sub-sect enlisted.³⁴ In 1940, a major conflict broke out among the board members on the issue of whether students from the Harijan/Depressed Classes (as untouchable communities were classified at that time) should be allowed into the K. P. University College. Tara Chand led the motion for their admittance while Munshi Harnandan vehemently opposed it. The latter group won in this particular instance. The report also reveals that the school was open to upper-caste Hindus but not to Muslims or Christians of any class or caste background. Apart from the caste break-up of students, we also learn that Kayasthas and upper-caste Hindus constituted the entirety of the teaching body. For instance, among the thirty-two teachers at the K. P. Intermediate College (grades eight through twelve), around twenty-six

³³ At this period, the Jaiswals (Kalwars) also claimed to be Kshatriyas. Moreover, the father of this student was Dr. Gorakh Prasad Jaiswal, one of the mercantile elites of the community and city, which might explain why he was admitted to the Pathshala. Ibid.

³⁴ In 1939–40, 196 Kayastha students and 31 “others” were enrolled at the K. P. Intermediate College. Ibid.

belonged to the various sub-sects among the Kayasthas and the rest were all from other upper caste groups.

The annual reports also establish how the Kayastha Pathshala, and the city of Allahabad, emerged as the clearing house for major charity efforts by the Kayastha community of the North-Western Provinces. The Pathshala received donations from all over north India and dispersed them throughout the region, always prioritizing their own caste members. The aim was to provide education up to the undergraduate level of study and prepare students to take up professional employment. Positions in the colonial public services and law were the preferred avenues of employment among the Kayasthas, though other professions such as medicine and teaching were also considered commendable. Even though copies of the journal from 1906 to 1936 are not available, the budgets and reports of the Kayastha Pathshala from the late 1930s show that between 1873 and 1940, a successful pipeline of education and professional success had been laid out by the Kayasthas of Allahabad so as to consolidate their caste into an upwardly mobile professional community.

Setting up the Kayastha Pipeline: Munshi Kali Prasad and His Associates



Figure 9: Kayastha Pathshala Intermediate College, Allahabad, January 2020
(With a bust of Munshi Kali Prasad at the center)
SOURCE: My photograph, January 2020

Munshi Kali Prasad played a foundation role in setting up the pipeline of Kayastha success I trace in this chapter. He is a renowned figure within the Kayastha community and biographical snippets are often repeated in the commemorative volumes published by the Kayastha Pathshala. Lucy Carroll's dissertation includes a short biography of this major advocate of Kayastha identity. Some of the sources she relies on are no longer accessible.³⁵ The major events of Prasad's life were passed down orally within the community. But biographical documents written in the highly Persianized Urdu prevalent in the nineteenth century are on display in dusty glass cases at the Kayastha Pathshala school. I examine these documents to understand why Prasad chose to switch from his job as a munshi in the colonial administration to a legal career in 1865 and his motivations for moving the journal and the school to Allahabad in 1873.

³⁵ Carroll refers to these documents in her profile of Prasad, "The Hindustani Kayasthas," fn 15, 185.



Figure 10: Munshi Kali Prasad, “Extract from the Character Book of the Oudh Settlement Department,”
 May 1861
 SOURCE: Kayastha Pathshala Library, Allahabad

Kali Prasad, son of Munshi Din Dayal, was born on December 3, 1840. As per biographical sketches found in Kayastha textual lore, he was born in Jaunpur and given a traditional education in Persian and Sanskrit at home. Carroll mentions that Prasad caught the attention of Shiva Prasad, then a Joint-Inspector of Schools of the Banaras Circle, who encouraged his father to send the boy to Banaras.³⁶ A matriculation certificate from the Normal School in Banaras issued in October 1857 identifies him as a young man of seventeen, and a resident of Shahzadpur in the district of Allahabad. At Benaras, he studied Urdu, Nagari (Hindi), Survey, Map-making and Drawing, Astronomy, Geography, Medical Knowledge, Note-keeping,

³⁶ Ibid., 148.

and various aspects of Mathematics (Euclid, Algebra, Arithmetic) and Law (Revenue Law and Criminal Law).³⁷

According to Carroll, he had been employed as a teacher only for a few months when the Rebellion of 1857 broke out. In the next year, he rejoined government service as a Deputy Inspector of Schools.³⁸ Then he took up employment as a clerk (*munşarim*) in the Revenue Department of Oudh in October 1859 (see Figure 10 below), but we do not know the reasons for this move. He worked in this capacity for a few years, making slow progress through the lower ranks of the colonial bureaucracy. He qualified for the “Vakil” exam held in January 1865 and joined the court at Lucknow.³⁹

Kayastha texts mention that Kali Prasad decided to give up employment under the colonial government and take up law as a result of the profound impact of the events of 1857. These accounts retrospectively attribute a patriotic motive to his career change but there is no evidence to suggest such an imperative or of any feelings of disloyalty towards the Crown. Carroll also provides no reason for Kali Prasad decision to become a lawyer. In my examination of Prasad’s papers, I found that Prasad received several letters of appreciation during this period of his career. They also mention his salary that remained low despite Prasad’s record as an efficient worker. The letters indicate that even though his talent was appreciated, Kali Prasad faced hardships in his career. A close examination of the applications Prasad sent to colonial officials appealing for promotions reflect that he was frustrated by the unsteady prospects of

³⁷ Certificate from the Normal School, Banaras, October 1, 1857, Kayastha Pathshala Intermediate College.

³⁸ Carroll, “The Hindustani Kayasthas,” 149. I did not find any document that provides evidence for this part of Prasad’s career.

³⁹ Diploma certificate issued to “Lallah Kalee Pershad” by the Judicial Commissioner, Oudh, February 2, 1865, Kayastha Pathshala Intermediate College.

growth within the Revenue Department. The last letter in the Pathshala collection is from 1864.⁴⁰ In this letter, Prasad mentions that his current position is under threat of disappearing due to a bout of downsizing and requests that he is retained within the Revenue Department or transferred to another similar position. It is likely that the capable and ambitious Prasad found that the avenues for permanent employment within the colonial bureaucracy were not very profitable and the scope for promotion was slow. During the brief period when he worked for the Revenue Department, Prasad was posted in different places across the province such as Hamirpur, Mohanlalganj, Malihabad and these frequent transfers might have added to the dissatisfaction he felt towards his conditions of employment.⁴¹ Robbed of the traditional means of promotion within bureaucracy that Kayasthas were used to under the Mughal and Nawabi administrations and as employees of other native states, an enterprising man like Prasad might have found the legal profession a better means of upward mobility. Carroll mentions that Prasad's father was also a minor official but did not find much success. His father's stalled career in bureaucracy might have also served as a cautionary tale.⁴² Presumably, after his appeal for retention had failed, he turned to law. In 1865, at the age of twenty-five, he qualified as a "Pleader and Agent in the Courts of Oudh" with a specialty in "Civil Justice," and moved to Lucknow.

Kali Prasad's transition to law indeed proved to be successful for him and for his community. A brief essay on the history of the Oudh court notes that Prasad was "one of the

⁴⁰ An Appeal by Kali Prasad to the Department in-Charge, Revenue Department, Oudh, dated October 28, 1864. At this time, he was employed as Munşarim-i-Bandobast at a salary of fifty to sixty rupees.

⁴¹ Correspondence dated January 22, 1863; February 15, 1863; September 2, 1863; October 3, 1863.

⁴² Carroll, "The Hindustani Kayasthas," 140.

oldest and highly respected members of the Oudh Bar.”⁴³ Within a short time, from 1865 when he began his practice until his death twenty-one years later in 1886, Kali Prasad had amassed a substantial amount of wealth through his legal practice and gained much prestige within and beyond the community, testifying to the shrewdness of his move from a clerical job in the bureaucracy to working as a lawyer. He rose to eminence as one of the leading members of Lucknow’s public life. In her article on the Jalsah-e Tahzib (est. 1868), one of the earliest “cross-cultural and secular” voluntary civic associations of Lucknow, Ulrike Stark notes that Prasad was a prominent member of this venture and was involved in a number of socio-cultural initiatives in the city.⁴⁴ Stark also notes an important connection between one of the earliest educational initiatives of the Jalsah-e Tahzib at Lucknow—a Sanskrit school—and the institution that later became the Kayastha Pathshala of Allahabad. As members of the Jalsah-e Tahzib, a number of educated Kashmiri Pandits and Kayasthas of Lucknow, including Prasad, made a case for Sanskrit education in the city in 1869. On the basis of Prasad’s appeal, which he delivered in Sanskrit, a Sanskrit primary school (*pāthśālā*) was opened in Lucknow. Two eminent Kayastha men—Brij Bhukhan Lal and Pandit Shyammanohar—were put in charge.⁴⁵

In 1873, this Sanskrit school was moved to Allahabad and renamed the Kayastha Pathshala. A detailed discussion of the early years of the school’s history is available in Caroll’s scholarship.⁴⁶ Here I only mention the aspects relevant to my inquiry. Prasad made an initial

⁴³ H. K. Ghose, “History of the Court in Avadh from 1856 up to Present Times,” in *High Court of Judicature at Allahabad: Centenary Celebration, 1866–1966*, vol. 1. (Allahabad: Allahabad High Court Publications), 1966. <https://www.allahabadhighcourt.in/event/HistoryOfTheCourtInAvadhFrom1856HKGhose.pdf>.

⁴⁴ Ulrike Stark, “Associational Culture and Civic Engagement in Colonial Lucknow: The Jalsah-e Tahzib,” *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 48, 1 (2011): 11.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 24. Lal was also one of the associates who helped Prasad compile the *Kayastha Ethnology* published in 1877. See the discussion in the preceding pages.

⁴⁶ Caroll, “Hindustani Kayasthas,” and “Caste, Social Change,” among other works.

grant of over Rs 100,000 to this school in 1874 and an additional Rs 50,000 in 1877–78 when it was raised to an Anglo-Vernacular middle school.⁴⁷ In 1880, the school provided education up to “entrance” affiliated with the Calcutta University. Biographies mention that since Prasad had no immediate next of kin, he decided to designate the entire Kayastha community as his heir. He left behind his whole estate amounting to Rs 600,000 to the school in the form of an endowment to the “Kayastha Education Trust.”⁴⁸ His endowments, legacies, and institutions went on to shape the Kayastha community out of what was until then, a scattered cluster of twelve sub-sects who did not practice inter-dining or intermarriage. His exalted status within the community gained him the epithet of “Kulbhaskar” (“the sun of the clan”).⁴⁹ In 1894–95, a few years after Kali Prasad’s death in 1886, Kayastha Pathshala was granted the status of intermediate college (grades eleven and twelve) under the Allahabad University. Ramananda Chatterjee was hired as principal in 1895. Afterwards, the Pathshala College affiliated with the university with a hostel for Kayastha students. Ultimately, this cluster of institutions became a training ground for Kayastha boys to enter lucrative professions without depending entirely on the colonial government for employment.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Caroll, “Caste, Social Change,” 68.

⁴⁸ See “Manzar-i-Qaum,” an unpublished versified ode by an unknown poet, private papers of Kali Prasad, Kayastha Pathshala Intermediate College. Also see Ghose, “History of the Court in Avadh,” 1966.

⁴⁹ That a successful legal practice was very financially rewarding in in the 1860s and 1870s can be gauged from the fact that around the same time, Jawaharlal Nehru’s uncle Nand Lal rose to become a successful *vakīl* in the Allahabad High Court. Jawaharlal’s father, Motilal Nehru, followed his brother in pursuing a legal profession and found a greater degree of wealth and success. See Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography* (Delhi: Penguin 1936), 3–5.

⁵⁰ Kali Prasad also contributed to the Kayastha community in a number of other ways. He compiled the *Kayastha Ethnology* (discussed above) which promoted the origin story of the caste and remains a bible among the community until today. Biographical notes in contemporary Kayastha publications mention that Prasad also helped with the establishment of the Upper India Couper Paper Mill, the Kayastha Trading Company, and donated to the Kayastha Joint Stock Company, all of which were situated in Lucknow. The paper mill was established by Munshi Naval Kishore as a shareholding company in 1879–80. Kali Prasad was the chairman of board of directors of the Company. See Stark, *Empire of Books*, 190–92. An interesting division is visible here: Kayastha commercial efforts remained in Lucknow while educational and professional efforts were based in Allahabad.

While Prasad continued to practice law at the Judicial Commissioner's Court in Oudh (Awadh) and live in Lucknow, his decision to move the base of his associational activities from Lucknow to Allahabad is significant. With this shift, the main center of Kayastha advocacy also came to be based in Allahabad. Prasad had presciently realized that henceforth, the center of power would be located in Allahabad, the new provincial capital, rather than in Lucknow, the old Nawabi capital.⁵¹ In turn, Kayastha presence, their associational and institutional activity, shaped the city of Allahabad and the North-Western Provinces in a number of ways.

A number of other illustrious Kayasthas, mostly lawyers, along with a handful of landowners, were among the earliest supporters of Kali Prasad's educational initiatives. Among them were his close friends and associates, Munshi Murlidhar Srivastava, also a lawyer, and "Ra 'īs-i-A' zam" (The Great Ra 'īs) Chaudhri Mahadev Prasad, a landowner. These three men were tied by various forms of kinship as they all belonged to the Srivastava Dusre sub-sect among the Kayasthas, and their families hailed from the same *qaṣba* of Kada.⁵² Together, the three took up the leadership of the new educational institution.⁵³ Srivastava also established the Kayastha Company Limited in Sitapur jointly with his brother Kalicharan. In 1877, he endowed Rs 25,000 to the Kayastha Pathshala and gave Rs 5,000 to fund scholarships (*vazīfā*) for the

⁵¹ Caroll lists the six reasons for this relocation that Kali Prasad mentioned in the "Prospectus" of the Kayastha Pathshala, Caroll, "Caste, Social Change," 68–69.

⁵² Prior to the rise of the city of Allahabad under the Mughals, Kada had been the seat of a Hindu ruler who controlled the region. Surendra Nath Sinha, *Subah of Allahabad under the Great Mughals, 1580–1707* (New Delhi: Jamia Milia Islamia, 1974).

⁵³ At the first Kayastha Conference held during 1887 in Lucknow, Murlidhar Srivastava presented an address and read a quatrain which illustrates his concern for the welfare of his "qaum," the Kayasthas.

education of Kayastha boys. Both his sons went on to become advocates in the Allahabad High Court and remained active in the administration of the Pathshala.⁵⁴

The expansion of the Kayastha network continued in a variety of ways. For instance, Mahadev Prasad, a scion of a landowning family in the Allahabad district, did not follow the Kayastha vocation of professional education. Instead, after a traditional education in Sanskrit, Urdu, and Hindi, he took up the reins of his ancestral *zamīndārī*. In 1914, he created a trust named after himself and made Kayastha Pathshala the legatee of all his immovable property (except his residential home). He also endowed half of his capital savings to the institution. Prasad's sister, Thakurain Ramkali Devi, who was a childless widow and the wife of late Thakur Bisheswar Baksh Singh, the *talūqadār* of Sitapur. With Prasad's encouragement, she established "Kayastha Scholarship Trust Sitapur" and "Thakur Bisheswar Trust" for Kayastha boys at the Pathshala in honor of the memory of her husband who had died without progeny.⁵⁵ This was another instance of an heirless Kayastha leaving behind his property for the education of boys of the community. Mahadev Prasad also willed Rs 100,000 to Kayastha Pathshala in 1914 for the future expansion of the institution and the establishment of a college. In 1950, a degree-granting college was indeed established in his name. He had two sons, Shivnath Singh and Viswanath Singh. Mahadev Prasad's son Shivnath Singh, his grandson, Naunihal Singh, and then great-

⁵⁴ Satish Chitravanshi, "Bhule Bisre Log: Babu Murlidhar Srivastava," *Kāyastha Mahākumbha* (Akhil Bhartiya Kayastha Mahasabha Allahabad: 2010), 71–72.

⁵⁵ Chaudhari Amarnath Singh, "Chaudhri Babu Mahadev Prasad," *Mahāsaṅgam—Akhil Bhārtiya Kāyastha Mahāsabhā Smārika* (Akhil Bhartiya Kayastha Mahasabha, Allahabad, 2004); Vijay Kumar, "Shikshā ke Unnayan mein Kāyasthom kā Yogdān," *Kāyastha Mahākumbha* (Akhil Bhartiya Kayastha Mahasabha Allahabad: 2010), 63–64.

grandson, Jitendra Nath Singh, all went on to become presidents of the trust. Jitendra Nath Singh was elected president for a second term in December 2018.

Table 7: List of Presidents of the Kayastha Pathshala, Allahabad, 1878–present

Dates	Names	Professions
1878–1887	Munshi Hanuman Prasad	Lawyer
1887–1900	Munshi Ram Prasad	Lawyer
1900–1904, 1913–14	Munshi Govind Prasad	Lawyer
1904–1913	Munshi Gokul Prasad	Lawyer
1914–1924	Major Dr. D. R. Ranjit Singh	Doctor in the army
1925–1929	Munshi Ishwar Saran	Lawyer
1930–1934, 1957–1962	Munshi Harnandan Prasad	Lawyer
1935–1939	Munshi Hon. Justice Kamlakant Varma	Lawyer and Judge
1940–1944	Munshi Ambika Prasad	Lawyer
1944–1952	Dr. Narayan Prasad Asthana	Lawyer, member of the Liberal Party, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Allahabad
1952–1956, 1962–1966, 1967–1970	Dr. Pyare Lal Srivastava	D.Phil, Oxford and Professor at the University of Allahabad
1970–1972	NA	NA
1972–1975	Chaudhri Shivnath Singh (son of Mahadev Prasad)	Lawyer
1976–1985, 1990–1992	Chaudhri Naunihal Singh (son of Chaudhri Shivnath Singh and grandson of Mahadev Prasad)	MLA and Minister in the State Govt of UP
1984–1990, 1992–1993	Chaudhri Amar Nath Singh	N/A
1993–1999	Dr. K. P. Srivastava	Doctor
1999–2018	Shri T. P. Singh	N/A
2018–present	Chaudhri Jitendra Nath Singh (great-grandson of Mahadev Prasad, grandson of Chaudhri Shivanath Singh, son of Chaudhri Naunihal Singh)	BA, LLB, and politician (Indian National Congress until 2019)

SOURCE: Premchandra Srivastav, “Kayastha Pathshala Trust ke Adhyaksha,” *Swarna Jayanti Smarikā* (Allahabad: Chaudhri Mahadev Prasad Mahavidyalaya, 2000), 26–29

In following these profiles and the list of presidents, we see that a pipeline of community members putting money into the Kayastha Pathshala Trust and its educational institutions was

established. In return, influential donors and their families maintained hereditary control of institutions even when these were elected positions.⁵⁶ It is also worth noting that in the pre-Independence period, with the exception of Ranjit Singh who was an army doctor, all the presidents of the Kayastha Pathshala were legal professionals associated with the Allahabad High Court. Even today, legal professionals continue to hold great influence over this institution. The Kayastha Pathshala pipeline often led to law as a profession. Thus, we see that the Kayastha community forged a strong link between education and the legal profession that was maintained by perpetuating this network of capital, philanthropy, and patronage.⁵⁷

Education and employment were promoted as the traditional strongholds as well as modern ideals of the community. The changes brought about by colonialism impeded access to traditional channels of education and employment. The Kayastha Pathshala stepped in and replaced the informal routes of imparting and receiving education by formalizing the role of caste networks. For instance, in textual publications and through associational activities like caste conferences, education and educational achievements were held up as the highest ideals for Kayasthas. The repeated remembrances and reproductions of the biographical sketches of illustrious men of the community in texts, beginning with Kali Prasad and his associates,

⁵⁶ When I visited during the December 2018 elections, I was told that given that this was the largest private educational trust in Asia (unverified claim), and elections were a very busy time, a meeting with the president would not be possible while elections were going on. In 2020, I was able to communicate with the present president on phone but unable to meet him. Also see, <https://www.patrika.com/allahabad-news/kayastha-pathshala-k-p-trust-nomination-form-for-member-election-1-3375387/>.

⁵⁷ In contrast with the almost absolute control of the Pathshala by lawyers, a different trend is visible in the post-independence period with members of other professions exercising some control. Two doctors, a professor, and many politicians appear on the list of presidents. In recent years, there seems to have been a takeover of the Trust by landowning families, in particular, the descendants of one of the founders, Chaudhri Mahadeva Prasad, a zamindar, have been in control of the Trust in recent years. The present president, Chaudhri Jitendra Prasad, is Mahadev Prasad's great-grandson.

promoted this Kayastha ideal. A model Kayastha man was one who studied at the schools and institutions supported by the community, studied law at the University of Allahabad, and then practiced law at the High Court, returning to the Kayastha Pathshala Trust as a board member, trustee, and ultimately donor.⁵⁸ While Kali Prasad was childless, Chaudhri Mahadev Prasad and Murlidhar Srivastava had families. Along with progenies of these two men, other influential benefactors took up all the major leadership positions with the Trust. Most of the male children and grandchildren indeed went on to study law, often at the Allahabad University, then practiced at the High Court, and took up positions within the KP Trust. The number of lawyers on the board of trustees remained consistently at about 90 per cent. In showing how Kayastha notions of education and success were molded by the Kayastha Pathshala, I have highlighted the guiding hand of caste in molding the physical and discursive landscape of the city of Allahabad.

We also find a near domination of the Srivastava Dusre sub-sect in this institution. This factionalism shows that, to some degree, the project of projecting and achieving a consolidated identity for the Kayasthas, which would serve to wipe out rivalry and factionalism among the sub-sects, remained incomplete. But the school to profession pipeline was definitely a success and Kayasthas came to represent a major power bloc in the city. Given the dominance of Allahabadi lawyers in the workings of this institution and given that establishing a successful legal practice required apprenticeships and the guidance of senior lawyers, networks were crucial for professional success. The school became the center of such networking efforts, connecting Kayasthas across the city and region to each other and keeping them in touch, ensuring a pipeline

⁵⁸ Post-independence, the lingua franca of the community was no longer Urdu. Initially, the community produced texts in English and eventually, in Hindi.

of success for the community. While a number of other Kayastha texts, journals, and associations thrived across the province, Allahabad and the Kayastha Pathshala remained the sun of this solar system.

PART II: The Kalwars of Allahabad

Kalwar Texts

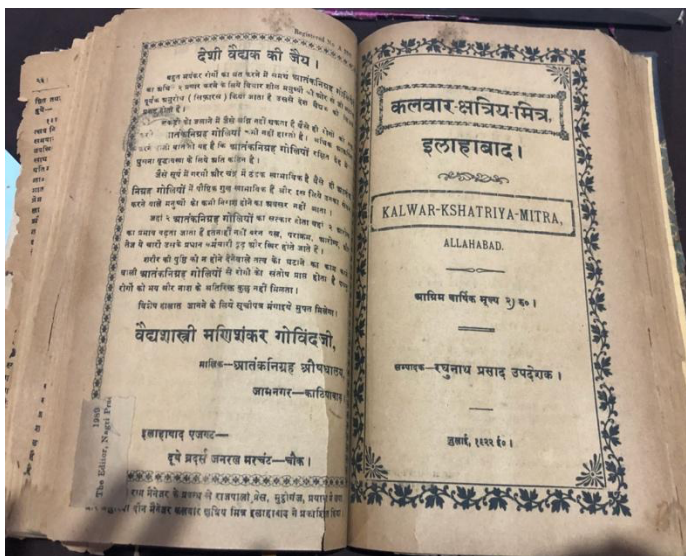


Figure 11 (left): Cover of the *Kalwār Kshatriya Mitra*, Allahabad, July 1922
SOURCE: Nagari Pracharini Sabha, Banaras

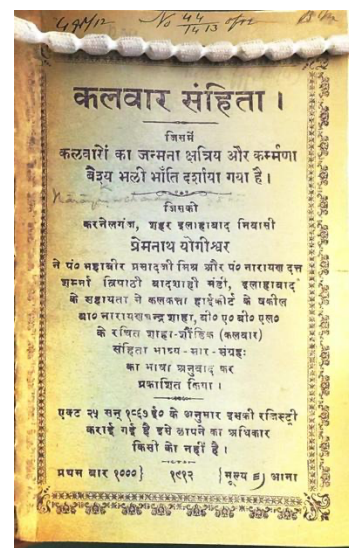


Figure 12 (right): Cover of *Kalwār Samhitā*, Allahabad, 1912
British Library, London

The manufacture and sale of alcohol was the hereditary occupation of the Kalwars. Under the colonial regime, they were categorically classified as Shudra without any benefit of doubt that previously might have been available to urban Kalwars, many of whom were engaged in trade. Colonial authorities deemed Kalwars to be outside the twice-born castes since their traditional occupation entailed physical labor centering upon an impure substance, alcohol. Consequently, they were deemed to be *asat* (unclean) Shudras. Like the Kayasthas, the Kalwar claim of being

Kshatriya and aspiration to a higher ritual status was a multi-pronged strategy to attain prestige and enhance caste pride with an eye on economic and social mobilization. Unlike the Kayasthas, caste mobilization also aimed to counter casteism and speak out against caste injustices. Kayasthas already had traditional access to networks of social and cultural capital before embarking on the task of community formation but the Kalwars had to start from scratch. Administrative sources like the *Census* and the *Government Gazette* portray the extent to which castes like the Kalwars lagged behind in education and employment, despite the fact that a small section among the Kalwars owned wealth and property and numbered among the *Ra'īs*—the wealthy and elite leaders of Allahabad.⁵⁹

For instance, a caste-wise list of candidates who were successful in the Middle School English Examination conducted in 1899 shows that out of a total of around 3043 candidates across all the sub-divisions in the province, there were only eight Kalwar candidates.⁶⁰ The majority of the Hindu candidates were “Brahmans,” “Kayasthas,” “Khatris,” “Banias,” “Vaish,” “Rajput,” “Thakur,” and “Bhumihar.”⁶¹ Similarly, the number of candidates from other castes with similar status as the Kalwars, like the “Sonar,” “Jat,” “Teli,” “Tailang,” and “Mali” were also in the low single digits. Among the list of candidates who had graduated from high school in 1900, there was only one Kalwar candidate out of a total of 369.⁶² In the list of candidates who

⁵⁹ See footnote 1 for literacy rates. On the Kalwar *Ra'īs* (wealthy and elite leaders), see Bayly, “Patron and Politics.” In the *KKM*, wealthy donors from the community were frequently referred to with this title, for instance, “Lala Mewa Lal *Ra'īs*.”

⁶⁰ *Government Gazette: North-Western Provinces and Oudh of 1900*. The candidates were: Bhagirath of Mission School Bareilly; Jwala Prasad of Government District School Shahjahanpur; Govind Prasad of Government District School Hardoi; Sarju Prasad of Bengali Tola High School Benares; Bhagwan Din of Jubilee High School Lucknow; Ajodhya Prasad, a private candidate of Lakhimpur Kheri; Kamta Prasad of Diamond Jubilee High School Kannauj, Farukhabad, and Yadu Bansh Lal of Government District School Ballia.

⁶¹ Candidates of other religions were simply classified as Muhammadan, Christian, and Jain.

⁶² *Ibid.*, Chedi Lal of Allahabad Government High School.

had passed the entrance exam for the University of Allahabad, there was one Kalwar candidate among 1338.⁶³

Despite this poor showing, or perhaps because of it, there was a sense among the Kalwars that in the twentieth century, upward mobility lay in the consolidation of the community and mobilizing it towards education. The methods entailed enhancing the status of one's caste through tactics of forging narratives of past power, asserting caste pride in the present, and coming together to lobby for education and employment in the future. Texts, including caste journals, played a major role in actualizing these ends. In particular, a variety of rhetorical and narrative strategies were deployed by caste publicists in print in order to consolidate a singular historical arc about the origin of their caste as brave warriors whose status fell due to the machinations of wily Brahmins.⁶⁴

Kalwars, like the Kayasthas, furthered textual and associational activities by establishing educational institutions. Christopher Bayly outlines Kalwar social and political mobilization in Allahabad including a discussion of the Kalwar *Ra'īs* who channeled the support of their community towards the Madan Mohan Malviya faction of the Congress. Bayly's sketch of "the Kalwars of Muthiganj" (a neighborhood of Allahabad) provides an illustrative background to my discussion on Kalwar textual activity.⁶⁵ Bayly characterizes the community as belonging to the

⁶³ Ibid., Bishambar Narian of Bareilly who passed in the II Division.

⁶⁴ This strategy of attempting to change the status of one's caste could be understood with reference to the situation in contemporary India, wherein the opposite strategy—the classification of a caste as a socially and economically backward caste—is considered an advantageous situation. The policies for affirmative action available under the postcolonial developmental state have implied that lower and middling castes, like the Kalwars, were classified as Other Backward Castes (OBC). Such a shift in definition took place especially after 1991 with the Mandal Commission's innovation of reservations in educational institutions and employment opportunities for castes classified as OBC.

⁶⁵ C. Bayly, "Patrons and Politics in Northern India," 380–385.

“lower rungs of the mercantile castes who had acquired wealth and status in Allahabad in 1900” and reached local importance.⁶⁶

Hanuman Prasad Jaiswal, a Kalwar elite—banker, activist, and politician—financed and formed the Allahabad Kalwar Association (the Kalwar Mahasabha) in 1902 and also started a drive to collect funds for an educational institution for the caste. In 1905, the Kalwar Pathshala was established. The association also started two journals, *Sam̐sār Mitra* and *Globe* which merged to become the *Kalwār Kshatriya Mitra* in 1909. The younger generation among the community formed the Kalwar Youth Association and were active in villages as well.⁶⁷ Some prominent Kalwar leaders like Lakshmi Narayan and Lala Mewa Lal were also part of the Arya Samaj. Lal, in fact, went on to become the president of the Arya Samaj of Allahabad.⁶⁸ A close reading of some Kalwar texts and the *Kalwār Kshatriya Mitra* will throw further light on Kalwar activities in Allahabad as well as the motivations of the community in undertaking associational institutional projects that have not been examined beyond their impact on the realm of political culture.

Kalwār Sam̐hitā (1912)

Compared to the flurry of texts produced by the Kayasthas, the Kalwars could produce only a handful of works and, as a result, very few of them survive today. To the best of my knowledge, only two texts are extant—*Kalwār Sam̐hitā* (1912) and *Jaiswāl Jātī kā Itihās* (1923/24).

Kalwār Sam̐hitā was published in Allahabad in 1912. It was a thirty-six-page Hindi translation and commentary (*tīkā*) on the *Sāhā Saund̐k (Kalwār) Sam̐hitā Bhaṣhya Sār*

⁶⁶ Ibid., 380.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 384.

⁶⁸ *The Pioneer*, November 20, 1902.

Samgraha, composed by Babu Narayan Chandra Saha, a Bengali lawyer who practiced in the High Court of Bengal. Presumably, the original work was composed in Sanskrit or perhaps in Bengali.⁶⁹ Premnath Yogishwar, a Kalwar publicist and a resident of Colonelganj, Allahabad, was the main translator of the text. He was aided by Pandit Mahabir Prasad Mishra and Pandit Narayan Datta Sharma Tripathi, two Brahmins of Badshahi Mandi, Allahabad.⁷⁰ Yogishwar was a prolific writer who went on to write and publish a number of other works of caste advocacy as well as general works on Hinduism. Mishra was a close associate of the Kalwar community. His name appears as one of the organizers of the Kalwar Mahasabha conference in 1921. A brief summary of the text with attention to its genre, its objectives, its intended audience, and its efforts to bring together Kalwars across north and east India into an alliance, will reveal how the author was pitching the text to the Hindi-speaking Kalwars of Allahabad and the region. This text, along with other works by Yogishwar (which are not extant), became the gospels of the modern Kalwar community. They are mentioned repeatedly in caste journals wherein Kalwar readers are exhorted to buy and read them in order to learn the “true history” of their community.

The text is an eclectic mix of genres which styles itself a “Samhita”—a section of the Vedas that contained versified hymns and benedictions in Sanskrit. Broadly defined, the Samhita

⁶⁹ I was not able to trace the original in standard Sanskrit catalogues.

⁷⁰ At the end of the preface to this text, Yogishwar requests readers to encourage him so that he can forthrightly publish four additional texts on the Kalwars which he had already composed. These were: *Shaundik Kalwārom ke Purushom kī Paurānik Kathā* (The Puranic Tales of Shaundik Kalwar Men), *Kalwārom ke Gotra, Varg, aur Vamshāvalī* (Gotra, Class, and Lineage of the Kalwars), *Kalwār Utpattī* (The Origin of the Kalwar), and *Kalwār Gāyatrī* (The Holy Chant of the Kalwars). The *QLP* shows that he published at least two of these texts in 1913. In the same year he also published *Prayāg Mahātmya Bhāṣhā Vartikā* (The Greatness of Prayag, Allahabad, based on the *Matsya Purāna*), (Allahabad: Babu Lal Sri Raghavendra Press, 1913). Hindustani Kayasthas also relied to some degree on Brahmins to lend their textual endeavors greater legitimacy; however, since they were literate in a number of languages, they had an easier time accessing scriptures, the traditional sources for tales of caste origin, directly. Kalwar reliance on Brahmins for the composition of caste compendiums is an interesting instance of non-Brahmin castes forging an alliance with Brahmins in order to gain legitimacy for their textual claims about a respectable origin and Kshatriya status.

is a methodical compilation of verses and texts in Sanskrit. It is in the latter sense that Saha compiled the *Shaundik Sāhā Saṃhitā*. In so doing, Saha/Kalwar caste advocates were appropriating Brahminical Sanskrit textual forms in order to insert their own caste myths in the Vedic scriptural corpus—an innovative textual strategy of creating a modern work in a classical genre. The description of the text on the cover page, possibly inserted by Yogishwar et al., announces the aim of this work: “The *Kalwār Saṃhitā* clearly depicts that Kalwars are Kshatriya by Birth and Vaishya by Occupation.”

A three-page preface by Yogishwar was also appended to the text, which noted that the true addressee of such texts is the Hindu public, in particular Kalwars and sub-sects among castes of similar origins across the country. The style of the text reflects that Yogishwar was an accomplished rhetorician who had a way with idioms. For instance, he writes that one of his main aims in writing texts that clarified the caste status of Kalwars was to counter the hatred (*ghṛṇā*) that others directed at this community. So rabid was the hatred that even hearing the name Kalwar led them “to raise their eyebrow and hold their breath” (*bhaumv chadā nāk sikod lete haiṃ*). The second aim of the text was to clear the misconception among the “Kalwar brothers” that they were born as Shudras by revealing the “truth” about the clan (*kula*) of their birth. The author adds that if the Kalwars themselves continued to answer to the name “Shudra,” is it any wonder that the listener, who already held a low opinion about Shudras from the scriptures, might react with such physical repulsion. These rhetorical strategies reveal a number of anxieties about caste status that caste advocates sought to counter. At least with Kalwar texts, colonial authorities do not appear as an intended audience at all. Instead, these texts were aimed at fellow Kalwars and the larger Hindu community so as to disburse the negative stereotypes and

emotions that upper-caste Hindus felt towards lower-caste Hindus. As Yogiswar’s text shows, these negative affects that the high-caste Hindus felt towards Kalwars manifested themselves as embodied, sensory, discursive, social, and cultural discriminations.⁷¹

This Kalwar text also critiqued the rigid hierarchies built into the caste system and the selfishness of upper-caste Hindus even while its preferred mode of overcoming caste discrimination was to claim a higher caste status. For instance, the text alleges that Hindus either chose to hide behind the screen (*taṭṭī kī oṅt se shikār*) or spread rumors (*man garhat/kapol kalpit*) based on the occupational theory of the world (*jātī gat karm*) against Kalwars.⁷² He repeatedly pointed out the anomaly inherent in a caste-driven Hindu society whereby the occupation of a Brahmin in contemporary times could be anything—“pulling a fan, watering, any job” and yet these laboring jobs did not make a Brahmin a Shudra. Birth and clan continued to determine a person’s caste identity and not occupation. On the basis of this critique of Brahminism, Yogishwar asserted that it was imperative for the Kalwars to find the history of their birth and clan and commended the author of the original text, Saha, who had undertaken this important effort.

Saha’s text was also a work of caste history and included a rereading of Indian history since the Vedic period when caste groups were first consolidated. The very first line of the text claims that the Sahas and Kalwars belonged to the “Haihaya Kshatriya” clan and were of Aryan heritage. According to the author, this Kshatriya clan eventually spread across Bengal as traders or *vaniks/baniks* of five types—Khandya, Gandhya, Swarnya, Kanshya, and Shankhya, with

⁷¹ On the sensory aspects of the practice of caste, see Joel Lee, “Disgust and Untouchability: Towards an Affective Theory of Caste,” *South Asian History and Culture* 12, no. 2–3, “Emotions in South Asia” (2021): 310–327.

⁷² *Kalwār Saṃhitā*, 1.

further subdivisions into Gopa, Tantri, Teli, among others. These groups were sanctioned by scriptures to trade in a variety of products not limited to liquor. From a general history of India, the text then leaps into Bengali history at the turn of the millennium to the time of the rule of Pala and Sena dynasties. As per the text, the Kalwar/Sahas faced degradation and demotion of caste status under the rule of the Sena kings. In order to furnish an explanation of the low ritual status of the Kalwar/Saha caste, the *Kalwār Samhitā* hitched the history of their caste to these episodes of Bengali history that several other lower-caste communities of Bengal also refer to.⁷³

Without access to the original text by Saha, it is hard to know which parts of the text are translations and where Yogishwar inserts his own opinions. But we find that after the text discusses specific episodes of the history of Bengal from the turn of the first millennium, it goes on to make an important claim about the mercantile castes like the Sahas, Baniks, and Kalwars from across north and east India who were considered Shudra rather than Vaishya or Kshatriya in their respective regions. Arguing for an all-India Saha-Kalwar unity, the author(s) asserted that while all these trading sub-sects like the Sahas of the Bengal region and the Kalwars of the northern Indo-Gangetic plains were of the same origin, the geographical and temporal rift between them had led to differences in customs and behavior due to which they no longer practiced inter-dining and inter-marriage (*roṭī-beṭī kā vyavahār*). These expansive claims made by Saha's text about a cluster of Bengali Shudra castes involved in trade, rendered it worthy of translation and circulation among north Indian caste groups with a similar ritual status. Such a move also held the added benefit of promoting a pan-Indian claim of caste identity and solidarity, something the higher castes like the Kayasthas and Brahmins had been long

⁷³ See Sarkar, "Identities and Histories."

advocating. These attempts to project a consolidated caste identity constitute an early instance of the realization by communities that their strength lay in mustering vast numbers, an instinct that also lies at the heart of postcolonial electoral politics today.

Kalwār Kshatriya Mitra (KKM), Allahabad

This important but underexamined Kalwar monthly, the mouthpiece of Allahabad's Kalwar Kshatriya Sabha, focused on a number of themes that have already emerged in the *Kalwār Saṃhitā*. In examining the issues of the *Kalwār Kshatriya Mitra* from 1918 until 1924, the close association between the journal, the Kalwar Mahasabha, the Kalwar Pathshala, and caste as a place-making factor in the city becomes apparent. In the aftermath of the World War as well as rise of Gandhian politics of anti-colonial mass resistance, we find that Kalwars of Allahabad were focused on building a pan-India Kalwar identity in order to consolidate their claims to Kshatriya status. One of the means through which they attempted to bring about this goal was by forging a close association with Arya Samaj's ideals of reform, temperance, abstinence from excess rituals, as well as full support for the cause of Hindi and Nagari.⁷⁴ In following the concerns that are highlighted by the *Mitra*, it is evident that prestige-based socio-cultural claims such as caste status were closely tied up with practical desires for upward mobility such as education and employment, and both these aspects were mutually imbricated and reinforcing.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ On the temperance movement among the Kayasthas, see Lucy Caroll, "Origins of the Kayastha Temperance Movement," *The Indian Economic & Social History Review* 11, no. 4 (January 1974): 432–447. On another reformist issue, regarding the ritual prohibition against sea voyages by caste Hindus, see Caroll, "The Seavoyage Controversy and the Kayasthas of North India, 1901–1909," *Modern Asian Studies* 13, no. 2 (1979): 265–299.

⁷⁵ Nandini Gooptu has noted that some Shudra castes chose to claim Kshatriya rather than Vaishya status as it allowed them to emphasize their physical prowess as a laboring community. Based on their Kshatriya claims, these communities were able to make two simultaneous self-assertions. First, they claimed that were martially useful to upper-caste Hindus, especially the mercantile elite who controlled the economy and polity of cities. Second, physical prowess associated with Kshatriya status facilitated a higher degree of caste pride. See Gooptu, "The Urban

Kalwār Kshatriya Mitra began publication as a monthly around 1904. It continued to be published at least until 1936, by which time it had been renamed *Haihaya Kshatriya Mitra* and was being published as a bimonthly.⁷⁶ Haihaya is the name of the kingdom and clan mentioned in Puranic sources which was led by Yadavas, a clan from whom Kalwars trace their Kshatriya lineage.⁷⁷ There was frequent turnover in editorship of the *Mitra*; Mannalal Jaiswal was the editor in 1918 but by 1919 Raghunath Prasad “Upadeśak” had taken over. The latter was an important Kalwar publicist and was given the epithet of “preacher” (*upadeśak*) due to his prowess as an orator at caste meetings across the region.⁷⁸ Babu Bankelal, resident of Colonelganj, Allahabad, served as the manager of the *Mitra* from the time of its establishment until his death at the age of fifty in 1921. A short obituary published in May 1921 furnishes some information about this Kalwar advocate. He was born in Allahabad and studied Mahajani (a script innovated by the trading community) from the age of eight until thirteen. Then, he was apprenticed to Lala Hanuman Prasad, one of the leading Kalwar figures and a founder of the Mahasabha. Bankelal worked at Prasad’s shop until he was appointed as manager of the *Mitra* when it was founded in 1905.⁷⁹ He was a close associate of prominent Kalwar publicists like Upadeshak and Yogishwar. After Bankelal’s death in 1921, his son, Masuria Din, took over this position.

Poor and Militant Hinduism in Early Twentieth-Century Uttar Pradesh,” *Modern Asian Studies* 31, no. 4 (October 1997), 879–918.

⁷⁶ An issue of the *Haihaya Kshatriya Mitra* from 1936 is available and attests to this shift. I discuss it later in this section.

⁷⁷ According to F. E. Partiger, Haihaya is the great grandson of Yadu. F. E. Pargiter, “General Survey of Genealogies,” *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass), 87.

⁷⁸ “Daranagar meim Upadeśak,” *KKM*, February 1921.

⁷⁹ “Babu Bankelāl jī,” *KKM*, May 1921, 84–85.

The journal announced itself as “A Useful Monthly Journal for Kalwar Kshatriya Brethren” (*Kalwār Kshatriya Bhāiyom ke liye Viśeshupyogī Māsik Patra*) Apart from the regular columns that disseminated the news of the community among the readers, the remaining articles also propagated opinions with an eye to community interest. Until 1921, each monthly issue comprised sixteen pages. From January 1921, the pages were increased to thirty-four with about eight articles in per issue.⁸⁰ Each issue opened with “A Prayer to God,” (*Iśwar Prārthana*) which comprised a devotional couplet in Sanskrit, or sometimes Braj Bhasha, followed by a commentary in Hindi. The content page featured many recurring elements; the table of contents was followed by a section titled “The Rules of *Kalwār Kshatriya Mitra*” (*Kalwār Kshatriya Mitra ke Niyam*) and “Helpers of Mitra” (*Mitra ke Sahāyak*). The latter comprised a list of donors with their locations; sometimes, their professions were also mentioned. For the Kalwar readers, this list indicated the geographical reach of the journal and of the extent of the community across places in the North-Western Provinces, in *qaṣbas* such as Nimach, Chapra, and Shahbad as well as in other regions such as Baroda (Gujarat), Hyderabad (Deccan), Amjhira (Gwalior), and Sambhar Lake (Rajputana). Despite the advocacy for temperance in the community, many of the donors listed in the journal adhered to traditional occupations of manufacturing and selling of alcoholic products. For example, Seth Amrit Lala Nandlal, a regular donor, ran a toddy shop (“*desī darū kī dukān*”) near Baroda station. Similarly, in 1922, the “Alcohol Distillery Godown” of Allahabad contributed sixty-nine rupees to the journal.⁸¹

⁸⁰ *KKM*, January 1921, 2.

⁸¹ *KKM*, “Dān Prāpta,” May 1922, 115.

Alcohol was a sensitive and contested issue for Kalwars, which explains the space occupied by it in the pages of the journal. While their hereditary occupation involved alcohol, Kalwars were aware that it was their association with alcohol—considered an impure substance within Hindu society—which was one of the main reasons for their Shudra status.⁸² This self-impression might have been exacerbated under the influence of the Arya Samaj's temperance movements. For instance, Lakshmi Narayan, a prominent Kalwar publicist, was associated with the UP Temperance Council which was an initiative of the Arya Samaj.⁸³ Consequently, casting their lot with the Arya Samaj implied an active disavowal of the caste's hereditary occupation related to alcohol. At the same time, trade in alcohol remained profitable for many members of the community and was certainly the basis of wealth among some of the *Ra'īs* of the city and the wealth of big and small donors to the Kalwar Mahasabha.⁸⁴ The *Mitra* took the path of denial on this issue. As per one article, 4000 Kalwar gentlemen (*bhadragan*) lived in Allahabad but only fifty to sixty were involved in the business of alcohol.⁸⁵ The curtailment of excess expenditure during weddings and other celebrations, especially on dance performances—another Arya Samaj reformist agenda—occurs repeatedly in the journal. The *Mitra* recommended that in place of bawdy entertainment and the use of liquor, virtuous Hindi plays should be staged during such events, and donations should be given to the association, the journal, or the school. Such acts

⁸² The *Kalwār Samhitā* further complicated the community's relationship with alcohol by claiming that their business in making and selling alcohol had ritual sanction because in the Vedic ages, alcohol was considered a divine substance (*soma*) that was used in rituals. Hence, it was not impure.

⁸³ Bayly, "Patrons and Politics," 382.

⁸⁴ Rai, a sub-sect among the Kalwars, different from the city elite or *Ra'īs*.

⁸⁵ *KKM*, Jan 1921, 31.

were reported in the *Mitra* and pious community members, most of whom were from Allahabad, were lauded as models.⁸⁶

Like alcohol, women constituted another tricky subject for reformists. On the one hand, women's education (*strī shikshā*) was promoted in the journal. Articles praised learned women, exhorted the community to stop considering women's education as a "huge sin" (*mahāpāp*), and solicited donations for the Arya Kanya Pathshala in the city. A regular column—"News of Our Caste" (*Swajātiya Samāchār*) operated as a space for matrimonial advertisements seeking eligible brides and grooms, as well as obituaries. These announcements provide a general sense of the educational, economic, and social attributes that the community considered worthy. Widow remarriage was promoted. In addition to the traditional traits of domestic virtue among brides and a good income among grooms, there was a newer emphasis on education for prospective grooms and sometimes, even for brides. The knowledge of English among grooms also makes an appearance as a covetable asset.⁸⁷

On the other hand, women's lives were circumscribed all the more stringently within strictures of what constituted acceptable behavior. The censure of "foolish" women from the community who participated in the worship of Ghazi Miyan—a warrior saint popular in the

⁸⁶The same moral rhetoric was promoted among *Kayasthas*, too. In fact, in 1903, a major controversy broke out after the President of the Kayastha Pathshala, Munshi Govind Prasad, arranged a dance performance at the wedding of his daughter on the premises of the Pathshala. The objection was not merely to the performance, which was broadly tolerated among those who were not completely under the sway of Hindu reformist organizations. Rather, the offense arose from the fact that the event was organized on the grounds of the school. The principal of Kayastha Pathshala College and renowned journalist, Ramananda Chatterjee, wrote a strong note against the event which had occurred without his knowledge.

⁸⁷Majumdar has noted a similar shift in criteria towards education and class status in her study of matrimonial advertisements in caste journals of Bengal in the same period. She notes that while the divisions on the grounds of sub-sects among castes came to matter less, caste identity remained crucial. See "Looking for Brides and Grooms."

region—was a recurring theme.⁸⁸ The devotional practice at Ghazi Miyan’s tomb by Kalwar women of Allahabad was not an incidental target of ire. For a caste journal like the *Mitra* that was aligned with the Arya Samaj, worship at the tomb of a Muslim warrior who had waged a war against Hindu “Kshatriyas” constituted the archetype of aberrant practices that needed reform. The incursion of “Muslim practices” among lower-caste Hindus constituted a significant target of critique in the pages of this journal. Simultaneously, the journal asserted pride in the actions of “fellow Kshatriyas” against Muslims in order to display kinship with higher-caste Hindus and consolidate their own status as a legitimate part of the Hindu community. For instance, the writer of the article mentions that the descendants of Suhaldev—the king who allegedly fought against Ghazi Miyan—continue to turn their faces away when they pass the tombs of Ghazi Miyan and his companions. Even after centuries had passed since the battle against Ghazi Miyan, they consider it “a great sin” to gaze upon these sites. Then the writer adds a comment of his own condoning this act, “They do absolutely the right thing. This is exactly the ‘dharma’ of a true kshatriya.”⁸⁹ Charu Gupta has noted these efforts across castes that were aimed at shaping the Hindu masculine ideal by premising it in the control of women’s bodies and critique of the Muslim other.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ See *KKM*, July 1918, 70. The sentiment is most sharply articulated in an article titled “Ghazi Miyan also known as Masud Ghazi and His Battle with Hindus at the River Bahaklay” (*Ghāzī Miyan Arthāt Mas‘ūd Ghāzī se Nadī Bahaklāy par Hinduṃ se Laḍāī*), March 1918. Written in the form of an exposé, the article seeks to present the “correct” version of historical events that took place in Baharaich where a battle was fought between Ghazi Miyan and the local king, Suhaldev, around the eleventh century. Over time, Ghazi Miyan came to be venerated as a *pīr* (holy figure) and his tomb became a shrine and center of an important celebration (*‘urs*) in the region that was frequented more by Hindus than by Muslims. Shahid Amin discusses the nuances of this contentious figure’s memory and the practice of veneration of a “warrior-saint” in *Conquest and Community* (New Delhi: Orient BlackSwan Private Limited, 2015).

⁸⁹ *KKM*, March 1918, 53.

⁹⁰ See Charu Gupta, *Sexuality, Obscenity, Community: Women, Muslims, and the Hindu Public in Colonial India*, Series (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2001).

The *Swajātiya Samāchār* column was also a space for obituaries. The content of these obituaries provides further indication regarding Kalwar masculine ideals. The issue of March 1918 lamented the death of Babu Gajadhar Prasad Jaiswal, a lawyer and resident of Delhi who had been the president of “All-India Kalwar Mahasabha” held in 1910. Celebrating and honoring the lives of illustrious men was a key textual mode of community-building among the Kalwars as it was among Kayasthas. For a lower-caste community like the Kalwars, these men provided models of ideal behavior. The community could feel pride in these men and in themselves and feel inspired towards future action. Recovery of a sense of pride in self and community was a key motif of caste mobilization that was visible in this journal.

The “Miscellaneous News” (*Vividh Samāchār*) column published a variety of notes that indicate the *Mitra*’s socio-political orientation, especially on the matter of Hindi and anti-colonial nationalist politics. The Hindi Sahitya Sammelan already enjoyed significant prestige in the city and readers were kept abreast of its activities. For instance, commenting on the eighth meeting of the Sammelan, readers were informed that two key questions would be discussed at this conference: “Whether Hindi should be the national language?” and “Whether it is advisable to make mother tongues the medium of all education?” While these two questions merely mirror the main position of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, the exhortation that follows reflects the *Mitra*’s interpretation:

Is there a good Aryan son (*Arya sapūt*) who wouldn’t agree with these two questions? Without these, the welfare of India could not be possible. Therefore, we fully agree with these, and we are hopeful that every person, man and woman, elderly and youth, knowledgeable and foolish, agrees with [the cause of] Hindi.⁹¹

⁹¹ *KKM*, March 1918, 36.

Once again, forging a link with the cause of the “Aryas” was a strategy of asserting Kalwar status as Kshatriya.

Displaying its political affiliations, the *Mitra* regularly published reports about the annual Congress sessions, especially those held in Allahabad. Reports also mentioned the visit of important leaders to city, including the visits and speeches of Gandhi, who was very popular among Kalwar publicists and always referred to as “Mahatmaji”. By the 1920s, articles on patriotism began to appear. For instance, a popular patriotic song composed by nationalist poet Hasrat Mohani, “*Sarfaroshī kī Tamannā*” was reproduced in the June 1921 issue. A nationalist brand of politics along with a close cultural alignment with the Arya Samaj emerged as the socio-political and cultural norm of the Kalwars of Allahabad.

Names and caste identities are closely aligned within Hindu society. The issue of the most appropriate name for the community was a recurrent theme in deliberations of the Mahasabha and the journal. For instance, the journal solicited opinions on various names such as Kalwar, Jaiswal, Kalal, and Kalpapal, as well as the use of “Singh,” “Varma,” or “Dhwaj” as surnames to denote Kshatriya status and dropping “Lala” as a prefix and “Lal” as a surname so as to disassociate themselves from commerce. In 1921, the *Mitra* announced that Kalwars from Allahabad had decided that they would stick to the name Kalwar even though other associational units of the association could choose a different name. But by the 1930s, they had changed their mind. The caste association was accordingly renamed Akhil Bharatvarshiya Haihaya Kshatriya Mahasabha and the journal as *Haihaya Kshatriya Mitra*. Only one issue of the *Haihaya Kshatriya Mitra* is available now, which also happens to be a special issue titled “Hīrālāl Ank,” dedicated to the life of an illustrious caste member, the late Raibahadur Dr. Hiralal, an educator

and amateur historian who wrote caste histories establishing the connection of Kalwars to ancient Hindu kings.⁹² Some broad themes about community formation can be gleaned from this issue. Without access to further issues, the logic behind the move remains a matter of conjecture.

The permanent editor of the renamed journal was one Shyam Sundar Jaiswal, a lawyer by training and the editor of this special issue was one Gorakhprasad, a graduate in science. It is also worth noting by the 1930s, patronage patterns among the Kalwars of the city had somewhat changed. Affluent traders and wealthy Kalwar businessmen of Allahabad continued to provide financial backing, but intellectual leadership was mostly provided by educated men, especially lawyers, most of whom were associated with the High Court of Allahabad or lower courts in the North-Western Provinces. Among the Kayasthas, the prime agents of community-building activities were mainly powerful lawyers who provided both financial patronage and intellectual leadership. Among Kalwars, the intellectuals definitely led advocacy efforts, but they relied heavily on the Kalwar *ra'īs* for financial patronage. With a high concentration of elites and educated Kalwars, Allahabad provided the ideal center for both textual and institutional efforts at mobilization.

The Fading Away of the Kalwar Pipeline: Kalwar Pathshala

In the early twentieth century, Kalwars, like the Kayasthas, were attempting to bring a number of disparate but ritually and occupationally similar caste sub-sects scattered across the country under the umbrella category of Kalwar. All these groups were lobbying for Kshatriya status;

⁹² “Hiralal Issue,” January–February 1936. Similar profiles of illustrious members of the community appeared in other issues too. Kalikaprasad Sharma, “Jāti Jivan Charit: Swajātibhushan Chaudhri Ghanshyam Das Prasad, Honorary Magistrate, Madhya Pradesh,” *KKM*, September 1920, 120–123.

sometimes a few groups identified themselves as Kshatriya Vaishyas. To actualize these aims, the Kalwars of Allahabad and the surrounding region forged alliances with communities like the Ahluwalias of Punjab and Sahas of Bengal. One of the major challenges faced by this community was nomenclatural, for the name Kalwar did not find wide and easy acceptance like the term Kayastha did. Other challenges lay in promoting not just conservative reforms such as temperance and halting the trade in alcohol but, rather, in promoting education in a community that did not enjoy hereditary access to literacy.

Kalwar textual advocacy and attempts at associational activities and institution-building likely faded away by the late 1930s. The rise of party politics and anti-colonial mass mobilization likely sapped the Kalwar movement of its energy. Among the various Shudra communities of the region, it is interesting that only a handful managed to gain enough wealth to produce a small, educated elite. Kurmis, Kushwahas, Ahirs, and Kalwars were among the few who left a significant trace in the textual archive of the region. Among these groups, only the Kalwars vigorously mobilized in Allahabad. The Kalwars, however, failed to build a lasting 'pipeline' from educational to professional success as the Kayasthas had managed to do so successfully.

The Kalwar Pathshala was the center of Kalwar caste advocacy efforts. Very little information is available on the Kalwar Pathshala except what can be gleaned from the pages of the *Kalwār Kshatriya Mitra*. On the basis of this source, I sketch a short profile of the institution here. The association, journal, and school were financed and led by its wealthy patrons and some educated members among the Kalwars of Allahabad. The Kalwar Pathshala was established in 1905 as an elementary school with classes offered up to grade six. The medium of instruction

was English.⁹³ In 1913, due to the paucity of funds and the passing away of a large number of Kalwar leaders, classes at the school were limited only to instructions in Mahajani and lessons offered until grade six had to be curtailed.⁹⁴ In 1918, the principal was one Devnarayan Pandey, a Brahmin, who regularly contributed articles to *Kalwār Kshatriya Mitra*. Perhaps there was no qualified Kalwar candidate available. Alternatively, perhaps a high-caste principal would garner a modicum of prestige and confidence from the Kalwar brethren and the larger Hindu community. In this, we find a parallel in the appointment of Ramananda Chatterji as the principal of the Kayastha Pathshala in 1895.

The textual archive reveals that advocacy for higher caste status which I discussed earlier, and support for educational efforts, were bound up together. For instance, the “sacred thread” (*yagopavīt samṣkār*) ceremony was conducted free of cost for Kalwars every Sunday on the premises of the Kalwar Pathshala of Allahabad and was financed by the Kalwar Mahasabha.⁹⁵ In return, the new members of the twice-born community would contribute two rupees to the Mahasabha and sometimes, to the Arya Kanya Pathshala of Allahabad.⁹⁶ For instance, on October 23, 1921, fifty-two Kalwars of the “Rai” clan participated in the sacred thread ceremony held at the school (*gurukul*) in Allahabad, presided over by Pandit Ramchandra Sharma, a

⁹³ *KKM*, “Kalwār Kshatriya Mahāsabhā, Prayāg,” February 1921, 25.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁹⁵ “*Swajātiya Samāchār*,” June 1922, 136–137; “Yagopavīt meṃ Dān,” Feb–March 1921, 64.

⁹⁶ The Arya Kanya Pathshala was the local Arya Samaj school for girls in Allahabad. For a while, Rameswari Goel, the first woman from Agarwal community to study up to MA levels, was the superintendent of the hostel and later, she was appointed the principal of this institution. The poet and educator Mahadevi Varma lived with Goel on the campus of the school when both were outstation MA students in the city. See Karine Schomer, *Mahadevi Varma and the Chhayavad Age of Modern Hindi Poetry* (University of California Press, 1983), 179–180.

teacher at this institution. Pyare Lal, a Kalwar, donated two acres of land as well as some money to the school after undergoing the thread ceremony.⁹⁷

Another way in which the Allahabadi Kalwars encouraged the spread of education in the community was to present their own example of association and institution building as a model to Kalwars elsewhere. In an open letter to the community, Pannalal, the vice-president of the Mahasabha, advised that Kalwars who lived in other areas should follow the model of residents of Allahabad (*Prayāg niwāsīs*). He added that in every district where Kalwars lived in large numbers, they should first form a caste association followed by the establishment of a school. Commenting on the organizational structure of such model institutions, Pannalal outlined the objectives:

After having established a school as per these recommended rules, boys of our caste from age five should be admitted, so that by the age of twenty, they are ready for physical, social, and emotional progress . . . Our aim is to ensure that the boys of our community enter the kingdom of peace, education, and civilization. At the same time, we should also illuminate the correct path for boys of other communities.⁹⁸

The article advised that the aim of these institutions should be to correct the historical injustices done to Kalwars by Hindu religious leaders and prepare the next generation to enter society as equals of higher caste Hindus. By publishing such appeals in the caste journal, and repeatedly requesting readers to subscribe to the journal and donate to the school, the Kalwars of Allahabad presented themselves as examples worth emulating.

On February 7, 8, and 9, 1921, the nineteenth Kalwar Kshatriya Mahasabha was held in Allahabad at the Kalwar Pathshala. It was scheduled so as to coincide with the annual Magha

⁹⁷ *KKS*, "Swajātiya Samāchar," January 1922, 23.

⁹⁸ "Swajāti Bhāiyom ko Sūchnā," *KKM*, January 1921, 24–25.

Mela which attracted a large number of visitors to the city. The proceedings of the meeting were reported in the *Mitra* which revealed a number of community-shaping attempts and enterprises led by the Kalwars of Allahabad.⁹⁹ For instance, as the list of office holders listed below will show, most of the organizers of the event were from Allahabad.¹⁰⁰ Supporters of the initiative from the larger Hindu community included Congress leader and Chairman of the Municipal Board of Allahabad, Purushottam Das Tandon; Pandit Gauri Shankar Mishra, Minister, Kisan Sabha of United Provinces, and Pandit Shyam Lal Nehru. Several resolutions were passed at this meeting. Chaudhari Mahadev Prasad, Babu Masuriadin, Babu Mahavir Prasad, Gauri Shankar Mishra, and Babu Mewa Lal delivered speeches.¹⁰¹

Mewa Lal exhorted Kalwars to take better care of the Pathshala which was not doing well. He squarely placed the blame for this state of affairs on the lack of enthusiasm for education within the community. He suggested that if each of the one thousand households that belonged to Kalwars in the city could contribute four annas (a former unit of currency, 1/16 of a rupee) to the Pathshala, or even a handful of rice, there could be a swift turn in the fortunes of the institution. The speaker also lauded Mewa Lal's proposal to open a community bank in Allahabad with branches in other mercantile cities to support community members and community initiatives like the school and take the cause of education further.¹⁰² The speaker exhorted Kalwars to give up their licenses that allowed them to sell alcohol (*ābkāri thekā*). The

⁹⁹ *KKM*, "Kalwār Kshatriya Mahāsabhā, Prayāg," February 1921, 28–39.

¹⁰⁰ *KKM*, January 1921, 20. An organizing committee was formed in January 1921. Lala Shankar Lala of Kydganj was elected the President, Lala Banshi Lal of Muthiganj as Vice-President, Babu Masuria Din of Chowk as Secretary, and Babu Mahabir Prasad of Muthiganj was chosen as the Treasurer, Masuria Din was the son of Banke Lal, Manager of the *Mitra*, whom I discuss earlier.

¹⁰¹ *KKM*, "Kalwār Kshatriya Mahāsabhā, Prayāg," February 1921, 28–39.

¹⁰² *KKM*, February 1921, 24–39.

list of supporters of this initiative provides a sense of the make-up of Kalwar leaders who were a mix of *Ra'īs* and community intellectuals:

1. Chaudhri Mahadev Prasad, President
2. Babu Radheshyam Das ji, *Ra'īs*
3. Mahavir Prasad ji, Treasurer
4. Mannalal ji
5. Bankelal ji, Manager
6. Shankar Lal ji, President
7. Sitaram ji
8. Mewa Lal ji, *Ra'īs*
9. Raghunath Prasad ji, Upadeshak
10. Baccha Lal ji, Vice-President
11. Babu Masuria Din ji, Secretary
12. Babu Mahabir Prasad

The bank would be called Jaiswal Bank Limited, Allahabad, and would start with an initial capital of Rs 10,00,000. Many of the above-mentioned community leaders pledged monetary support. Radheshyam Das and Mewa Lal led the initiative with promises of endowing Rs 10,000 each. Others who swore to contribute smaller amounts were: Madho Ram Matabadal, Mahabir Prasad Khuldabad, Devta Din Ganga Prasad, and Mahabir Prasad Bajaj. Other Kalwars pledged to buy 60,000 shares at the rate of Rs. 10 per share. Smaller funds were raised for the support of the *Mitra*, mostly from among the Kalwars of the city and some from the neighboring towns of Barabanki and Pratapgarh. An appeal was made to turn the monthly journal into a fortnightly and then a weekly one. The report ended with a vote of thanks and announcement of a grand soiree on the occasion of the Kalwar Pathshala's Annual Celebration to be held over three days in February which would coincide with holy days of the Magh Mela.

Just like the Kayasthas had chosen the city as the center of many of their textual, associational, and institutional efforts, so did the Kalwars of north India. Unlike the case of the

Kayasthas of Allahabad, however, the fervent activity of the Kalwar caste seems to have left few enduring traces on the physical landscape and infrastructure of the city. The Kalwar Pathshala ceased to exist at some point. Unlike the Kayasthas Pathshala which went on to become a Trust in the postcolonial period—an umbrella organization for eighteen institutions—the Kalwar Kshatriya Mahasabha left behind no physical infrastructure. In the absence of an existing institutional apparatus, all that remains of the history of Kalwar mobilization in Allahabad is the textual archive which comprises texts like the *Kalwār Samhitā* and journals like the *Kalwār Kshatriya Mitra*.

Bayly frames the rise and decline of the Kalwars of Allahabad as a function of the political economy of the city. He attributed the rationale behind this peak of caste advocacy among Kalwars of the city to the self-interest of the Kalwar *Ra'īs* who patronized local social and political activities because they were interested in changing their caste status so that it could match their newfound economic status.¹⁰³ He cited the waning away of elite Kalwar interest in order to explain the decline of Kalwar activities. In the absence of money and patronage provided by powerful community leaders like Hanuman Prasad, “the *Mitra* became irregular, the money for the Pathshala dried up, and the Mahasabha ceased to exist—a good example of the extent to which so-called ‘caste’ bodies were largely dependent on the activities of a few *Ra'īs*.”¹⁰⁴ By contrast, I suggest that while the vanishing of financial patronage and economic clout were important causal factors in the fading away of Kalwar caste advocacy, another factor for the decline of the Kalwar journal and institution is visible when the event is examined

¹⁰³ Ibid., 382.

¹⁰⁴ Bayly, “Patrons and Politics,” 384.

through the lens of cultural and social politics of the city. Comparing the Kalwars to Kayasthas also shows that caste advocacy had a number of motivations internal to community formation and the impetus to modernize their community by using urban facilities provided by a city like Allahabad. With neither longstanding hereditary access to cultural resources, nor a large network of literate, motivated, and organized caste members, textual and associational activities slowed down. Instead of viewing Kalwar mobilization in Allahabad, even though short-lived, as yet another instance of the power of wealthy elite patrons who could mobilize their communities to political action during this period of early nationalism, as Bayly proposes, I suggest that Kalwar activities should be viewed as integral to socio-cultural change in the city and as a crucial place-making practice by a lower-caste community. As my discussion shows, the Kalwar community was not entirely led by the motivations of their wealthy patrons. Rather, they were part of a region-wide mobilizational effort by similarly placed Shudra groups whose aims were to protest against the injustices of caste, to gain a modicum of respect within the Hindu community, and to secure the future for later generations.

Conclusion

Caste remains a crucial but underexamined factor of place-making in urban spaces of colonial India. The colonial pressure to provide textual evidence regarding caste claims coincided with the general growth of Hindu reformist sentiments. In response to both these developments—the external pressure of the colonial state apparatus as well as the internal pressure towards reform and modernization—caste publics emerged as a crucial sub-section of the north Indian public sphere. Their emergence and strength depended on their embrace of the amenities and

opportunities offered by modern urban life, especially, those made available by print culture.

This chapter has shown that using ‘textualization,’ the medium of the written word as a first step, caste clusters were able to mobilize themselves into urban communities. Associational activities and institution-building were other crucial urban mobilizational strategies.

The significant trace left behind by various castes groups in the textual archive affords these inquiries into the history of the relationship between city and caste which would otherwise be erased. In Allahabad, two caste groups, albeit with significantly disparate ritual status, left a major trace in the domain of texts facilitating this comparative study between Kayasthas and Kalwars. Even while the volume of textual production remained unequal, the rise of caste publics, even among a disadvantaged caste group like the Kalwars, is a testimony to the capacious nature of the print sphere of Allahabad. This chapter has demonstrated that the histories of publics at the intersection of caste and print culture reveal a crucial constitutive aspect of the history of the provincial city.

Chapter Four

Learning Together and Living Separately in Allahabad:

A History of University Hostels

Writing in the 1960s, Syed Ijaz Husain (1899–1975), alumnus and former professor of Urdu at the University of Allahabad, recalled the vibrant culture that was prevalent in the residential hostels of the university during the 1920s and 1930s:

By lighting the lamp of literature, the university had spread this light to the entire city. The Musalman Boarding House provided accommodation only to university students and enjoyed a long tradition of organizing *mushā'iras* (a poetry symposium, gathering). In the other hostels of the university, educational and literary gatherings were organized only during a specific month. In fact, theater, debate, music and dance and a variety of other cultural events were organized in these hostels, but in the Musalman Boarding House, just this one activity, the *mushā'ira*, embodied everything (*mushā'ira sab kuch thā*). A grand tradition had been established . . . As a result, a literary atmosphere prevailed even outside the boundaries of the university.

— Ijaz Husain, *Merī Duniyā, K̲h̲ud Navisht Šavāniḥ-i Ḥayāt*, 1965¹

Husain's anecdote underscores the centrality of university hostels in the cultural life of not just the educational institution but of the entire city. In a medium-sized city like Allahabad, with a population of 157,220 in 1921, the presence of a prominent educational institution implied that the activities of the university were indelibly stamped on the city's identity, rendering it in many ways a "university town."² While scholars have focused on this university and its educational mission, my chapter moves the focus away from the lens of pedagogy and excavates the

¹ Syed Ijaz Husain, *Merī Duniyā, K̲h̲ud Navisht Šavāniḥ-i Ḥayāt* (Allahabad: Karvan Publishers, 1965). All translations are my own. See chapter one for a detailed discussion of this autobiography

² *Census of India, 1921: United Provinces of Agra and Oudh* (Allahabad: Government Press, 1923).

relationship between the provincial capital and hostels as a particular outcrop of colonial modernity and of colonial urbanity.³ I show that in shaping these educational and residential spaces, Indian and European educators along with colonial authorities, projected their joint visions of civility regarding what constituted ideal provincial life. Given that these stakeholders hailed from particular communities, they also imposed certain normative values and anxieties about who could eat, socialize, and share a living space with whom. Consequently, taking university hostels as the focus of inquiry, this chapter interrogates the possibilities as well as the serious limitations that informed the construction of the ethos underlying the ideals of provincial civility and public life in Allahabad.

As in the previous chapters, texts, and processes of textual productions by distinct communities, hold centerstage. Hostels were extensions of the larger educational enterprise and thus, it makes eminent sense that several members of the educational community took to writing about this novel experience in in journals, hostel magazines, annual reports, and memoirs. The instinct to write, to print, and to publish about the experience of hostel life led to the production of several texts which remain underexamined and constitute a crucial archive for cultural and urban historians. In the process of reflection and deliberation on the experience of hostel life, educators, administrators, and hostel-dwelling students emerge as yet another significant textually mediated public in Allahabad at this time.

³ Joseph E. DiBona, *Change and Conflict in the Indian University*, Monograph no. 7 (Durham, NC: Duke University, Program in Comparative Studies on Southern Asia); Irene A. Gilbert, *Autonomy and Consensus under the Raj: Presidency (Calcutta); Muir (Allahabad); M.A.-O. (Aligarh)*, Reprint Series (Chicago: University of Chicago, Committee on Southern Asian Studies, 1972); Motilal Bhargava, *Hundred Years of Allahabad University* (New Delhi: Asian Publishing House, 1987); Neelum Saran Gour, *Three Rivers and a Tree: The Story of Allahabad University* (New Delhi: Rupa Publications, 2015); R. P. Misra, *Rebuilding Our Universities : Lessons from Experiments at the Oxford of the East* (Allahabad: Sharda Pustak Bhawan, 2006); Heramba Chaturvedi, *Allahabad School of History, 1915–1955* (New Delhi: Prabhat Prakashan, 2016).

I supplement these pieces of historical traces of everyday life in the hostels with documents from the colonial archive, in particular, files from the Educational Department, that provide an insight into the role of administrators in this enterprise. In doing so, this chapter is distinct from the other chapters which have focused largely on indigenous enterprises. Since the university itself was a unique space of collaborative effort between Indians and Europeans, it is suitable that the archive for this chapter constitutes public textual production as well as official correspondence and policy documents of both Indian and colonial educators and administrators.

At present, there is very little scholarship on hostels associated with colleges and universities in the colonial era, except brief mentions in the histories of specific universities or in works on the history of education in India. Hayden Bellenoit's discussion of the role of missionaries in promoting hostels in the context of colonial education and Sneha Krishnan's forthcoming work on girls' hostels are notable exceptions.⁴ My chapter adds to this emerging scholarship by focusing on three residential spaces associated with the Allahabad University—the Musalman (or Muslim) Boarding House (1890), the Oxford and Cambridge Hostel (1900), and the Women's Hostel (approximately 1935). Hostels have been viewed as extensions of the missionary enterprise or colonial educational imperatives, and also lend themselves to a reading as Foucauldian disciplinary spaces. Yet, the fact that they are significant and unique urban institutions whose formation was informed by the socio-cultural limitations and possibilities of

⁴ To my knowledge, the only significant discussion of hostels associated with institutions of higher education is available in Hayden J. A. Bellenoit, *Missionary Education and Empire in Late Colonial India, 1860–1920* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2007). A forthcoming monograph by Sneha Krishnan promises to examine hostels for girls in South India, "*In Gilded Cages: Hostels, Girlhood and Colonial Modernity in South India*." No further details are available. For a description of this project, see <https://www.geog.ox.ac.uk/staff/skrishnan.html>.

their settings, remains largely unexamined.⁵ This chapter analyzes how the establishment of hostels was part of the public discourse in the city and a crucial place-making exercise taken up by urban publics.

The narrative arc of this chapter is propelled by two questions that arise in my reconstruction of the history of hostels in Allahabad. The first question emerges from the fact that while residential universities existed in ancient India (the most famous instance being Nalanda), the establishment of the modern residential college in India was largely an extension of the derivative model of Western education. Scholarship has demonstrated that Indian reception of Western education entailed a series of complex negotiations.⁶ It would follow that the process of establishing and organizing the hostels along broadly Western models also involved a lengthy process of negotiation with colonial difference. What were some of these complex adaptive measures innovated on the ground in Allahabad in establishing hostels?

In the late nineteenth century, various ideological contestations centering on education manifested themselves in the city, which included stakeholders from the European and Indian communities. The major premise on which some of these hostels were founded, that of religious,

⁵ Bellenoit, *Missionary Education*, see “Student Hostels in the Emergence of Late Colonial Education,” 155–167, wherein the author discusses missionary-led hostels in various universities, including Allahabad. The focus is on missionary ideology. In a different context, the iconic Calcutta-based *messbārīs*—private residential accommodations for working men—have left an impact on the Bengali cultural milieu, especially in films. These were, however, private dwelling arrangements outside the university. Apart from students, a variety of older men seeking employment or already employed lived in these places. In the South African context, hostels emerge as single-sex private dwellings at the nexus of apartheid, migration, and employment but again, these were not formal extensions of the educational enterprise. See Nomkhosi Xulu Gama, “Introduction,” *Hostels in South Africa: Spaces of Perplexity* (Portland: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2017).

⁶ See Sanjay Seth, *Subject Lessons: The Western Education of Colonial India* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007) on how Indians negotiated colonial education and eluded being made into absolute subjects of the aims of colonial education. On the reception of colonial educational policy in India, also see David T. Boven, “Patriots and Practical Men: British Educational Policy and the Responses of Colonial Subjects in India, 1880–1890” (PhD diss., Loyola University Chicago, 2017).

caste, and gender segregation as their names suggest—Kayastha Hostel, the Muslim Boarding House, the Hindu Hostel, the Anglo-Indian Hostel, and the Women’s Hostel—reflect the narrow interests of the urban publics which aided in their establishment. The Oxford and Cambridge Hostel led by Church Missionary Society was the only exception in not following the principle of religion or caste-based segregation and presents a unique example. Beyond identity-based divisions lay the experience of female scholars of all backgrounds. Women’s access to higher education, let alone the fact of women living away from natal homes, were fraught enterprises in this period. The small number of female scholars the University of Allahabad—in the low double digits in the 1920s—made separate gendered classrooms implausible beyond school education. Consequently, co-education posed a major challenge to social rules which governed the conduct of women in spaces of learning, socializing, and living. Strict segregation of genders in living arrangements shows up as the norm in the colonies and in the metropole. In Allahabad, it was only in the 1930s that a hostel for women was established on university premises. Thus, the second question asks how hostels became the grounds for maintaining community-specific normative values and how this development impacted the city.

I argue that the adaptation of the Western model of residential facilities at institutions of higher education, in practice, implied a compromise of the principles of universal access to education. In the process of adaptation and translation, communities infused these spaces with their desires and anxieties.⁷ Through a study of these hostels, I demonstrate that a contestation of

⁷ On the adaptation of Western models in the colonial context and on mediation of “colonial difference,” see Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton University Press, 2009).

values between *secular education* and *sectarian living* was set up from the very onset of colonial modernity and provincial urbanity. As a result, the non-denominational education provided by the modern university was offset and counterbalanced by identity-driven communal concerns which manifest themselves in hostels. In viewing residential hostels not just as asides to the educational enterprise but rather as central to education as well as the identity of the city, this chapter examines the effects of these segregated spaces on the development of the public sphere of this prominent provincial site. Viewed through this lens, hostels were mirrors and extensions of the divisions that existed in the city and in the region.

The University of Allahabad was established in 1887. Until 1921, the main role of the institution was to grant degrees, conduct examinations, and provide affiliation to colleges in the region. Its transformation from its initial role as the first degree-granting institution in the North-Western Provinces into an institution of postgraduate education with expanded hostel accommodations was not a given. The first section of the chapter provides a brief outline of the larger ideology of education and Allahabad's rise as an education hub. It serves as the background to the rise of residential spaces attached to the university. The principles that informed the organization of the educational facilities also seeped into residential facilities. The next section furnishes an overview of hostels as social and cultural spaces as gleaned from the pages of the *Muir College Magazine*, followed by short histories of Musalman Boarding House, the Oxford and Cambridge Hostel, and the Women's Hostel. I conclude with some reflections on the mutual imbrication of various facets of urban culture such as university hostels, textual production, and the shifting nature of communities and identities prevalent in the city and the region. These communities and identities were bound up in relationships of reciprocation,

reflection, and reproduction. The rare instances of challenge to limitations of caste, religion, and gender were small but significant indicators of the possibility of changes to come in the future.

The development of the University of Allahabad was a part of the larger context of the development of higher education under colonial conditions. Historians have provided a rich analysis of the ideological contestations informing the progress of education in India. These contestations centered on the medium of instruction (vernacular or English), on the content (Orientalist or Anglicist/Western), on the identity of the educational enterprise (missionary, government, private, government-aided), and on the aim of pedagogy.⁸ Sanjay Seth has drawn attention to the politics of dissemination of modern Western education to colonial subjects. In particular, his analysis of the rhetoric propagated by colonial educators about the capacity of Indians to absorb Western education is illuminating for this discussion. Seth shows that various categories of Indians students were able to exceed and subvert negative perceptions that the colonial authorities held against them, and even mold Western education to their own purposes.⁹ The discussion to follow shows that in the arena of adjusting to the model of residential education too, Indian students showed a similar sensibility and creativity.

⁸ On the Orientalist versus Anglicist controversy, see Lynn Zastoupil and Martin Moir, *The Great Indian Education Debate: Documents Relating to the Orientalist-Anglicist Controversy, 1781–1843* (Richmond: Curzon, 1999). The debate on the medium of instruction was part of the Orientalist-Anglicist debate. A mixed model of education prevailed for a time in the pre-1857 period wherein English and vernacular-medium instruction and a mix of Oriental and Western education were offered side-by-side within the same institution. The emphasis was on translation between languages and systems. See Margrit Pernau, *The Delhi College: Traditional Elites, the Colonial State, and Education before 1857* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006). For a general overview of the history of education in India, see *Education in Colonial India: Historical Insights*, ed. by Deepak Kumar, et al. (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers & Distributors, 2013) and Krishna Kumar, *Political Agenda of Education: A Study of Colonialist and Nationalist Ideas* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2005). Also see Mushirul Hasan, ed., *Knowledge, Power & Politics: Educational Institutions in India* (New Delhi: Lotus Collection, 1998) which documents the histories of twelve prominent educational institutions of India. The University of Allahabad is not part of the study.

⁹ For a critical engagement with the various conceptual stakes of education in colonial India, see Seth, *Subject Lessons*.

My discussion of the establishment and growth of hostels in Allahabad also reveals how hostels were an intermediary zone between the civil society of the city and Indian and European educators. Through the hostels, various stakeholders exercised considerable agency on the lives of students outside the aegis of colonial control. In moving the debate on higher education from educational policies and their varied outcomes towards the social life engendered by educational institutions, my work sheds light on a different aspect of the history of education. I show that higher educational institutions were hubs of new forms of sociality centered on campus life, especially in provincial cities whose socio-cultural structures were narrower and distinct from metropolitan life. This form of sociality involving students, professors, administrators, and members of the provincial elite and middle classes was novel and merits more scholarly attention than it has received thus far. By including the role of hostels within the purview of the larger educational mission, I expand the scope of what an English-language Western education implied as an aspirational ideal.

The Rise of Allahabad as a Hub of Higher Education

The origin of the colonial educational system in India lies in the policy of 1854, known as Wood's Despatch. This proposal led to three major changes in the landscape of Indian education: the creation of departments of public instructions in each province to oversee the administration of education; the founding of the universities of Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras in 1857; and the introduction of the system of grants-in-aid scheme to encourage indigenous educational initiatives. Initially, the new universities were modelled after the University of London and were administrative and examining bodies without any teaching responsibilities. Colleges took up the

responsibility of offering classes.¹⁰ The history of educational institutions in Allahabad from the 1860s onwards unfolded against the background of this policy.

In addition, the growth of higher education in Allahabad was entangled with the debate on the future of provincial cities. As a result, the establishment of educational institutions was seminal to the growth of colonial urbanity. In particular, the city's newfound status as the provincial capital was repeatedly invoked by colonial officials as well as Indians when discussing its suitability as a future educational hub. In 1868, the Scottish scholar and administrator, Sir William Muir, assumed the office of Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces (1868–1874).¹¹ A keen orientalist who was a scholar of Islam and Arabic, Muir took a personal interest in the establishment of an institution of higher learning in Allahabad, going well beyond the call of official policy. With the expansion of colonial administration in the post-1857 period, official policy was in alignment with the indigenous demand for a college in the N.-W. Provinces. In a Darbar held in 1869, Muir compared the situation in north India with that of Bengal, reminding the educated members of Hindustani society that with Bengali graduates numbering in hundreds, “prizes of influential and lucrative office” were passing into the “hands of Bengali Babus.” He reminded the residents that,

Belonging to you myself, and not to Bengal, I am jealous for your interests and honor. For these reasons it is with great satisfaction I have heard of the movement lately set on foot among yourselves to provide funds for a College in Allahabad. And in truth, as Allahabad has now again become the seat of Government, it has a *right* to institutions of this kind. This city should now become *the largest and*

¹⁰ Jana Tschurennev, *Empire, Civil Society, and the Beginnings of Colonial Education in India* (Cambridge University Press, 2019), 273; S. N. Mukherji, *Britannica Academic*, “The Spread of Western Educational Practices to Asian Countries: India.” <https://academic-eb-com.proxy.uchicago.edu/levels/collegiate/article/education/105951#47636.toc>.

¹¹ For a biography of William Muir and his brothers, see Avril A. Powell, *Scottish Orientalists and India: The Muir Brothers, Religion, Education and Empire* (Woodbridge, UK ; Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2010).

*most important centre in India, after the presidency towns themselves. As the city is now rapidly extending and assuming fresh importance, it demands new institutions of a Metropolitan character; and therefore I trust to your exertions to aid the Government, so that in due time Allahabad shall have its College, eventually its University, a Medical College, and other institutions becoming the capital of Northern India.*¹² [emphasis added]

In advocating for the establishment of a college in Allahabad, Muir envisioned that including “institutions of a Metropolitan character” would turn the new provincial capital into a truly cosmopolitan place, akin to the metropolises of Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras. At least in the realm of education, this vision came to fruition soon. Preparations were soon afoot. The college was named after Muir and classes commenced in July 1872.¹³ The ceremony of laying the foundation stone took place on December 9, 1873. The building that would house the college was completed in the 1880s and was funded by Indian patrons and donors, most notably, the Maharaj of Vizianagaram who donated Rs 100,000.¹⁴ The Muir Central College remained affiliated with the Calcutta University until the University of Allahabad was established in 1887, thereafter, becoming its first constituent member.

Even while preparations were underway to establish the Muir College in Allahabad, the call for a university in the N.-W. Provinces India grew louder. Syed Ahmad Khan had first made the case for a “vernacular” university for the North-Western Provinces in a speech in 1867, but later shifted his efforts towards the promotion of

¹² “The Muir College,” *The Pioneer*, April 8, 1886, reproduced in *Dustavez (Documents), Allahabad, 1829–1933*, ed. by Satyaprakash Mishra, Rajesh Kumar Mishra, and Tribhuvan Dutt Singh (Allahabad: Allahabad Museum, 2004), 207.

¹³ “The Opening Ceremony,” *The Pioneer*, April 8, 1886, in *Ibid.*, 223.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* Also see *Report on the Progress of Education in the North-Western Provinces, 1873–74* (Allahabad: Government Press).

education for the Muslim community and the establishment of the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh (est. 1875).¹⁵ In Allahabad, even as the preparations for the foundation of the Muir College were going on, Indian educationists, with the support of their European counterparts, began to petition the colonial administration asking for the establishment of a university in Allahabad. The petitions reveal how a sense of place developed among the people of the region with Allahabad as its nerve center, and how these aspirations animated place-making in the city. A report in the *The Pioneer* summarized the appeals written by eminent educationists such as Syed Ahmad Khan, the leading Muslim reformer; Babu Pramada Das Mitra, an eminent Sanskrit scholar of Banaras; Babu Bireshwar Mitra of Banaras; Mr Gall, the Officiating Principal of Canning College; and Rev. J. Hewlett, the Principal of London Mission College, Banaras.¹⁶

The key arguments advocating for a university in the city hinged on the need for autonomous development of education in the region, so that “the people of Hindustan” might determine for themselves the content of the education disbursed to them and not the University of Calcutta, which served the people of Bengal. The report summarized Pramada Das Mitra’s appeal and succinctly stated the case: “The Calcutta University is not in a position to appreciate the educational requirements, intellectual capacities, and the moral instincts of the people of these Provinces.” It was necessary to establish a university “which may prescribe a course of instruction in harmony with the needs and

¹⁵ Syed Ahmad Khan, *Writings and Speeches of Syed Ahmad Khan*, compiled by Shan Mohammad (Bombay: Nachiketa Publications, 1972).

¹⁶ “The Proposed University of Allahabad,” *The Pioneer*, Saturday, December 18, 1886, reproduced in *Dustavez*, 228–232.

aspirations of the people of Hindustan.”¹⁷ Due to the early exposure of Bengal to colonial education and the migration of a large number of educated Bengalis to the North-Western Provinces as employees of the colonial government, comparison and competition between the two regions, communities, and institutions was a recurring theme in official and indigenous educational discourse.¹⁸

Residential hostels were integral to the educational vision and the development of the university’s reputation. The consolidation of the Muir College into the University of Allahabad and the latter’s growth into a residential campus was a crucial step forward. Such a trajectory of colleges becoming the stepping-stones to the formation of major Indian universities was not unusual. In fact, Indian and European educationists petitioned the colonial authorities for the creation of universities on the strength of the success of students studying in undergraduate colleges. The high numbers of student enrollments, the number of students who could pass exams and earn scholarships, as well as their performance in extra-curricular activities, became the basis on which the case for a university in Allahabad was built. The Hindu College, christened Presidency College in 1855, paved the way for this pattern of transition with the formation of the University of Calcutta in 1857. In the process, the college took on the role of the premier affiliate institution which could provide intermediate and undergraduate classes and

¹⁷ Ibid., 229.

¹⁸ A case in point is a speech by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan delivered to a largely Muslim audience in Lucknow in 1887, where he made several such comparisons. For instance, he said, “Now I take Mahomedans and the Hindus of our Province together, and ask whether they are able to compete with the Bengalis or not? Most certainly not. When this is the case, how can competitive examination be introduced into our country?” Syed Ahmad Khan, *Sir Syed Ahmad on the Present State of Indian Politics, Consisting of Speeches and Letters Reprinted from the "The Pioneer"* (Allahabad: The Pioneer Press, 1888), translator unknown, 1–24 (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 1982). http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00islamlinks/txt_sir_sayyid_lucknow_1887.html.

sometimes even offered postgraduate instruction.¹⁹ Led by Muir College, the formation of the University of Allahabad followed a similar pattern. Consequently, the Muir College became the core of the newly founded university. Eventually two other constituent colleges, Ewing Christian College and Kayastha Pathshala College, were affiliated with the university and these three formed the main teaching bodies of the university.

At this time, a college under the University of Allahabad was an amalgamation of three levels of education: an intermediate college that offered classes for grades eleven and twelve (the equivalent of high school of the contemporary educational system), an undergraduate institution that granted the bachelor's degree, and an institution that provided master's level instructions and tutorials. Until the University of Allahabad became a teaching institution under the Act of 1921, colleges continued to provide instruction to graduate students. Subsequently, undergraduate and graduate instruction was separated. As part of the Act of 1921, teaching and residence at the university became formally integrated into the charter of the institution, transforming the University of Allahabad into a "residential university" rather than merely a degree-granting body made up of affiliated colleges. Except day scholars who lived with their families or local guardians, all university students were required by mandate to live on campus facilities. As the following discussion will demonstrate, the complete implementation of this stipulation remained an ideal rather than a full-fledged reality. As the scope of education on offer in the city grew, more hostels were established in response to the growth in demand. These were results of joint

¹⁹ Gilbert shows how the autonomy and pedagogical scope of Presidency college became a matter of contention between the college and the university. While the college held the claim of being the predecessor, the university saw itself as the newer but more comprehensive and wide-ranging institution.

ventures between the citizens of Allahabad and the university administration, aided by the colonial government.

The need for residential accommodation for students was felt soon after these colleges and the University was established. Colonial and India elite visions of promoting metropolitanism in the provincial city through education and a disciplined residential life were enmeshed with the desire to learn English and acquire European cultural mores. Immigrant and local professionals played a significant role here. Irene Gilbert argues that early on, the die was cast in favor of offering Western and English-medium education at the Muir College since the earliest students were sons of Kashmiri and Bengali professionals who had moved to the new city for employment. For these immigrant professionals, the knowledge of English up to the highest level of education would significantly increase the chances of their sons also finding employment as professionals; therefore, Western education imparted in English was a priority. The interventions of these groups in literary production, print culture, and caste associations have been discussed in previous chapters. Here I draw attention to their role in shaping educational visions and enterprises in the city. Gilbert adds that over time, local Hindu groups also took advantage and sent their sons to the English-language college, “much as their predecessors had done in Bengal two generations before.”²⁰ Elite, educated Muslims also played a major role in the development of education in the city.

Hostels: Spaces of Many Influences

²⁰ Irene A. Gilbert, *Autonomy and Consensus under the Raj*, 180.

In 1890, the Muslim Boarding House was established as the first hostel of the university. The population of Muslims in the North-Western Provinces was substantial, and this region was also the site of community mobilization of elite Muslims—a large number of whom lived in urban settlements such as cities, towns, and *qaşbas*. As a result, the initiative to establish a residential space for Muslims in Allahabad took hold quite early in the course of the city’s growth.²¹

Christian missionaries (both Indian and European) also played a leading role in the establishment of hostels. In 1900, the Church Mission Society established the Oxford and Cambridge hostel, which was later renamed Holland Hall after its first superintendent, Reverend W. E. S. Holland. This hostel was non-denominational and open to all male scholars of the university, including lower-caste students. In 1902, the Christian College was established by the American Presbyterian Mission in the city, later known as the Ewing Christian College. At this institution, there were hostel accommodations for 70 students at the “Princeton building,” containing a common room, a reading room, a library, a YMCA association room, residential quarters for professors, and students’ rooms. The building was financed by the “gifts of the alumni of Princeton University.”²² The students were housed in two bungalows and the building was under construction.²³ A hostel for Hindu students called MacDonnell Hindu Boarding House, was established, possibly in 1901/1902. In addition, the Kayastha Pathshala also had a separate hostel for students studying in the Pathshala College which catered largely to Kayastha and other

²¹ As per the *Census of United Provinces* for 1921, the Muslim population in the United Provinces was 1446 per 10,000 as compared to “Brahmanic Hindus” who constitute 8,448 per 10,000. Other religions accounted for 106 per 10,000. In absolute numbers, in 1911 the number of Muslims in the region were 6,904,731 in 1911 and 6,724,967 in 1921, accounting for just about 14 per cent of the total population of around 480,000,000. For breakdown of the population of Allahabad according to caste and religion, please see the Introduction.

²² *Report on Public Instruction, United Provinces, Year Ending March 1906*, 12.

²³ *Report on Public Instruction, United Provinces, Year Ending March 1904*, 11, 14.

upper-caste students (date not available).²⁴ In 1902, there were 146 “boarder residents” who lived in the various hostels: Muir College Boarding House, 48 students; Muslim Boarding House, 20; Oxford and Cambridge Hostel, 42; Hindu Boarding House, 36; Kayastha Pathshala Hostel, 25.²⁵

This spate of construction of hostels continued for years. In 1909, a Government Hostel was established which was later renamed the Muir Hostel. Around 1915, the Anglo-Indian Hostel was built for students of this community.²⁶ This was followed by Sumer Chand Digambar Jain Boarding House (est. 1915), Sir Sundar Lal Law Hostel (est. 1916), New Hostel (est. 1927), and Sir Pramoda Charan Banerji Hostel (est. 1930). The hostels were organized under different management models, with some directly administered by the university and others which were managed privately but recognized by the university. By 1932, the deliberations on higher education had settled into more organized grooves. Sir Sundar Lal Law Hostel, Sir Pramoda Charan Banerji Hostel, the Muir Hostel, and the New Hostel were maintained and managed by the University and the rest (Muslim Boarding House, Hindu Boarding House, Jain Boarding House) were recognized by the University but managed privately.²⁷ A hostel for women was established only in the mid-1930s.

Within a few years of the establishment of the system of residential accommodation in Allahabad, the socio-cultural life it had engendered had become highly popular. We get an

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ The *University of Allahabad Calendar for the Year 1932* provides an overview of the hostels associated with the university at this time. *University of Allahabad Calendar for the Year 1932* (Allahabad: The Standard Press, 1932), 89–90, 180, 307–309, 344–446, 550–559.

insight into this life through the genre of the college magazine. Welcoming new hostellers, the editorial of the September 1914 issue of *Muir College Magazine* stated:

In the larger and freer atmosphere of college life they have opportunities of development which do not exist at school. In the community life which they now enter each new student can rub shoulders with every type of man, thereby becoming *more liberal in his views as he talks with those who differ from him and learn to sympathise with a standpoint that is not his own*. It is possible to live in the Hostel for several years and yet leave at the end a small man with small ideas with little knowledge of men and no love for his country. His horizon may be no wider than his own miserable schemes and his aims no bigger than his own success; on the other hand, *he may learn to be a citizen and a patriot* [emphasis added].

In the archive examined here, the trope of hostel life's ability to provide a wholistic and formative character-building experience outside and away from home is repeatedly invoked. Indeed, the opportunities for socio-cultural and physical extra-curricular activities provided by residential life often exceeded the facilities afforded by domestic life in smaller towns, *qaşbas*, or villages. Hostels were spaces where students were exposed to the urbane and sophisticated etiquettes of city life within the boundaries of bourgeois morality. For instance, the 1910 report on the Muslim Boarding House cautions against the corrupting influence of the market (*bāzār*) on students who boarded in private accommodations in the city.²⁸

The social life offered by residential hostels was indeed vibrant and attractive. So much so that non-resident students, who were presumably the sons of local Allahabadis, petitioned for the formation of an association for day scholars of the Muir College so that they may also participate in intra-hostel cultural and sport activities. These efforts were led in 1916 by

²⁸ Honorary Secretary, compiler, *Boarding House Musalmānān, Allahabad, Report (in Urdu) on the Muhammadan Boarding House, Attached to the Muir Central College, from July 1890 to April 1905* (Allahabad: Muhammadan Boarding House Committee, Muir Central College, August 12, 1905).

Amarnath Jha, son of Ganganath Jha, a renowned professor at the university who would later become the Vice-Chancellor.²⁹

Hostels students were a temporary and floating population but one that constituted an important presence in Allahabad's socio-cultural and intellectual landscape. Some stayed on in the city and became permanent migrants, like Syed Maqbul Ahmad Samadani whom I discuss in chapter one. For this generation of young men, living at home was the norm. Therefore, living away from their place of upbringing was a novel experience and a brief interlude before they rejoined a more stable domestic set-up. This short interruption in the normative domestic arrangement before their reintegration into family life held significant socio-cultural ramifications for the students and the city. It was during their stay in the hostel that they were exposed to a variety of urban influences—the cultural values of the Western residential system of education as well as the values of the communities which operated some of the hostels.

The British boarding school and residential university system played an important role in inspiring the structure of hostel life in colonial north India.³⁰ In particular, the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, with their organizational structure of affiliated residential colleges, provided a model for Indian universities. Gilbert attributes this influence to the presence of British scholars in India who had studied and boarded at universities in England. She writes,

In line with their own educational traditions (generally those of the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge), the British professors sought to make the college a community. At Presidency [Calcutta], they created a community in which staff and students might participate in continued traditions of excellence. The effort to reform the institution began slowly; a few efforts at organizing games in the

²⁹ Incidentally, after completing an MA in English, Amarnath Jha joined the faculty as a professor and like his father, rose to the position of Vice-Chancellor of the University of Allahabad.

³⁰ An extensive discussion of this influence is beyond the scope of this work.

1870s, a debating club which met intermittently, occasional prize-giving days or gatherings with the old boys.”³¹

As was the case at Presidency College of Calcutta, a number of Oxbridge-educated British professors taught at Allahabad. For example, we learn from the *Oxford and Cambridge Hostel Magazine* that December 1914 was a time of hectic social activity due to the arrival of new Hostel staff from England. They were:

Rev. V. G. H. Shaw, M. A., Clare College, Cambridge
Mr. H. B. Salmon, B. A., Pembroke College, Cambridge
Mr. G. B. Bush, B. A., Pembroke College, Cambridge³²

Predictably, there were comparatively more British staff at the Oxford and Cambridge Hostel due to the connection of this hostel with British missionaries. But even in the other hostels, staff members educated at British universities were aplenty. Their names suggest that initially they were mostly European. By the twentieth century, names of Indians educated at British universities also appear in this archive.

The influence of the culture of British universities on the social life of Indian institutions is most evident in the arena of sports, and in extra-curricular activities like drama and debate. For instance, enthusiastic reports of cricket, football, hockey, tennis, and athletics matches at inter-hostel tournaments reflect that British sporting culture was steadily seeping into provincial life. In addition to the teams from Allahabad colleges and from colleges across the region who played against each other at regular tournaments, each hostel fielded its own team in competitions. The emphasis on sports and physical activity were tied up with colonial aims of the transfer of

³¹ Gilbert, *Autonomy and Consensus*,” 176.

³² *Oxford and Cambridge Hostel Magazine* III, no. 31, December 1914, 2.

desirable cultural values.³³ Similarly, debate and drama clubs were very popular, with separate Hindi, Bengali, English, and Urdu sections. As part of their extracurricular character-building exercises, some of the hostels published their own magazines that reported events and provided space for students to hone the craft of public writing.

Despite the strong influence of British culture on the organization of hostels, there were many aspects of Indian hostel life and extra-curricular activities that were informed by north Indian cultural values and mores. For instance, while the debate as an extra-curricular activity was a British hand-me-down, the topics were local and topical. In 1914, the students of the Oxford and Cambridge Hostel debated on topics such as “the Ancient Gurukula system versus the Modern College system” and “Higher Education for Indian Women.”³⁴ Similarly, by prioritizing the organization of poetic gatherings or *mushā‘iras*—a cultural product of the Indo-Persian court tradition—above other cultural activities held at the hostels, the Muslim hostel replaced British cultural forms with Indic ones. The rubric of hostels providing a public space for the performance of cultural events was facilitated by the Western system of hostels, but the content of such event was often local. In this way, Indians made important edits to the structure of the British residential educational system in the process of adapting it.

Such instances of provincialization through an infusion of local cultural norms, however, carried their own set of limitations and problems. For instance, in discussing hostels, writers frequently invoked the ancient Indic *guru-shishya* system of ancient India which had also

³³ See Brian Stoddart, “Sport, Cultural Imperialism, and Colonial Response in the British Empire,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 30, no. 4 (October 1988), 649–673.

³⁴ The opposition won. It was decided that women were to be “makers of home” and were to have “only such general education as was needed in the discharge of domestic duties and in sympathizing with their husbands.” *Ibid.*, 14.

followed a residential model. But caste and religious segregation that were fundamental norms of the system went unquestioned. These hostels had been established through the support of particular indigenous publics such as Muslim and Hindu elites. As each community sought to inculcate its own particular values in the residents, the ideologies of these communities manifested in the identity-based living arrangements of the hostels as well as the socio-cultural activities held there. As I demonstrate in the discussion to follow, the socio-cultural ethos and activities that were promoted at hostels often replicated elite culture with its in-built caste and religious hierarchy. Consequently, the limitations at the heart of Indian culture crept into these residential arrangements too. For instance, the demand to build a “residential college [hostel on the university campus]” for women students gathered steam only in the 1920s and the women’s hostel was established in the mid-1930s. Until then, there is little mention of the participation of women in social gatherings except in their capacity as wives of professors, wardens, and guests. Consequently, women were unable to enjoy the many vaunted benefits of campus residential life until more than fifty years after these were available to male students. Even then, their numbers remained small. While university education was open to all students including lower-caste students, they are hardly mentioned in the archival sources that I track. Sometimes, they make marginal appearances, which matches their social position in the realm of education in particular and in public life in general.

The prominence of some identity groups and the near complete absence of others in the history of hostels are striking testaments to the narrow range and exclusivity of the socio-cultural life that was emerging around universities. Yet more noticeable is the fact that broadly defined, identity-specific, sectarian, and segregated residential spaces were emerging as the normative

model in Allahabad with just one exception. The bases of segregation in northern India were caste, religion, and gender—a triple fracture within social and cultural life that mirrored the divisions within the public life of the city and region. In this regard, Allahabad was only a prominent example of segregated living arrangements and not the exception. Since a comprehensive study of university and college residential spaces remains to be written, it is difficult to compare the situation in Allahabad with universities that were established earlier in Calcutta, Madras, Bombay, and Lahore.

As I discuss below, hostels represented a unique situation whereby domestic and personal arrangements of living and eating were given a formal and institutionalized shape in the public sphere. While the establishment of hostels represented the distinct aspirations of various communities, they also indicated a significant crack in civic values. In the following sections, I examine the histories of some of these hostels with attention to the contestation between particular community values and general civic interests that became enshrined as principles of place-making in Allahabad and represented a limit of its *gaṅgā-jamunī* civilizational ideal.

College versus Hostel: An Overview from the Pages of the *Muir College Magazine*

Muir College was the first constituent college of the University of Allahabad. The socio-cultural life of this college, as captured in the *Muir College Magazine*, set the benchmark for the experience of attaining an education and living in hostels in north India. As discussed earlier, several of the hostels were first associated with Muir College before they expanded to accommodate students from other colleges and graduate students studying at the university. As a result, regular reports of hostel activities appeared in this magazine. These reports furnish an

overview and insight into the everyday life of students studying and living in the Oxford and Cambridge Hostel, the Government Hostel, the Anglo-Indian Hostel, and the Muslim Boarding House. Through a discussion of this textual archive, I highlight the ways in which the city and its prominent citizens engaged with college life.³⁵ I also remain attentive to the process through which an elite student identity around the idea of “social unity” was constructed.

The *Muir College Magazine* began publication in January 1915 as a quarterly organ. Its commencement coincided with the early years of World War I. Several faculty, staff, and students from the college fought in this war. As the chief editor was a professor, the magazine perhaps did not entirely reflect student opinion. A close reading of the issues suggests that this magazine was treading a middle ground between providing a space to students for the expression of their thoughts and functioning as an official organ of the institution whose readership included alumni, patrons, and administrators. The first editor was Prof. S. G. Dunn, and the Business Editor was Prof. A. C. Mukerji. The inaugural editorial team included a number of student assistants and featured two student writers who were regular contributors—Amarnath Jha and Raghupati Sahay. Both went on to become professors of English at the university and prominent public citizens of the city. Jha became the Vice-Chancellor of the university and Raghupati Sahay rose to eminence as a renowned Urdu poet who was better known by his pen name, Firaq Gorakhpuri. The magazine was printed by the leading publishers of the city, the Indian Press.

The genre of the college magazine emerges at this period as a repository of news about the social and cultural life in the college and the hostels. The contributors were a mix of students and professors who held forth on a variety of literary, historical, and scientific topics that

³⁵ *Muir College Magazine*, Allahabad, 1915–1921.

reflected the subjects taught at the institution. A wide variety of creative pieces such as travel narratives, poetry, and short stories—the mainstay of college magazines for decades to come—were published. In addition, notices regarding the arrival and departure of faculty and higher administrative staff were posted in the magazine, university results were highlighted, visits by colonial officials such as the Director of Public Instructions were reported, as was news about prizes and scholarships won by students. The reports in the magazine show that through the medium of extra-curricular activities, the college and hostel teams interacted with local urban associations such as the YMCA and the Allahabad Gymkhana Club, with administrative units such as the UP Secretariat team, and with military battalions stationed in the city like the 1/5 Hampshire Regiment and the 1/1/ Devon Battery. The Literary Union, the Historical Society, and the Economic Society were the main locus of intellectual deliberations on campus.

Equally significant is the fact that these magazines were the medium through which a network of social and cultural life between educational institutions and hostels across the region developed. Several other colleges in the city and in the region participated in this form of textual culture in order to discuss college and hostel life in their respective magazines. These magazines then circulated among students and staff who were able to keep abreast of each other's activities through this medium. For instance, the *Muir College Magazine* mentioned and discussed proceedings from the *Bareilly College Magazine*, *Canning College Magazine* (Lucknow), *Kayastha Pathshala Magazine* (Allahabad), *Meerut College Magazine* (Meerut), *Holkar College Magazine* (Indore), *Lalbagh Chronicle* (NA), and *Christ Church College Magazine* (NA). A network of cultural, social, and sporting events bound the students of these institutions in bonds

of fraternity, all the while constructing an elite male social community bound by privileged access to education, class, and upper-caste status.

An analysis of the recurring themes in the magazines uncovers the key constituent units of this fraternal community and the ends this fraternity might have served. Beyond the empirical exigencies of producing an educated class to run the administration of the colony, the aim of inculcating the values of “social unity” through college and hostel life had a number of intentions such as promoting loyalty towards the empire. Quite soon after the magazine began publication, the editorial of the September 1915 issue attempted to excite further interest in the social life of the institution among students. The editorial exhorted students to shed the instrumental approach to college as a place where one merely acquires an education. Instead, the editorial urged students to view college as more than just a space of pedagogical instruction. The editor resorted to a forceful rhetorical appeal to the “average” student, “for it is by the average student, and not by the brilliant scholar or athlete; that the outside world will judge us.”³⁶ The editors reminded students how easy it was to slip into a relationship of pure transaction when it came to college life, whereby the institution might be regarded as a “bunniya’s [i.e., trader’s] shop, where a little learning may be bought as cheaply and then the relation is over,” or where games might be viewed “as an amusement for the few and no concern of theirs, rather than as the active expression of *our social unity*” [emphasis added]. The article continued in this vein and concluded by saying that students should aim to give back to the college community something of what they received there. “Social unity” of the college community was, thus, a large part of the vision of higher education, one that was shared by the faculty and students. The high degree

³⁶ *Muir College Magazine* II, no. 3, September 1915, 2.

of participation of colonial officials in college events shows that these community-building activities were looked upon with appreciation and indulgence by the authorities.

Until 1919, the articles in the *Magazine* show that the spirit cultivated by the university was one of loyalty to the Crown. The articles by students betray little hint of anti-colonial zeal but given the supervision by professors and perhaps fear of censorship, this is not. For instance, the “General Notes” column of February 1916 notes that the Commemoration and Durbar Day were celebrated “with greater grandeur than ever before” and a grand function was held.³⁷ The Lieutenant-Governor of the N.-W. Provinces, Sir James Meston (1912–1918), presided over the prize distribution. Social celebrations on hostel and university campuses (a mile race, tug of war, and a cricket match between past and present members of the college) that were meant to create affective attachments towards the college were also intentionally entangled with inculcating loyalty to the empire. These aims, however, were not shared by all stakeholders. Official organs of the college like these magazines would not mention anti-colonial feelings that were present on the campus. In the aftermath of the ending of the World War I and on the eve of the Non-Cooperation Movement in 1919, patriotism picked up. In his autobiography, Ijaz Husain notes that rousing speeches by Gandhi, Tilak, and other popular Congress leaders in the city led to a

³⁷ *Muir College Magazine* III, no. 1, February 1916, 8. This event refers to the events of January 1, 1877, when the first royal Durbar was held in the Coronation Park at Delhi. At this event, Queen Victoria was proclaimed as the Qaisar-i-Hind (Empress of India). A grand celebratory event called Jalsah-i-Qaisari was held in front of an audience of approximately 68,000 and 15,000 troops. The queen did not attend the ceremony and never visited India, but her proclamation promising good governance to her Indian subjects was read out aloud. Anchi Hoh, “Delhi Durbar and the Proclamation of the Queen,” *Library of Congress Blog*, November 1, 2017. <https://blogs.loc.gov/international-collections/2017/11/the-delhi-durbar-and-the-proclamation-of-queen-victoria/>

wave of anti-colonial fervor at the university. Harivansh Rai Bachchan also mentions listening to such speeches in his autobiography.³⁸

The culture of individual hostels became so predominant that it threatened to overwhelm the singular identity projected by the College, creating a competition of loyalties between affection towards the college and towards the hostel. In the May 1916 issue, students expressed their varied opinions on this matter in open letters to the editor. Local residents of the city and day scholars like Amarnath Jha found the attitude of the hostel associations to be contrary to the spirit of the college. Jha was an active member of the college who held the position of Secretary of Literary Union, besides membership of various other bodies, and was a frequent contributor to the *Magazine*. In his angry complaint to the editor, Jha writes that due to their deep engagement with hostel life, “students have no affection for the College itself” which led to “conflict of claims” between the hostels and the college. He writes that perhaps it might make sense that a hostel resident spends most of his time in the hostel where “he has intimate friends, who take a brotherly interest in him; there, except his parents, he gets all that he gets at his home; there he has opportunities for the improvement of both his physique and his intellect.” Jha reminds hostel residents not to be swayed by their strong affection for their home away from home with a strange analogy, “He forgets his Hostel is merely the offspring of his College; that without the College his Hostel could not exist; that he owes as much to the College as an Indian, for example, [as he] owes to this Sovereign Lord the King; over and above that to the Viceroy.” He concludes by asserting that “The growth of Societies in College [is] a sure antidote for

³⁸ Syed Ijaz Husain, *Merī Duniyā, K̄hud Navisht Savānih-i Hayāt* (Allahabad: Karvan Publishers, 1965); Harivansh Rai Bachchan, *In the Afternoon of Time: An Autobiography*, translated by Rupert Snell [1969] (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1998).

intellectual ennui and noxious growth of hostelmania.”³⁹ As I discuss earlier, Jha also led efforts to form a “Day Scholars Association,” possibly in order to create a platform that would give non-resident students a chance to compete in inter-hostel activities. Arguing against these allegations of “hostelmania,” a resident of the Oxford and Cambridge Hostel wrote that the idea that students perceived the two spaces—the College and the Hostel—in a hierarchical fashion was an imaginary one and might kindle “a pernicious spirit.” “To say that a student pays more attention to his hostel than his College, is to say that a student loves his home better than his College.”⁴⁰

On the surface, these competing claims and contestations of opinions between students seem like good-natured rivalry between different shades of opinion within the college. The interesting question here is why did the hostel emerge as the locus of affect to the degree that it garnered such strong emotions, both in those who dwelled there and in those who did not? And what is the relationship between these spaces and the larger city? In magazine archives, two contrasting ideas of belonging were emerging in these early discussions on the nature of social life in provincial educational institutions. Colleges offered a new form of secular, liberal education and hostels offered a new mode of dwelling where one could still retain one’s identity as a Christian, a Muslim, a Hindu, and above all, as an upper-caste and upper-class individual. Social life in both spaces ensured upward mobility within colonial society but in the hostel, the demands of a liberal and secular pedagogy were suspended to a degree. Perhaps loving one’s “home” more than one’s college was not quite as absurd as the unnamed student writer imagined. Hostels were homes away from home for students and it is likely that the ethos of hostel life

³⁹ *Muir College Magazine* III, no. 2, May 1916, 31–32.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 32.

aligned more closely with the ethos of home. In the texts that I analyze here, colleges were perceived to some degree as spaces of alienation and hostels as spaces where community life thrived. There is a further layer to this issue beyond alienation created by colonial educational practices. Colleges were spaces to acquire an education leading to employment whereas hostels were often formed on the principle of some form of identity, either of religion, or caste, or segregated by gender. The cleavage between loyalties towards the college and towards the hostel that so alarmed the editor, Prof Duff, and the student, Jha, was hardly innocent; nor was it imaginary. This division of loyalties gestures towards the contestations of identity that my dissertation has traced in the histories of various other textually mediated publics of the city as well.

Musalman Boarding House: A Guardian of Health, Morals, and Religion

The foundation stone of the Musalman Boarding House was laid down on March 11, 1890, by Sir Auckland Colvin.⁴¹ Maulvi Samiullah Khan, Syed Ahmad Khan's cousin and his ally in promoting Western education among Muslims, was instrumental in the establishment of the Muir College as well as of this hostel.⁴² *The Allahabad Review*, a bilingual Urdu-English monthly, was also started in 1890 and played an important role in drumming up support for this initiative. It was published and edited by Samiullah Khan's son, Mohammad Hamidullah, a barrister educated in England. This journal played a leading role in popularizing the cause of a hostel for

⁴¹ *Allahabad University Calendar*, 1932, 555–557.

⁴² Ibid. For a brief profile of Maulvi Samiullah Khan, see Afzal Usmani, "Moulvi Samiullah Khan," *Karwaan-e-Aligarh*, no date, http://aligarhmovement.com/karwaan_e_aligarh/Moulvi_Samiullah_Khan. Also reproduced with some changes as "Moulvi Samiullah Khan: Cofounder of Aligarh MOA College," June 27, 2021. <https://www.islamicity.org/78652/moulvi-samiullah-khan-cofounder-of-aligarh-moa-college/>

Muslim students who were studying at the University of Allahabad.⁴³ A serialized column titled “Arrangement for a Place of Living for Muslim Students in Allahabad” written by Hamidullah was published in the *Allahabad Review* from May 1890 onwards, explicating the need for an institutionalized residential arrangement for Muslim students of the Muir Central College. Under the editorship of Hamidullah, the journal routinely published general articles on education and employment and zealously took up the cause of aiding Muslim students abroad. For instance, articles discussed how students could access educational opportunities in England, find a place to live, and engage with a community of fellow Indians.

The establishment of this journal in the early 1890s coincided with the apex of the *Ashraf* Muslim movement towards Western education and professionalization, spearheaded in the region by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. In the aftermath of the establishment of the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College in 1875, and the creation of the University of Allahabad in 1887, a section among the Muslim elites coalesced around the cause of progress of the community, under the perceived benevolence of the British Raj. This phase was distinct from the earlier era of the post-1857 moment when Muslims of north India were targeted as the prime instigators and culprits of the rebellion and experienced significant feelings of alienation and loss.⁴⁴ As the discussions in the *Allahabad Review* reflect, by 1890s a section of the Muslim elites were more focused on finding a foothold for Muslim youth in the modern era that colonialization had

⁴³ It is interesting to note that the journal was printed by the Indian Press, preceding the press’s most famous Hindi periodical, *Saraswatī*, by ten years.

⁴⁴ See Eve Tignol, “The Muslims of Northern India and the Trauma of the Loss of Power, c. 1857–1930s” (PhD diss., Royal Holloway University, London, 2016); Francis Robinson, *Separatism among Indian Muslims: The Politics of the United Provinces’ Muslims, 1860–1923* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974).

inaugurated than in looking back at the past.⁴⁵ The contents of the journal mirror this community-wide urge of support for the elite, educated Muslim youth in their endeavors to attain the best education and access prestigious jobs. For instance, in the Urdu section of the journal, letters of support from various Muslim elites of the region were cited and sometimes published in full. The English section of the journal also published articles on the issue. In fact, in the English section, the bulk of the articles focused on the cause of education and employment: “Education in Europe,” “The Civil Service of India,” “Admission into the Indian Finance Department,” “Indians Abroad,” and regular extracts from English and German magazines and newspapers. All these articles were written with an eye on Muslim interests; both achievements and shortcomings were prominently highlighted.⁴⁶ All this evidence points to a concerted effort by the elite Allahabadi Muslims to systematically ensure upward mobility for the community through education and employment. These efforts resembled the Kayastha campaign to achieve similar ends that was in fact, unfolding at the very same time.

While the *Review* was explicitly a mouthpiece for expressing the concerns of the elite Muslim community of the city and the region, it was not entirely closed off to inter-religious views or concerns. For instance, a serialized commentary on the *Mitāksharā* written by a writer, S. C. Vasu, appeared regularly in the journal. Moreover, the list of donors who contributed to the Muslim Boarding House shows that the cause had found a number of supporters among elite

⁴⁵ Aligarh was the institutional space where the first generation of English-educated Muslims were trained, and Aligarh graduates provided leadership to the community on a number of issues. See David Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation: Muslim Solidarity in British India* (Princeton University Press, 1977).

⁴⁶ Alongside some general interest literary, historical, and social pieces (“Hafiz of Shiraz,” “Prince Bismarck,” “the Indian Silver Trade,” “The Registration of Mahomedan Marriage and Divorce,” etc.) were also published. Elite Muslim advocacy in the *Allahabad Review* also extended beyond educational concerns and into the terrain of community-building. “An Islam Club for the N. W. Provinces” is an example.

Hindus, most of whom were landowners like Pratap Bahadur Singh, Raja of Pratapgarh, or lawyers like Bans Gopal Sahib Rai, vakil from Rai Bareilly.⁴⁷ The journal acknowledged this moment of inter-religious cooperation.

It will be observed that among the donors are not only Mussulmans but also a large number of our Hindu brethren. We cannot find words strong enough to thank them . . . Indians in former times were renowned for their sympathy not only towards those of their own cast [sic] and religion, but to their countrymen in general—nay even to the brute creation. We sincerely hope that the people of India will cultivate the virtue of sympathy as much in this age as their ancestors did in the days gone-by [sic]. No solution of the present discontent and disunion can possibly be discovered better than the potent magic of SYMPATHY [sic].⁴⁸

The efforts of the elite Muslim community of Allahabad hinged on a number of imperatives centered on the growing status of the provincial city. Allahabad had emerged as the seat of the local University and as a result, a large number of well-to-do Muslim students were pouring into the city. These thoughts found articulation in the English article, “A Boarding House for Moslem Students,” wherein the writer arrives at the conclusion that a hostel should be established in Allahabad “entirely under Mussalman supervision.”⁴⁹ In the article, Allahabad is repeatedly cited as a “central place” where the Muslim community should have a notable presence. Implicit in these assertions is the claim that community-formation in Allahabad was central to the wider progress of the community. Through these repeated citations of the significance of the city to the cause of education and progress of the community, Muslim elites of the late nineteenth century were both laying claim to a sense of belonging to the city and simultaneously marking the city as a place suitable for Muslims.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Pratapgarh is a town in the vicinity of Allahabad.

⁴⁸ No author, “The Mussulman Boarding House, Allahabad,” *Allahabad Review*, no. 3, 55.

⁴⁹ No author, “A Boarding House for Moslem Students,” *Allahabad Review*, no. 9, 143.

⁵⁰ Veena Talwar Oldenburg, *The Making of Colonial Lucknow, 1856–1877* (Princeton University Press, 1984).

Muslim elite efforts to establish a hostel for Muslim students in Allahabad took the shape of advocacy in print, formation of committees, publication of reports of their proceedings, and called for subscriptions to the cause. They also used the medium of print to call for letters of support from similar-minded individuals who were interested in the cause. These concerted efforts by the Muslim elites paid off when a public fundraising initiative was launched by the journal. In each issue, the names of donors were listed alongside the amount of donation. The Committee also deliberated in November 1890 if “out-station enlightened Musalmans” should be invited to join the Committee. This stray phrase, in fact, reveals the major role played by the Allahabadi Muslim community in establishing a hostel, and by extension, contributing to place-making in the city. These endeavors finally came to a fruition when in July 1890, No. 6 Mayo Road, a large bungalow close to the Muir Central College, was leased and turned into a boarding house. A provisional Committee was formed which was chaired by Sheikh Amir-ud-din, who, like Hamidullah, was a barrister. The guiding hand of these legal professionals once again reflects a similarity with the Kayasthas of the city (see chapter three). After the Boarding House had operated for a few months, an article in the *Review* stated that, “the conclusion is irresistible, that such an institution will be productive of the greatest good.”⁵¹

The efforts of the Muslim community of the city ensured that a hostel for Muslim students was established quite early on in the educational history of Allahabad, laying the foundation for a connection between education, religious community, and urban growth. In 1905, a 55-page report in Urdu titled *Boarding House Musalmanān* was published by the Honorary Secretary of the Muhammadan Boarding House Committee, Muir Central College. It furnishes

⁵¹ No author, “A Boarding House for Moslem Students,” *Allahabad Review*, no. 9, 144.

an insight into the operation of the hostel from its foundation in 1890 until 1905. In its content, aim, and language, it is clear that the report was written for the Muslim community rather than an official audience. The aim was to present a comprehensive history of the then 15-year-old institution furnishing several details about the administrative committees, conditions of admission, and daily arrangements of the institution. The opening section titled “*History yanī Hālāt-i-Boarding House Musalmānān, Ilāhābad*” states the foundational aims of the institution:

This boarding house is for Muslim students who study at the Muir Central College. Its aims are to make comfortable arrangements for the boarding and lodging of such students as well as look after their health (*ṣeḥat*), morals (*akḥlāq*), and religion (*mazḥab*). Alongside the education they gain from the college, they will also receive training (*tarbiyat*) so that a love for the community grows in them (*quamī josh paidā ho*). This implies that the same rules that are applied in the boarding house of Aligarh Muslim College will be applicable here.⁵²

The college at Aligarh had set the horizon of expectation for Muslim educational initiatives to follow, even for hostels that were attached to non-denominational secular institutions like the Muir Central College. Maulvi Samiullah Khan’s involvement in both the Aligarh MOA College and the Muir College was a further reason for these similarities between the structure of hostels of these two institutions.

My reading of these sources show that residential spaces were perceived to be the solution to the issue created by the policy followed at government-sponsored educational institutions. Wood’s Despatch of 1854, whose key aims I have outlined earlier in the chapter, had also declared that the colonial government aimed to maintain a policy of non-interference in

⁵² Ibid., 1, my translation. The phrase “*quam*” (community) is mentioned repeatedly in this document. While *quam* by itself can refer to any community, the rest of the document establishes clarifies that here the reference is to the Muslim community. *Boarding House Musalmānān*.

religious matters. As a result, educational institutions were prohibited from offering religious instructions.⁵³ The 1882 Hunter Education Commission confirmed that the British Crown would maintain this policy. Traditional Indian educational institutions like *madrasas*, *ṭols* and *pāthshālās* had fulfilled the requirements of providing a religious education alongside pedagogy in other subjects. The lacuna left in the wake of their decline generated much anxiety and conversation in the public sphere about the fact that the new generations of indigenous students lacked religious instruction. As already mentioned, the Muslim community had been slower to embrace British-backed Western education. Syed Ahmad Khan's intervention was the turning point in popularizing the cause of Western education among the community. Consequently, even within the structure of a secular educational institution, a space that would cater to the needs of Muslim students was bound to appeal to the community. Offering a modicum of religious instruction and accommodating the needs of religious-minded students was therefore, essential to the aim of garnering widespread support for the hostel.

Hostels also had to be vigilant about another cultural aspect—their role as substitute guardian for outstation students. Describing the living conditions of students prior to the establishment of the hostel, *Boarding House Musalmanān* mentions practical concerns such as finding salubrious living and eating arrangements as well as the fact that students had to waste time managing a household. The document repeated the phrase *nigrānī* (supervision) several times, hammering in how the lack of parental presence affected young students and how parents remained anxious that their children had no guardian (*nigrān-i-ḥāl*). In replicating the same

⁵³ Board of Control of the East India Company, "Educational Despatch of 1854," in *A Source Book of Modern Indian Education: 1797 to 1902*, ed. M. R. Paranjape (London, GBR: Macmillan and Company, Limited, 1938).

principles (*aṣūl*) on which the boarding house of Aligarh was run, the Muslim Boarding House of Allahabad sought to provide adequate supervision. Therefore, the spatial organization of hostels embodied the twin motivations of inculcating religious particularity and parental oversight over young scholars.

In March 1892, the Muslim Boarding House moved into a permanent set of residential buildings which had been built on land donated by the government and lay in the vicinity of the Muir College. The Lieutenant Governor, Sir Auckland Colvin, laid the foundation stone. Students were accommodated in individual rooms. Rent was set at two-and-a-half rupees per month and the fees for meals and other facilities were set at eight rupees, bringing the total expenditure up to ten-and-a-half rupees per month. As per the report, stipends were offered to needy students. By 1905, 26 students boarded at this institution under the supervision of Superintendent Munshi Abdul Ghaffar. The building comprised 29 rooms. The government promised Rs 15,000 as a grant towards the construction of 30 more rooms.⁵⁴ Apart from basic facilities of boarding and lodging, the Boarding House provided a separate room for offering *namāz* (prayers). The hostel was also equipped with a library, a common dining space, and sports facilities. The superintendent of the hostel was appointed by the principal of the college and reported to him.

On the eve of the inauguration ceremony, Colvin delivered a speech to an audience of eminent residents of Allahabad and educators. While praising the initiative of the local Muslim community in emulating the example of their Aligarh brethren, Colvin also warned the eminent members of the community that a hostel for Muslims should not become a hotbed of “Muslim

⁵⁴ *Report on Public Instruction, United Provinces, 1904–1905*, 12.

separatism.” This remark reveals that even fifty years after the Rebellion of 1857, British fears regarding Muslim dissatisfaction—that the colonial authorities believed had incited the event—had persisted. Over years, donations and grants for the hostel continued to pour in for years and the number of students grew. This hostel, along with all the others discussed in this chapter, continues to remain in operation today.⁵⁵

A hostel for Hindu students was inaugurated sometime in the early years of twentieth century (possibly 1901/1902) in the same bungalow and premises which the Muslim Boarding House had occupied from July 1890 until 1892. Later, it was named after the Lieutenant Governor of the region, Antony MacDonnell who had laid down the foundation stone.⁵⁶ He had also been particularly sympathetic to the cause of Nagari and Hindi and had aided efforts to bring together the Hindu community around linguistic markers of difference (see chapter two). Thus, we find that by the early 1900s, the principle of religious particularity was woven into the foundational fabric of institutions of higher education. It had crept in through the rear entrance and found a firm footing in the residential arrangements of these institutions.

The Oxford and Cambridge Hostel⁵⁷

⁵⁵ *Allahabad University Calendar*, 1932, 555–557.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ This section suffered from Covid-induced travel restrictions as I was not able to utilize the Humanities Division Dissertation Travel Grant to travel to the UK. The Cadbury Research Library at the University of Birmingham holds the largest collection of documents related to the Church Missionary Society which had important missions in North India. I hope to access this archive after the completion of the dissertation and add to this section and add a new chapter on Christian communities of Allahabad, with a focus on low-caste conversion.
<https://churchmissionsociety.org/about/our-history/archives/>.

The Oxford and Cambridge Hostel, along with the Oxford and Cambridge Institute, was established in 1900 by Reverend W. E. S. Holland, an alumnus of the University of Oxford.⁵⁸ Soon after, he was joined by Rev. P. Armitage, a graduate and missionary from Cambridge. The hostel started off with six students. Within a few years, it was flooded with applications and at its height housed close to 200 students.⁵⁹ As mentioned earlier, it was unique in housing students of every background—Hindus, Muslims, and Christians—at a time when segregated accommodation was the norm. It was also exceptional in accepting lower-caste students as residents. In the late nineteenth century, caste norms were so rigid were for upper-caste Hindus that even commensality with a person of the same *jāti* but different sub-sect (as we see in the case of Kayastha sub-sects in chapter three), constituted a potential breach. Under such circumstances, how did hostel dwellers negotiate living with members of other religions and with members of lower castes? To what extent did the spirit of egalitarian community life really prevail in this hostel and what were its limits? And what do we learn about the capacities of the urban public sphere which had facilitated this experimental challenge against strict social hierarchies?

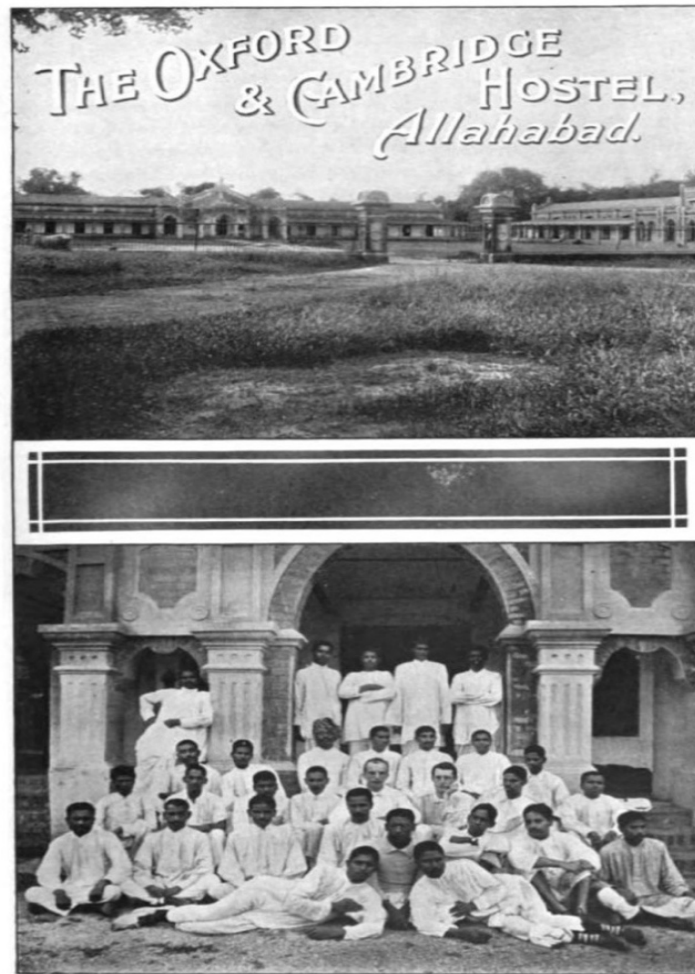
Hayden Bellenoit examines the influential role played by missionaries in shaping education, including hostels, in colonial India. Bellenoit shows that missionary ideology was independent of and differed from official colonial policies and practices. Colonial educational policy itself was not uniform in its aims or implementation, allowing independent actors like

⁵⁸ James Shepard Dennis, *Christian Missions and Social Progress: A Sociological Study of Foreign Missions* (Fleming H. Revell Company, 1906), 128; *The Church Missionary Review* (Church Missionary Society, 1900), 710, 860.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

missionaries as well as Indian agents (within and outside the administration) to influence policy especially during its implementation at the ground level. Missionary aims were also not static and changed with the evolution of the larger discourse on education. Bellenoit demonstrates that by the late nineteenth century, missionaries had given up hope that education could be effectively used as a tool to “win souls” for the cause of Christianity. Instead, they had realized that they could be most useful to the church if they could inculcate Christian ideals of public-minded service and humanitarian thought among the educated classes of India. Hostels provided missionaries the kind of long-term and intimate access which they could utilize to influence the morals and ethos of students. As a result, hostels became important spheres of missionary activity. Bellenoit notes that missionaries such as Charles Andrews at St. Stephen’s and Reverend Holland at Allahabad extended these ideals further so as to include support for anti-colonial nationalism and patriotism. In so doing, they went against official colonial policy regarding educational institutions.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Bellenoit, *Missionary Education*, 155–167.



The Hostel Quadrangle, Allahabad.
A Group of Indian Students—Inmates of the Hostel.
(See p. 128.)

Figure 13: The Oxford and Cambridge Hostel and its Students, 1906
SOURCE: Reproduced from James Shepard Dennis, *Christian Missions and Social Progress: A Sociological Study of Foreign Missions*, 1906, 129

The Oxford and Cambridge Hostel published its own magazine from around 1905 onwards. It was a quarterly publication of twenty pages per issue.⁶¹ The content of the magazine comprised an editorial, a list of events held during the previous quarter and their descriptions,

⁶¹ Based on information about copies available in the Birmingham University Library on their website.

and a few short articles on miscellaneous topics. The Indian Press was the printer of this magazine too.⁶² In the February 1914 issue, an article titled “Hostel Life” by a student who signed off as A. C. P. furnishes a rare glimpse into the affective experience of living in these residential spaces from the perspective of a student:

There’s a phrase that is often heard in conversation in the Hostel. It crops up again and again in unexpected places . . . ‘Hostel life.’ It recurs like a refrain . . . All know it. All use it. There is no doubt of its meaning, yet when we are asked to define it, or write down in words what the phrase conveys, the difficulty begins. The fact is that Hostel life does not consist in the games or the Debating Society or any other Hostel activity. It is something bigger. It includes them all. They are but outward expressions of it. It is itself invisible, a spirit, an attitude of mind and outlook, which creates and makes possible the various occupations which we enjoy. It teaches us to tolerate each other, to trust each other, to help each other, in one word to be friends. It is the foundation of our social life. The Christian name for it is love . . . It is possible to live in the same Hostel without knowing the other men . . . without being on speaking terms with the other members of the block . . . to be a nonentity unknown to all. These things actually happen, in India, in England, everywhere in fact where the right spirit does not exist, the spirit of mutual understanding and camaraderie, which we call ‘Hostel life.’⁶³

This touching tribute to residential institutions uncovers a conundrum which is at the heart of this chapter as well as this dissertation. On the one hand, new institutional spaces engendered by colonial modernity, such as the hostel, were crucibles for the growth and fostering of ethos and emotions of mutuality and sociability. “To tolerate,” “to trust,” “to help,” “love” were not new emotions in the socio-cultural landscape of the region but rather, the spaces in which such emotions could develop were new as was the fact that these forms of relationalities were not based on kinship or community but on feelings of friendliness and amiability for strangers who were of the same age and shared a living space. The growth of such social relationships based on

⁶² I was able to access only the issues from 1914 which were available in the British Library. No further information on the editor or organizational structure is available.

⁶³ A. C. P. “Hostel Life,” *Oxford and Cambridge Hostel Magazine* II, February 1914, 9–11.

youth, intimacy, and “the spirit of mutual understanding and camaraderie” within hostels and across colleges was a refreshing aspect of urban life engendered by colonial modernity.

On the other hand, this egalitarian ethos of “mutual understanding” seemed to have encountered its limits in the social reality of caste and community that lay outside the pages of the magazine. In such a scenario, the same institutional space that engendered the growth of the public sphere also set up classical conditions of contestation through clear demarcations of whom one could touch, eat, pray, and be friends with. This schism at the heart of colonial modernity was, therefore, operating at three levels: an expansion of opportunities, a continuation of older norms of differentiation, and the product or amalgamation of these two factors. Together, these factors led to a reemergence of segregation in new spaces of sociality and mutuality.

An evocative six-page description of hostel life from the missionary warden’s perspective is available in *The Goal of India*, Reverend W. E. S. Holland’s recollections of his life and service in India. This part of the text is written in the form of short journal entries that describe daily life in the hostel. The evidence of the dilemma raised by the presence of lower-caste students is available in Holland’s own words: “Back for a Prefects Meeting: to discuss some grave problem raised by the admission to the College of an out-caste student, whose entrance into the dining-hall will defile them all.”⁶⁴ *The Goal of India* is in many ways a stringent critique of caste and reveals where Holland stood on the matter. But the text offers no further details on this particular case. As his other writings show, Holland held great sympathy for Indians and India, including support for the anti-colonial struggle. His writings reveal that this affection was

⁶⁴ W. E. S. Holland, *The Goal of India* (London: United Council for Missionary Education, 1918), 146.

perhaps tinged with a degree of romance and idealism about India. Yet, he remained steadfast in bringing to attention the malicious nature of caste in its everyday operation. In another work, Holland wrote a severe critique of the caste divisions within Indian society,

True, the rules of caste are changing. But only in their most superficial application. The rules are often as ridiculous as they are inconvenient. As Warden of a Hostel at Allahabad I had to provide thirty-seven kitchens for a hundred Hindu students! The conditions of modern travel have necessitated the relaxation of the requirements in regard to food, water and touch, and the withdrawal of the ban upon sea voyages. But there is no sign of any breakdown of the restrictions upon marriage. Even Mr. Gandhi, while vehemently attacking untouchability, defends caste. And it is these marriage restrictions that give caste its exclusiveness, its divisiveness, its permanence, and its tyranny.⁶⁵

Holland's testimony reveals that even in institutional settings where co-living was possible, commensality remained a taboo among men of different castes and religions. In the *Muir College Magazine*, which reported the extra-curricular activities of the various university hostels, the names of the sportsmen, debaters, dramatists who won awards and glories, or "toppers" who gained high marks in exams inevitably mark them as upper-caste Hindus, upper-caste Christian converts, Europeans, and *Ashraf* Muslims. This could likely be a result of their extremely low numbers or possibly due to their active marginalization from the realm of the social and cultural activities. While the domain of education was marked as secular and open by government mandate, the domain of everyday sociability remained marked by hierarchies. The development of an urban and urbane ethos thus remained underscored by ancient fissures that were challenged in local and everyday ways by some agents such as individual missionaries.

⁶⁵ W. E. S. Holland, *The Indian Outlook: A Study in the Way of Service* (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1927), 26. Bellenoit also draws attention to Holland's role in inculcating egalitarian values at this hostel in *Missionary Education and Empire*.

From the Kalwar caste journals we learn that some members of these intermediary Shudra castes were able to access undergraduate and professional education, especially as lawyers, as their large numbers in caste advocacy movements demonstrates. However, rarely do they feature in the jovial and light-hearted accounts that form the genre of hostel magazines. Despite operating under the strict control of educators and administrators, and despite the casual and carefree tone that dominates this genre, the college magazine can be read carefully to gain rare and rich insights into the experience of college goers and hostelers in the early years of the century and remains an underexplored archive.⁶⁶ The social exclusion speaks to the deep-set biases built into Indian social life. Even while the arena of education was being pushed open, social biases were carried forward and institutionalized in the socio-cultural life that was emerging under colonial modernity.

Women's Hostel: A Place of Her Own

Scholars have established how the “women’s question” that raged since the nineteenth century, in effect, sidelined women and their progress. Instead, women’s reform became the battleground for a variety of masculine anxieties.⁶⁷ Even so, women’s education or *strī shikshā* made some small strides in north India, facilitating the emergence of a new generation of literate women. As

⁶⁶ Sneha Krishnan’s examination of magazines from women’s colleges from the early twentieth century seeks to address part of this lacuna. Sneha Krishnan, interview with Malini Nair, “Old College Magazines Show that for Women on Indian Campuses, Some Things Haven’t Changed,” November 15, 2017, “<https://scroll.in/magazine/853097/old-college-magazines-show-that-for-women-on-indian-campuses-some-things-havent-changed>.”

⁶⁷ See Charu Gupta, *Sexuality, Obscenity, Community: Women, Muslims, and the Hindu Public in Colonial India*, (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2001); Partha Chatterjee, “The Nationalist Resolution of the Women’s Question [1989],” in *Empire and Nation: Selected Essays*, ed. by Nivedita Menon, 116–135 (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

the discussion below will illustrate, in the domain of formal education, women students were just a handful in comparison with men.⁶⁸

Women students were offered classes at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels, but a number of arrangements were made to segregate them from male students. The quality of education and facilities provided at these segregated classes remained questionable. As the discussion to follow shows, the university administration recognized that providing residence facilities would also improve the standards of education. A sincere effort was made throughout the 1920s to build a “college” for women which implied a building with residential facilities as well as rooms for tutorials, administered under the supervision of a female professor and female warden. In the absence of journals or other texts by female students studying the university, the colonial archive offers some clues about the debates that animated this enterprise.

After the University of Allahabad Reorganization Act was passed in 1921, the university sought to undertake massive infrastructural expansion under the aegis of the newly formed Allahabad Improvement Trust. The scheme was called the Allahabad University Extension. As part of its vision to become a residential teaching institution, the university sought to construct a number of buildings within walking distance of the existing university premises, including more

⁶⁸ For the spread of literacy and education outside the educational context and on the genre of women’s conduct books which fashioned new female subjectivities, see Smita Gandotra, “In Search of a Subject; Stri Upayogi Sahitya, 1870–1930” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2013). Also see Shobna Nijhawan, *Women and Girls in the Hindi Public Sphere: Periodical Literature in Colonial North India* (Oxford University Press, 2012). On educational initiatives for Muslim women in this period, see Gail Minault, *Secluded Scholars: Women’s Education and Muslim Social Reform in Colonial India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) and Barbara Daly Metcalf, ed., *Perfecting Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

hostels for male and female students, residences for the vice-chancellor, registrar, and various grades of faculty and clerical staff, and university hostels for students.⁶⁹

The expansion of the university by stages implied that the city underwent further physical transformation. By the 1920s, the Civil Lines neighborhood of Allahabad was already a densely built up European-style town, a city of bungalows that housed Indian and European elites who had claimed a central location in the city. But with the expansion of the university, several of them were bought out and displaced.⁷⁰ Given the massive expenditure that was incurred on buying up existing residential buildings for their land, one might wonder why the university could not set up campus in a different part of the city where the terrain was not so heavily built up and where land might be available at a much lower price. The trends reflected in infrastructural makeover of other colonial cities would indicate that building the university at a central location—one accessible to the public as well as staff and students associated with the institution—were tied up with notions of prestige that the university brought to the city.⁷¹ The provincial city, as Muir noted, must embody “a Metropolitan character.”

Official correspondence between university officials and colonial administrators reveals the negotiations that went on behind the scenes and what were the motivations underlying the expansion of hostels, especially for women.⁷² A brief overview of the overall situation of education and accommodation on campus will provide a comparative framework to think

⁶⁹ December 9, 1924, Letter from the Registrar, University of Allahabad to the Secretary to Government, United Provinces, Educational Department, Allahabad, UP State Archive, Lucknow.

⁷⁰ Arvind Krishna Mehrotra, retired professor of English, poet, and literary scholar, chose the name *The Last Bungalow* for a collection of writings on Allahabad that he edited in 2007. It is a fitting epithet for the city.

⁷¹ See Stephen Legg, *Spaces of Colonialism: Delhi's Urban Governmentalities* (Delhi: Blackwell Publications, 2007).

⁷² September 5, 1925, Letter from the Vice-Chancellor to the Secretary to Government, Educational Department files between 1925 and 1940, UP State Archive, Lucknow.

through the status of women students. While 1200 students were enrolled at the university, the existing hostels housed only 650. Commenting on this paucity of space, Jha wrote, “Unless the University can provide accommodation to all its students, the ordinances requiring students to live in the hostels cannot be enforced and the real object of unitary teaching will be defeated. Therefore, the construction of a new hostel is now an imperative necessity.”⁷³

The scheme of the “New Hostel Block,” meant for housing male students was expected to accommodate 126 students. In addition, the hostel would have large tutorial classes, two reading rooms, a library, as well as a residence for the superintendent.⁷⁴ The Committee appointed by the Executive Council consisted of six members, both Indian and European. They suggested modifications to the plan such as cutting down some facilities and compromising on building material in order to curtail the expenditure.⁷⁵ The plan went through the official pipeline rather swiftly. Out of the proposed budget of Rs 500,000, the University furnished Rs 125,000 out of its savings, and the Government delivered Rs 200,000 by 1927. The remaining Rs 175,000 was yet to be sourced. Future acquisition of property involved buying up the bungalows situated around the existing university for a total of Rs 370,000, one of which belonged to Motilal Nehru. In fact, the bulk of the expenditure was estimated to be on Nehru’s bungalow which was valued at Rs 250,000.⁷⁶ The process of acquisition was swift and called for no additional justification for

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ July 30, 1926, from Registrar to the Secretary, University of Allahabad, Educational Department, UP State Archive, Lucknow.

⁷⁵ The other three bungalows belonged to Sir Pramoda Charan Banerji, Lala Ram Dayal, and Babu Radha Charan. Another residence in the neighborhood that was to be acquired for hostels belonged to the Editor of the Pioneer Press. October 21, 1926, Report of the Committee, Members: Dr. J. C. Weir, A. H. Mackenzie, S. G. Dunn, T. D. Tunnicliffe, Lala Wazir Sahai, Dr Tara Chand, the Treasurer, the Vice-Chancellor (Convener). Educational Department, UP State Archive, Lucknow.

⁷⁶ November 26, 1927, Vice-Chancellor to the Secretary, Educational Department, UP State Archive, Lucknow.

the proposed expansion on the part of the university. This course of events suggests that male education and accommodation did not require any explanation since it was part of the normative vision. How the scheme for female education and accommodation unfolded is a different story.

Construction of a residential “college” for women within the premises of the university was part of the new scheme of university education under the aforementioned University Reorganization Act of 1921. Until then, women students at the university were housed at the Lady Sunderlal Hostel of the Crosthwaite College (an intermediate college which offered education up to grades eleven and twelve) managed by a Mrs Nehru, possibly Roop Kumari Nehru.⁷⁷ At this juncture, a debate cropped up—whether a residential college for female students of the university should be constructed on the premises of the Crosthwaite College, or if such a residential college would be better situated within walking distance of university premises.

By this period, the need for housing women had begun to be recognized, at least within educational circles. However, in contrast with the swiftness that was in evidence when it came to the scheme of constructing more hostels for male students, finding funds for the acquisition of suitable land and construction of a “University College and Hostel for Girls” turned out to be a long drawn-out process.⁷⁸ In order to actualize the women’s hostel scheme, the university, aided by the Allahabad Improvement Trust, had to negotiate the acquisition of several residential properties in its vicinity. The acquisition process ended up in litigation. Correspondence reveals that the university depended entirely on the goodwill of the colonial government to fulfill this

⁷⁷ “Mrs Nehru” in official correspondence. Shobhna Nijhawan mentions that Roop Kumari Nehru, editor of *Kumārī Darpaṇ*, the children’s supplement attached to *Strī Darpaṇ*, taught at Crosthwaite. This makes her a possible candidate for the post of superintendent of the hostel. Nijhawan, *Women and Girls in the Hindi Public Sphere: Periodical Literature in Colonial North India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012), 40–41.

⁷⁸ Educational Department files make tracing of this timeline possible as well.

vision. The Vice-Chancellor and other university officials had to constantly plead and wrangle with the Director of Public Instruction and the Lieutenant-Governor for swift disbursement of funds. Between 1926 and 1936, much deliberation on this matter took place between the Vice-Chancellor, Ganganath Jha, and subsequently his successor, Iqbal Narain Gurtu, and P. M. Kharegat, the Secretary of the Educational Department of the United Provinces. Other participants were the Registrars and Treasurers of the university and the Commissioner and Collector of Allahabad. Higher education for women did not seem to be a priority. The tardiness in the sphere of building residential facilities suggests that women were not seen as essential constituents of the city's public sphere and hence their presence was not a priority.

After much back and forth, the No. 12 Bank Road plot, adjoining the university premise was selected. The reasons for choosing this site over the proposal for expanding the Crosthwaite College premises are worth dwelling on. Proximity to the university would enable women students to use the University Library and Laboratory and avail women students of the "full the academic activities of University life."⁷⁹ If the proposed girls' college was located far from the university, the apprehension was that it would lead to complications over proper supervision and control of the residents. The Principal of the Crosthwaite Girls College, who was not a university teacher, and hence outside its control, would end up supervising women who were students at the university and over whom she had no jurisdiction. Even while the Vice-Chancellor espoused the cause of women availing higher education and the benefits of their participation in public life, he

⁷⁹ March 22, 1929, Vice-Chancellor to the Secretary to Government, Educational Department, UP State Archive, Lucknow.

held conservative views on the role of educated women. As a result, a limitation was built in at the very foundation of this venture. For instance, Jha wrote,

I may be permitted to state here my personal opinion on the whole question of Girls' Higher Education. I feel sure that before long, our people will realise, as the Bombay and Poona people have realized, *that the entire curriculum for girls should be different from that of boys, and that for the proper education of girls it is necessary to have a separate University.* With that end in view, the site most suitable for the Girls' College which would naturally develop into the Girls' University would be an entirely open place—such for instance as the land near about the Commissioner's Bungalow, which being Government property could be had for free.”⁸⁰ [Emphasis added]

Jha's belief that women's education constituted a separate sphere from that of men reflects the broader patriarchal attitudes towards women scholars prevalent in the early twentieth century.

We also see how the project of women's education, despite a small measure of progress, remained a slow-moving enterprise deeply circumscribed by male authority and male control.

On August 12, 1930, in an order passed by the Collector of Allahabad and addressed to the Commissioner of the Allahabad Division, it was stated that there was no objection to the purchase of the aforementioned plot of land under the Land Acquisition Act of 1923. The “Agreement” was signed on October 13, 1931. In a letter petitioning for urgent funds in order to commence the construction of the hostel, the Vice-Chancellor painted a pitiful picture of the current state of affairs which necessitated an immediate redress.

There are 11 girls in I year B.A. Class, 15 in II Year BA Class, 4 in MA, and 2 are research (science) scholars . . . The present position of our Women's department has reached almost an intolerable state and postponement in the provision of separate buildings for them would be disastrous. In fact the want of suitable accommodation for girls is hampering the advancement of higher education among girls; and many girls have, we understand, have had to stop short at the Intermediate stage, only because they could not find suitable accommodation to the satisfaction of their parents and guardians . . . It is hoped that even under the

⁸⁰ Ibid.

present depressed condition of the provincial finances, funds would be available for meeting this dire need of the community, which has come to realise that the future of the country is being endangered by the lack of facilities for the spread of higher education among girls.”⁸¹

These comments reveal the shockingly low number of women who were able to access some form of higher education in the city: a total of thirty-one undergraduate and postgraduate students over a period of three years, or an average of around ten a year. It is unclear if these were the total number of women scholars enrolled at the university, including those who lived with their families in the city, or if this was the data only for women scholars who were hostel residents. In any case, in these early years of institutionalizing women’s education and their access to safe housing, contradictory principles were woven into the very foundation of the enterprise. As a result, the domain of women’s education became the site of “satisfaction” of the demands of family and patriarchal authority as well as the grounds for progress of the “community” and “future of the country.” Furthermore, given their small numbers, it is hardly surprising that the kind of textual artefacts such as college and hostel magazines that were written and produced by male scholars are absent for women.

⁸¹ July 29, 1932, Vice-Chancellor to the Secretary, Educational Department, UP State Archive, Lucknow.



Figure 14: Site Plan for 12 Bank Road, Allahabad—Proposed Site of the Women’s Hostel/College
SOURCE: UP State Archive, Lucknow

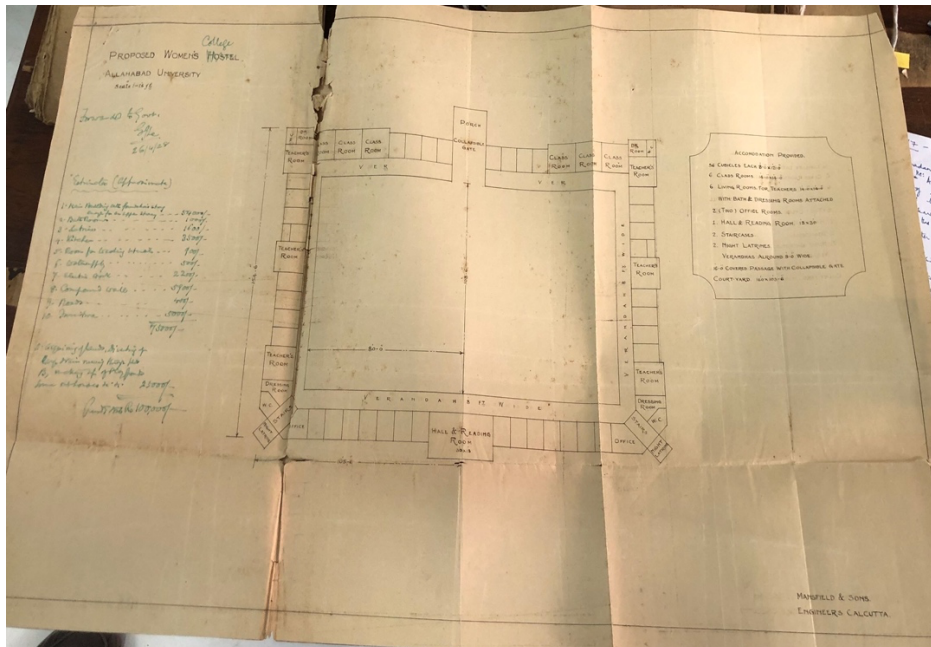


Figure 15: Building Plan for the Women’s Hostel/College, Allahabad.
SOURCE: UP State Archive, Lucknow

By 1933, the plot of land in question had been acquired. But the planned construction of the hostel and the modification of the bungalow to accommodate teacher and wardens had not started. The newly appointed Vice-Chancellor Prof. Gurtu again brought up the plan in his appeal for funds to the Secretary of the Educational Department. He reiterated the advantages accruing to women from the scheme and suggested that the bungalow at 16, Bank Road (which belonged to the retired Deputy Collector, Babu Radha Charan) could be cheaply acquired and easily modified in order to accommodate “two to three teachers, some classrooms, and kitchen and dining rooms for the students and staff.”⁸²

In a letter from September of the same year, Gurtu mentions that “The Hostel for women proposed to be built on that land will consist of a rectangular block of buildings intended to accommodate, when complete, about 150 women students, and to provide quarters for matrons and a lady Superintendent and an isolation room or sick ward.” Given the paucity of funds, in his next letter, Gurtu solicited funds only for a single wing of the building.⁸³ Funds were sanctioned in October after some more penny-pinching. In a letter dated January 16, 1938, which discusses a separate matter of land acquisition by the university, we find a reference to the Women’s Hostel and Women’s College. It attests to the fact that between 1933 and 1938, some of the proposed construction was indeed carried out successfully and women scholars had found a footing, literally, on the premises of the university.⁸⁴

⁸² March 2, 1933, Vice-Chancellor to the Secretary, Educational Department, UP State Archive, Lucknow.

⁸³ August 8, 1933, Vice-Chancellor to the Secretary, Educational Department, UP State Archive, Lucknow.

⁸⁴ January 16, 1938, Kanhaiya Lal, Honorary Treasurer, University of Allahabad to Col. Weir (position not mentioned), Educational Department, UP State Archive, Lucknow.

Here the colonial archive falls silent. However, we get an insight into the experience of hostel life for women in this period via the memoirs of poet and litterateur, Mahadevi Varma (1902–1987) who, along with her fellow poet and friend, Subhadra Kumari Chauhan (1904–1948) studied at the Crosthwaite Girls College and lived in the hostel there. In a short essay titled “My Childhood Days” (*Mere Bachpan ke Din*), we hear Varma’s reflections on her time as a hostel student.⁸⁵ From this rare account, we learn that religious segregation which seems to have been the norm at men’s university hostels was absent in the hostel for women residing at Crosthwaite. Varma mentions that Hindu and Christian girls studied together and that she had a Muslim roommate. Each room was shared by four students and the atmosphere of the hostel was conducive to intimate friendships as well as intellectual pursuits. Encouraged by her roommate Chauhan, Varma began to publish in *Strī Darpañ*, a prominent journal for women, and started to participate in poetry gatherings in the city.⁸⁶ In her memory of the period between approximately 1918 until the early 1920s, Varma emphasizes the harmonious nature of the living situation in the hostel and contrasts it with the strife that she and her generation witnessed later in their lives during the partition of the country. She writes,

During that time, there was no communalism that I saw. Girls from Avadh would speak Avadhi with each other, those from Bundelkhand would speak Bundeli. No distance separated us, and we studied Hindi together. We were also taught Urdu. But with each other, we spoke our own language. This is a hugely important point. We would eat at a common cafeteria, stand together in prayer. There was never any controversy.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Mahadevi Varma, “My Childhood Days,” translated by Anita Anantharam, in *Mahadevi Varma: Political Essays on Women, Culture, and Nation, Student Edition*, ed. by Anita Anantharam, 37–42 (Cambria Press, 2010).

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 38. For a discussion of this journal, see Shobna Nijhawan, *Women and Girls in the Hindi Public Sphere: Periodical Literature in Colonial North India* (Oxford University Press, 2012).

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 40.

She ends this reflective memoir on a sorrowful note. Contrasting past episodes of harmony that she had witnessed with the time of writing the essay, she likens the past to a dream. “Today, this dream is lost,” she laments.⁸⁸

Afterwards, Varma studied for a BA and MA in Sanskrit at the university, but her BA classes continued to be held at Crosthwaite. As a female student at the University of Allahabad in the 1920s, Varma would have been squarely placed in the middle of Vice-Chancellor Ganganath Jha’s efforts to facilitate female education. Her generation was also hemmed in by the circumscribed nature of education that Jha and many other traditional-minded men considered appropriate for Indian women. Karine Schomer agrees with such an assessment of Jha. Citing the discussion published in the November 1925 issue of the Hindi journal *Chānd*, Schomer writes,

Mahadevi’s B. A. class was the first group of women students to receive all their B. A. level instruction at Crosthwaite itself. Previously, the handful of women students studying for the B. A. in Allahabad had attended classes at the university along with the men. In 1925, however, Vice-Chancellor Ganganath Jha, a conservative man who believed that ‘it is impossible for men and women to study together under any circumstances,’ pushed through the university senate a ruling that created a separate women’s college at Crosthwaite. A hue and cry was raised over the issue by the elite women’s organizations of the city, but in the end Ganganath Jha prevailed. Mahadevi’s class of BA women students were taught in makeshift buildings on the Crosthwaite campus by women professors assigned to Crosthwaite and a few men of junior rank came over part-time from the university. In her chosen subjects (English, Philosophy, and Sanskrit), Mahadevi was taught by relatively unknown junior faculty instead of senior professors of the university.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Ibid., 41.

⁸⁹ Karine Schomer, *Mahadevi Varma and the Chhayavad Age of Modern Hindi Poetry* (University of California Press, 1983), 174.

In addition to the discussion in *Chānd*, a progressive Hindi journal published in the city, documents from the colonial archive of this period show that strict rules for women were not limited only to the gender segregation in classrooms. Harsh limitations were also imposed on the living arrangements for women. The correspondence on the issue of women's hostels shows that both British and Indian men believed that the living arrangements for women must reflect the ethos of both nearness and distance from the university. Women must live on campus so that they are near enough for instruction, laboratory facilities, and in order to partake of the university atmosphere, but while living on campus, their lives must be segregated and controlled. As a result, as I discuss earlier, once the women's college and hostel scheme met with budgetary approval of the Department of Education around 1933, the Crosthwaite arrangement of which Mahadevi's graduating class was a part, was dropped.

As a result of connections and friendships formed in the hostel, Varma found a network of literary companions. Varma's hostel mate and fellow poet, Subhadra Kumari Chauhan, became a close friend and they kept up their correspondence and would occasionally visit each other until the latter's untimely death in 1948. Savitri Mukherjee, a day scholar and the daughter of the editor of the English-language newspaper, *Pioneer*, became Varma's intellectual companion.⁹⁰ Varma's sister was married to Dharendra Varma, who went on to become a renowned professor of Hindi at the university. During the time that she was studying for an MA degree, Varma befriended Rameshwari Goel, the first woman from the mercantile Agarwal/Agrawal community to take a master's degree.⁹¹ Their living arrangement also brought

⁹⁰ Ibid., 177.

⁹¹ Ibid., 179.

them closer together. As both were outstation students who needed a place to live in the city, and as the hostel was still at the planning stage, the two women ended up residing together as roommates in the dormitories of Arya Kanya Pathshala, an Arya Samaj school for girls where Goel served as the resident superintendent.⁹²

Despite the rules of segregation that manifested themselves in a number of ways and hindered women from fully participating in educational, social, and cultural life of the university and the city, Varma was able to find a space for herself in the city, which went on to become her home for the rest of her life. The city, firmly the center of Hindi literary activities from the 1920s onwards, offered Varma a number of opportunities to flourish. She was well-received in *kavi sammelans* (poetry gatherings) and attended the famous ones hosted by the Hindu Boarding House of the university. At these literary events, she met her fellow *Chāyavādī* poets, Nirala, Sumitranandan Pant, and Harivansh Rai Bachchan, among others. Encouraged by fellow litterateurs, Varma published in *Chānd* and was the editor between 1935 and 1938.⁹³ She took up a career as an educator and institution-builder for women, dedicating herself to various educational schemes, especially the Prayag Mahila Vidyapith (est. 1922) where she served as the principal.⁹⁴ This institution was established on the lines of the Women's University of Maharashtra and National Women's University in Tokyo on the initiative of a number of Allahabadis, including Sangamlal Agrawal, the chairman of the education committee of the Allahabad Municipal Board. The Vidyapith followed an alternative educational system and

⁹² Schomer, *Mahadevi Varma*, 180.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 183–184.

⁹⁴ *The Prayag Mahila-Vidyapitha (the Allahabad Women's University): Why it is Wanted and What it Aims At? Draft constitution and Regulations* (Allahabad: Rajpali Press, 1921).

granted degrees such as Praveshika, Vidya Vinodini, Vidushi, and Saraswati to a large number of students.⁹⁵ Later, this institution became a teaching university with a small residential unit. What stands out in Schomer's account as well as my reading of Varma's autobiographical writings is how Varma, as the principal of the college and supervisor of the hostel, created an independent educational and residential space for women scholars that was unique for the times. While Agrawal, member of the Arya Samaj, had led the initiative to establish the institution, Varma stamped the place with her own vision and supervision. Unlike the arrangements at the University of Allahabad where male control, as we have seen, was near absolute, Prayag Mahila Vidyapith was unique in the sense that a woman played a seminal role in shaping it. Schomer mentions how students came from all over India to study there and "because of the trust and respect Mahadevi inspired, and the college's status as a nationalist institution, many people began to send their daughters to study there as boarding students."⁹⁶ Varma, quite likely inspired by her own experience as a single female scholar living in a city without male guardianship—a novel experience for the 1920s—was keenly attentive to both the educational and residential facilities offered to young women at her institution. Hostels gave women a place of their own in the city as individual subjects; however, their participation in social life of the university and public life of the city remained severely circumscribed by patriarchal authority, except in pockets created by pioneers like Varma.

Conclusion

⁹⁵ For a detailed discussion of this unique educational enterprise in Allahabad, see Schomer, *Mahadevi Varma*, "Mahila Vidyapith and Women's Education," 211–223.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 221.

From the late nineteenth century onwards, residential arrangements for students at the constituent colleges of the University of Allahabad emerged as an area of public concern and mobilization for the citizens of Allahabad. In catering to the needs of specific publics—Hindus, Muslims, Anglo-Indians, caste communities with a powerful presence like the Kayasthas, and women—the development of hostels became a crucial mode of place-making in the city. The missionary and government hostels aimed to cater to a wider base though in practice there were limitations. Each community operated on the principle of supporting their own students in their quest for education and employment and rallied for the cause of hostels. Through such community-driven expansion, education and professional opportunities opened up for a large number of people from all over the province, and indeed, country. Hostel expansions, thus, constituted a major shift in the socio-cultural environment of the city. But even as hostel life marked a novel presence in the Indian socio-cultural landscape, its lack of heterogeneity was writ large and the pool of students who could access residential life remained narrowly defined. This chapter has examined the history of expansion of opportunities for education and residence in the city for outstation students. I have also raised questions about the many forms of exclusion that were built into the system. In the last two decades, hostels and campus life associated with universities in India have emerged as the locus of student activism, especially feminist and Dalit-Bahujan advocacy, leading to major political action. In focusing on the history of these ancillary spaces associated with education that lie beyond the ambit of the mainstream pedagogical role of universities, this chapter fills in a crucial gap in the historiography on hostels as seminal socio-cultural institutions.

Conclusion

In bringing together the histories of various urban publics who emerged in Allahabad from the late nineteenth centuries onwards, my dissertation has shown how the textual archive is a rich source for the study of provincial cities within the sub-field of urban studies, print cultures, and the history of identity formation. A variety of life-worlds overlapped in the city at this period, producing a palimpsest of locals and migrants; liberals and conservatives; men and women; upper and lower caste communities; Indians and Europeans; and Hindus, Muslims, and Christians (among others). Colonial urbanity, despite producing immense change, one that melted all that was solid into air (to cite Marshall Berman), did not resolve to any considerable extent the indentarian tensions that underlay Indian society. These tensions constitute every city to some extent, making them places of possibilities, contestations, and negotiations. What distinguished Allahabad in this period is the fact that a number of individuals and communities took to expressing themselves publicly and thus, left behind significant textual traces of their mobilization.

As a result, writing and publishing were not just means of self-expression but also mediums of expressing a relationship with place. This relationship was, in fact, a sociological and historical product of colonial urbanity. At the same time, publishing and mobilizing in the city in themselves constituted acts that produced urbanity. In other words, the urban and the textual, as I show here, were intertwined in a proverbial chicken-egg formulation in the history of Allahabad's emergence as a prominent provincial city. In highlighting this relationship, my

dissertation has argued for a new methodological approach to the writing of urban history, one that takes the whole range of expressive relationships between texts and place seriously.

My thesis also gestures towards the intertwined histories of multilingualism and migration. As I have demonstrated, by bringing together large numbers of educated people to the city, migration constituted a major enabling factor that aided in the flourishing of a multilingual print culture. Multilingualism went on to become an essential aspect of Allahabad's identity and found reflection in the world of words and their publication, leading to the coexistence of various linguistic publics. By probing this phenomenon further, I show that while textual productions in Hindi, Urdu, English, and Bengali were not identical in volume, the fact that each language had a significant public in the city reveals an important facet of place-making. My analysis of the multilingual print sphere and various linguistic publics of Allahabad has revealed nuanced fissures and contestations of identity, especially in the realms of languages and cultures. In addition, adopting this multilingual method allowed me to further probe the limits of liberalism.

Each kind of public that I analyze here held progressive and conservative potentials. While the liberal constituents of the city envisaged Allahabad as the center of *gaṅgā jamunī tahzīb*, an abode of inter-communal harmony, I show that this was an aspiration for a small section of the city. In fact, claims of liberalism were often undercut by certain adherents of liberal ethos. For instance, apparently progressive journals like *Modern Review* and *Prabāsī* were already towing a Hindu majoritarian stance in the early decades of the twentieth century even before the rise of communalism as a concrete political ideology; thereby, contributing to the communal fracture that was to come. Similarly, hostels associated with the university were apparently novel sites of self-actualization at the cusp of liberal education and novel mode of

independent life for the youth. Here too, we find that this ideal was compromised by religious, caste, and gender discriminations. In this thesis, caste mobilization best emblemizes this conundrum at the heart of urban publics and their modernity. Mobilization enabled lower caste communities like the Kalwars to call out the discrimination they faced in their everyday life at the hands of upper-caste Hindus and gave them opportunities to express a sense of pride despite their marginalization. At the same time, Kalwars operated within the rubric of caste hierarchy and one of their aims was to claim a higher caste status. Meanwhile, Kayasthas utilized urban opportunities to cement their privilege without any attempt to subvert or question the caste system.

Another limitation of the world of words lay in the fact that despite the prolific efflorescence of print culture in north India in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, texts were bound by certain limitations. Their circulation and reception were to some degree restricted to a literate or “oral-literate” audience in a period when literary rates were very low.¹ Texts were also expensive; consequently, accessing them was in large parts, limited to the middle classes and the elites. Apart from the conditions that circumscribe their reception, texts were also constrained by conditions of production that determined who could write and publish. Access to avenues of public expression—which I have argued is the hallmark of urban modernity—posed a major challenge for lower-caste authors and women. My work has shown that a very small number of authors from marginalized caste backgrounds were able to enter the realm of texts as self-representing subjects, which speaks to the fact that the literate public sphere

¹ Francesca Orsini, Introduction to *Print and Pleasure: Popular Literature and Entertaining Fictions in Colonial North India* (Ranikhet: Orient Blackswan, 2017), 1–48.

of the city was elastic, but only to a degree. These writers often had some formal education and were able to tap into familial or kinship networks for support. Even so, their numbers were very small in comparison to the dominant voices of upper-caste and upper-class authors. Once again, we find that print culture of the city was simultaneously capacious as well as limiting, especially for certain stakeholders and communities. This anomaly regarding who could write, publish, and constitute a public has been a productive tension in my work, which I hope to continue exploring. My examination of some of these crucial instances of place-making in Allahabad by no means exhausts the full range of text-based negotiations with place that were unfolding in the city in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In shoring up some prominent texts, journals, and institutions, my dissertation has indicated the fecundity of local instantiations of place-making and how they played a crucial role in shaping identities and communities in Allahabad.

Continued scholarly attention to the history of provincial cities remains crucial since these sites are significant to the understanding of contemporary India. Today, three “mega-cities” in India have populations above 10 million: Mumbai, Delhi, and Kolkata. Metropolises like Chennai, Bangalore, and Hyderabad hover below the 10-million mark, but are significant urban agglomerations. Apart from these six cities, there are forty-three “Million Plus Cities” or “Tier II Cities” in India—those with populations of more than a million but less than ten million, including Allahabad which has a population of 1.2 million today (1, 212, 365).² With a total

² Any place with a habitation of above 5000 is considered “urban,” or a Census Town, as per the Census of 2011. There are 3,894 Census Towns, and there are 46 cities with populations of more than a million. Even so, the share of population of India which is considered urban is only 30 per cent, even as urbanization continues to be an upward trend.

population of almost 80 million, “Tier II urbanity” is beginning to find representational space in mainstream cinema, journalistic columns, and even in the reports of businesses which view these cities as lucrative consumer markets.³ These medium-sized cities continue to appear in a variety of texts in contemporary times, as they did in the period I explore. The pioneer in the field of generating an archive of textual representation of cities is a series of edited volumes titled *Writings on Cities* which is published by Penguin.⁴ In addition, several journalists and authors have taken to writing reflective works on Lahore, Patna, Ludhiana, and, more recently, Allahabad.⁵ These texts reflect the enduring relationship between place, texts, and identities.

Urban history implies a dual form of particularizing—locating a city as a distinct place in its specific spatiality and within a particular temporality. My dissertation presents a fresh epistemological approach to urban history by focusing on textual productions by indigenous agents. Throughout, I have drawn attention to an essential mode of being urban that is available in the acts of writing, publishing, advocating, and publicizing. In proposing that texts could become the main archive of studying the *history* of cultural shifts of a prominent city, my project has brought the fields of urban history, print and literary cultures, and debates on identities into direct conversation. By examining the prominent textual traces that its citizens and urban publics left behind at the turn of the last century, I have tried to recover Allahabad’s multi-layered sense

³ Shibu Philips, “Tier-II and Tier-III cities to Drive the Growth of Malls in India,” *The Times of India*, April 25, 2022. Ina Dawer and Vishnu Vardhan, “Unlocking Growth in the Fast-Changing Tier II Cities in India,” *Euromonitor International*, no date, <https://www.euromonitor.com/article/unlocking-growth-in-the-fast-changing-tier-ii-cities-in-india>.

⁴ Arvind Krishna Mehrotra, ed., *The Last Bungalow: Writings on Allahabad* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2007), is one in a series of such collections of writings on cities published by Penguin, each edited by an eminent citizen of a particular city.

⁵ Udbhav Agarwal, *A for Prayagraj* (New Delhi: Aleph, 2021) in English and Mamta Kalia, *Jīte Jī, Ilahābād* (New Delhi: Rajkamal Publications, 2021) in Hindi are the most recent additions to this oeuvre of city writing.

of place. I have also shown that a different kind of urban history can be written when the city is viewed through this alternative archive of texts. In so doing, I hope to have presented a new way of seeing the provincial city.

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