Glossary
Appendix - II

Glossary

* Advaita guru - Teacher of non-dualistic Hindu philosophy.
* Agnicayana - A twelve-day ritual of building the altar of fire in the shape of a bird. The heart of the altar is the tongue of flames, Agni’s symbol.
* Bandwallah - A poor musician in glittering and embellished uniform, playing at weddings.
* Bhikkuni - Buddhist nun.
* Dhoti - A long loin-cloth worn by many Indian men.
* Gotra - Clan.
* Jhuggi - Make-shift residence in the slum.
* Karma - Good and evil actions, which are believed to be the cause of happy conditions and miseries in this world.
* Kotha - Brothel.
* Kothewali - Courtesan.
* Law of Karma - It means the law of causation. As a man sows, so he shall reap. It is one of the fundamental doctrines not only in Hinduism, but also in Buddhism and Jainism.
* Manu - The great codifier and law-giver of the ancient period who laid the foundations of the rule of law for the people of India to follow.
* Mataj ka Mandir - Temple built and managed by the grandmother.
* Mlechas  - A class of low-born people of indeterminate caste.

* Pahari  - The native people of Kumaon region call themselves Pahari meaning “hill person” to distinguish themselves from Desis of the rest of India.

* Ritu  - A woman’s monthly cycle.

* Sadhus  - Holy men dedicated to the cause of spirituality.

* Shakti  - Personification of divine feminine creative power.

* Shudras  - The lowest caste in the traditional four-section division of the Hindu caste system.

* Suttee  - Conventional Hindu practice of making a widow end her life by jumping into the funeral pile of her husband.

* Swadharma  - One’s own law of action. It is a basic ethical core and connotes righteous living, thinking and action.

* Upanayana  - A youth’s formal initiation into Vedic study under a teacher and the investiture of the sacred thread signifying entrance into one of the three upper castes.

* Vanavasi  - Forest dweller.

* Yavana  - A foreigner who does not follow pure life-style.