APPENDIX 1

MAPS

Map -1: India

[Source: http://www.censusindia.gov.in/maps/State_Maps/Maps.aspx, accessed on Sept 18, 2013, 10 am]
Map - 2: Bihar

[Source: http://www.censusindia.gov.in/maps/State_Maps/StateMaps_links/bihar01.html, accessed on Sept 18, 2013]
Map -3: Jharkhand

[Source: http://www.censusindia.gov.in/maps/State_Maps/Maps.aspx, accessed on Sept 18, 2013, 10 am]
Map -4: Mithila and Bihar

[Source: Brass, Paul R., 1974, p. 50]
Map -5: Mithila in India


Appendix -1
Map - 6: Political Map of Mithila

MITHILA (INDIA)

[Source: Antarshriya Maithili Parishad, Jayanagar]
APPENDIX 2
SHORT BIOGRAPHIES OF MAITHILI WRITERS AND ACTIVISTS

These short biographies of Maithili writers and activists are meant to give very brief information about the literary works being produced in Maithili. I have tried to give a brief account of the family background, education, literary works in Maithili and contributions of Maithili writers and activists in the progress of Maithili language and the movement. For the information I have relied mostly on Bhimnath Jha’s Parichayika, but I have also consulted Mithila Darshan, Kanrnmrut and the varieties of other sources. These sources are all quoted in the Bibliography. This list of Maithili writers should not be considered as complete or representative. It has not been possible to include all the names and I am aware of the omissions of some of the great Maithili writers. However, my purpose here is to give an account of expanding literary world of Maithili, particularly from the beginning of the middle of the nineteenth century.

JYOTIRISHVAR (1294-1348)

So far the most ancient prose text available in Maithili or any other north Indian languages is Varnaratnakar written by Jyotirishvar in thirteenth century. He was a Pali Moolak Maithili Brahaman. His father name was Dhireshwar and his Grandfather name was Rameshwar. His period was considered to be the reign of the last Karnat ruler in Mithila – Maharaja Harisingh Dev. According to Dr. Jayakant Mishra his period was 1280 – 1340.

His Varnaratnakar is one of his best known works in Maithili. There has been two authentic publication of this work so far. The first was published by the Royal Society of Bengal in 1940 under the editorship of Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee and Pt. Babujee Mishra. And the second was published by the Maithili Academy, Patna in 1980 under the editorship of Prof. Anand Mishra and Pt. Govind Jha. M. M. Harprasad Shastri visited Nepal twice during 1895 – 1900. During these visits his disciples – Pt. Rakhalchandra Kabyateerth and Vinod Bihari Kabyateerth researched this book in Mithila. There were two copy of manuscript of this book but now there is only one copy that is available. This manuscript of Varnratnakar is kept in the library of the Bangal Royal Asiatic Society. It
is written in Tirhuta. This manuscript had originally 77 leaves but by the time of preservation 17 leaves were lost. The work is divided into eight chapters, which is called Kalol. It is a nuance description of medieval Maithil society, its city, lifestyle, music, beauty, palace, forest, mountains, seasons, saints, poetry, river, pilgrimage places, marriage, thieves, weapons, fortress, state etc. According to Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, its greatness lies in the profusion of its details, and in the fact that it includes description of almost all things worth describing in human life. This work is of great value to understand society, economy, culture and politics of medieval Mithila.

His other works are Dhurtsamagam and Panchayak. According to Jayakant Mishra, it is quite obvious from the maturity of style and composition of Jyotirishvara’s vernacular (Maithili) works that the literary use of the vernacular by the Jyotirishvar was neither first nor the only one. But so long as other older Maithili specimens are not discovered they must continue to be considered as the earliest conscious literature in Maithili.

VIDYAPATI (1350 – 1448*)

Vidyapati is considered not just as the pillar of Maithili language but pillar strength to the Maithili movement and Maithili identity too. Vidyapati Parva Samaroha has played a critical role in shaping linguistic consciousness among the Maithils. It is Vidyapati – the poet and Maithili – the language that is capable of bringing different caste and class groups in Mithila together. It is widely acknowledged that it was because of Vidyapati that Maithili has been able to revive itself and gradually flourished as a modern Indian language.

Vidyapati was born at village Bisphi in Madhubani district. He was a Darbari (royal court) poet. He worked in the court of Raja Shiv Singh. Here is difference of opinion regarding the period of his birth and death. It is because despite being a prolific poet and writer he has left no trace of his birth and death. Many scholars like Chanda Jha, Dr. Subhadra Jha, Prof. Ramanath Jha, Pt. Shashi Nath Jha considered 1350 A. D. as his year of birth. However, for M. M. Dr. Umesh Mishra and Dr. Jayakant Mishra he was born in 1360 A. D.

* It is debatable, for Dr. Subhadra Jha it was between 1448 and 1461; for Umesh Mishra it was 1446; for Jayakant Mishra it was 1448; Pt. Shashinath Jha opined it to be 1450.
There is a narrative widely prevailed in Mithila that Mahadev (God Shiva) himself worked in his household as a servant – Ugana. It is also believed that Ganga (a river, also called mother Ganga) changed its course to take him in her lap at the time of his death. That place is known today as Bajitpur, Vidyapati Nagar.

Vidyapati had written in Sanskrit, Awahatta and Maithili. His popularity is based on his vernacular writings mainly Maithili. Besides, Vidyapati’s own creativity and sweetness of his *Padas*, it is the women folk of Mithila which kept these *Padas* alive almost for six century through oral transmission. His *Padas* and songs are very much rooted in the cultural milieu of Mithila and that has been its real strength.

His famous works are *Bhuparikrama, Vibhasagar, Dan-vakyavali, Purush-Pariksha, Durgabhakti-Tarangani, Mani-Manjari, Likhanawali, Kirtilata, Kirtipataka, Goraksha-Vijaya*. His Maithili *Padas* are found in Mithila, Bengal and Tarai region of Nepal and these all have been published by the Bihar Rashtrabhasha Parishad, Patna in three respective volumes.

**BIHARI LAL ‘FITRAT’ (1829-?)**

Bihari Lal was one of the main contributors in the historiography of Mithila. He wrote *Aina-I–Tirhut* in Urdu. It was published in 1883 from Lucknow. The book is recently republished from Kalyani Foundation, Darbhanga with translation into Hindi and not Maithili under the editorship of Prof. Hetukar Jha in 2001. This book is considered as first serious attempt of history writing in Mithila. It gives vivid account of political-social-economical and historical account of Mithila in late nineteenth century.

He was born into an elite family of Darbhanga. He passed the examination for becoming a lawyer in 1856 and he was made honorary Magistrate in 1877. Next year he was made government lawyer in the court of Munsif at Darbhanga. He was also made a member of District School Committee in 1878 and Municipal Commissioner in 1879. During his time Arabic or Persian and later Urdu was the language of administration. Knowledge of Persian, Arabic or Urdu was considered as necessary to enter into the administration of revenue and judicial transactions in the region. The spread of English education was very limited. He and his family were closely associated with Darbhanga Raj and his own position as a lawyer and government servant gave him an important position in the cultural and intellectual life of Darbhanga.
Appendix -2

CHANDA JHA (1831-1907)

Chanda Jha is considered as a catalyst for the modern writings in Maithili. He was the first in modern times who restored the lost pride in the mother tongue - Maithili. In a period when Sanskrit was the only language considered worthy of serious study and Maithili was regarded as a language of the commoners and unworthy of higher studies, it was Chanda Jha who took the trouble to show the literary capacity of Maithili. His love and convictions for the mother tongue was so firm that he never deterred from writings in the Maithili. Though he was called Bhat kavee (a derogatory term to make fun of some literary figures whose work is considered below the standard) by his contemporaries, yet he successfully established Maithili as the language of literature. And later on in his life he was admired and was called Kavishwar (the greatest poet). His Mithila Bhasha Ramayan transformed pundit’s perception about the inability of Maithili as a language of literature. He was the first to set Maithili free from the clutches of Shringar (love songs) and Bhajan (prayers) songs. He made the language relevant for the changing social and political need of the time. Though, most of his own writings are in these two genres yet he also wrote on socially, culturally and politically relevant issues.

His full name was Chandrakant Jha. His father’s name was Pt. Bhola Jha. Chanda Jha was born in his maternal village Badagaon of Saharsa district where he spent most of his early life, until the age of 17. Because of some trouble at his paternal village Pindaruch of Darbhanga district, with the local landlords he left his village and settled in his in-laws village Thadhi in Madhubani district. He served the court of Maharaja Lakshmishwar Singh and Maharaja Rameshwar Singh and was well respected among the Pundits of the court.

Chanda Jha was a prolific writer. His original works include – Lakshmishwar Vilas, Mithila Bhasha Ramayan, Geet-Sudha, Padyavali, Ahalyacharit Natak. His translation of Vidyapati’s Purush Pariksha opened up further research and studies on Vidyapati. He also edited Saheb Ramdas Geetavali published in 1901. There are other works like – Gitasaptsati, Mula-Grama-Vichar, Chanda Vichar, Vathvana and Raskaumudi which were attributed to Chanda Jha by many scholars but these works are not available today.

His greatest contribution to Maithili was establishing Maithili as a literary language on par with any other modern Indian languages. It is said that what Vidyapati did for
Maithili in the 14th Century has been done by Chanda Jha in the 19th Century and perhaps his contribution is more profound than the former.

HARSHA NATH JHA (1845-1899)

Harshanath Jha was the last poet of Vidyapati tradition and also of middle age’s literary style. He was a Sanskrit scholar working as a Sabha Pandit in the court of Maharaja Lakshmiswar Singh. In Maithili he is famous as a poet and also as a playwright. He is regarded as the last play writer of Kirtaniya Natak Parampara of Mithila.

He was born in Shardapur of village Ujan in Darbhanga district. In Maithili his famous plays are Ushaharan and Madhavanand. He wrote many Sanskrit nataks in which Maithili is used for the songs. He wrote different varieties of Maithili songs – devotional, Sohar, Uchiti, and Tirhuti. These are quite famous among the masses. His complete Maithili compositions have been compiled and edited by Ridhinath Jha and Amarnath Jha by the name of Harshanath-Kavya-Granthavali. His main contribution in Maithili literature is that he kept the literary tradition of Vidyapati alive.

JEEVAN JHA (1848-1912)

Jeevan Jha’s main contributions in Maithili literature is in the field of modern Maithili plays. It is to his credit that plays in Mithila which was traditionally used to be written in Sanskrit and Prakrit mixed language, where most of the dialogues used to be written in Sanskrit but songs and dialogues of ‘second-rate characters’ was used to be in Prakrit or in Maithili. Jeevan Jha was the first to write complete plays in Maithili.

He was born at village Haripurba in Samastipur district. His full name was Jeevan Nath Jha. He worked as head of charity at the Palace of the King of Kashi, Prabhu Narayan Singh.

Jeevan Jha has also written Maithili Padas on traditional line, but he is more popular because of his Maithili plays. These are – Sundar Sanyog (1904), Narmada Sagar Sattak (1906), Maithili Sattak (Not published in book form but partially published serially in Mithila Moda and Maithil Hit Sadhana in 1906), Samvati Punarjanma (1908). In all his plays he depicts Mithila’s social life and its sickness. In 1980 all his writings were compiled by the combined editorship of Chandranath Mishra ‘Amar’
and Ramdeo Jha entitled *Kavivar Jeevan Jha Rachnavali* and published by the Maithili Akademi, Patna.

**LAL DAS (1856-1911)**

He was a great poet of Ramkabya tradition in Mithila after Chanda Jha. He was born to a prestigious Kayasth family of village Kharaua in Madhubani district. He worked in the court of Maharaja Rameshwar Singh. His most admired work in Maithili is his *Rameshwar Charit Mithila Ramayan*. Rameshwar in the title of his Ramayana is believed to be his attribute to the Maharaja Rameshwar Singh. His work played an important role in recognition of Maithili as an independent language in modern India. He also wrote around sixteen books in Maithili and one in Hindi – *Mithila Mahatmya*. These are – *Saang Saptashatı Durgak Teeka, Chandicharit Arthat Saptasati Durga, Streedharma Shiksha, Ganeshkhand, Maheshwar-Vinod Athva Gaurishambhu Vinod, Haritali Vratakatha, Vaidhabya-Bhanjani Arthat Somvari Vratkatha, Virudawali, Ganga-Mahatmaya, Janaki Ramayan, Shrimad Bhagwat Geeta, Brahmuttar Khand, Radha Kand, Lakshmi Kand, Savitri Satyavan(Play), Streedharma Shiksha (Prose).*

His *Rameshwar Charit Mithila Ramayan* was published in 1954. The Maithili Akademi, Patna had published *Savitri – Satyawan* and *Janaki Ramayan* in the year 1979 and 1980 respectively. Other works by him was published but now have become almost rare to find. His use of language is neither so standard that it is inaccessible to the masses nor too colloquial.

**PARMESHWAR JHA (1856-1924)**

Parmeshwar Jha is famous for *Mithila Tatva Vimarsha* – the first research work in Maithili on the history of Mithila. He was born at village Tarauni in Darbhanga. He studied Sanskrit grammar in Kashi and then went to Rajputana and taught Sanskrit there in a school for four years. In 1880 he worked with the ruler of Purnea Raja Padmanand Singh as a Rajapandit. He worked for twelve years in Gandhwhari Dyaudhi of Madhubani. Thereafter he joined the court of Darbhanga Maharaja Rameshwar Singh and was appointed as a Rajapandit on July 01, 1899. He also worked as principal of Rameshwar Lata Sanskrit college of Darbhanga. He established Parmeshwar Library in village Tarauni in 1916. He guided K. P. Jaiswal and S. N. Singh respectively on their research on Mithila.
He wrote around forty books in Sanskrit. In Maithili he wrote *Simantini Aakhyahika* and *Mithila Tatva Vimarsha*. One can understand the condition of publishing books in Maithili during those days when such a book as *Mithila Tatva Vimarsha* has to wait for twenty five years after the death of Parmeshwar Jha to be published in 1949.

Despite being a traditional Sanskrit scholar he had unconventional views on many of the prevailing social conditions and practices in Mithila. He was against the institution of *Panji*. For him it created hierarchy and divided the society. It hampered the growth of fellow feelings among the Maithili speakers. When English education in Mithila was looked at with contempt he saw the progress in the study of English. He himself studied the language and used many English words in his *Mithila Tatva Vimarsha*. He was against the practice of excommunication of the Maithils from the society on small ritualistic pretext. He believed that it had hampered the growth of unity among the Maithils.

When Calcutta (now Kolkata) University recognised Maithili it was Parmeshwar Jha who was offered to teach the subject in the university. But because Maharaja Rameshwar Singh was so impressed with his scholarship and work that he wanted him to stay in Darbhanga. So he could not accept the offer. However, he continued to work for the Maithili. He established the competency of Maithili even for the serious work like history writing.

**RAGHUNANDAN DAS (1860-1945)**

Munshi Raghunandan Das was an expert of medieval Maithili literature. Initially he started to write in *Braj-bhasha* before he starts working for the growth and development of Maithili literature. His contribution to Maithili literature, besides inspiring many of his contemporaries to write in Maithili, is well acknowledged. He was the main motivator to persuade Babu Bhola Lal Das to work for the growth of Maithili.

He was born at village Sakhbar in Madhubani district. He had his primary education in his maternal village. He worked with Raj Darbhanga as an accountant. There he came into contact with Sir Ganganath Jha, Mukund Jha ‘Bakshi’, and Pt. Chetnath Jha. It is believed that with their inspiration and encouragement he started to write in Maithili. His famous works are: *Mithila Natak*, *Sudarshan Natak*, *Dutangadavyayog*, *Vratkatha*, *Veer Balak*, and *Subhadra-Haran*. His *Subhadra-Haran* and *Mithila Natak* was very popular.
His two works — *Mithila Natak* and *Dutangadavvayog* were published by the Maithili Akademi, Patna in 1984. His *Mithila Natak* is considered to be influenced by *Bharat-Durdasa* of Babu Harischandra. But main difference between this two *Natak* according to Dr. Lekhnath Mishra is that in *Bharat-Durdasha Des-Prem* is highly emphasised whereas in *Mithila Natak* contemporary degraded state of Maithil society was shown with their possible solutions, with an aim for the growth of Mithila, Maithil and Maithili. In other words the stress on Desa is obscure in *Mithila Natak*. For his contribution to Maithili literature *Maithili Sahitya Parishad* awarded him ‘Sahitya Ratnakar’. Admixture of Sanskritised, Farasi-Urdu words with a clear taste of *chaste* Maithili words is distinctive feature of his writings.

**MUKUND JHA ‘BAKSHI’ (1860-1938)**

Mukund Jha ‘Bakshi’ was a famous scholar of Sanskrit literature, particularly *Karmakanda*. He studied in Kashi and then taught Karmakanda in Dharmasamaj Sanskrit College, Muzzafarpur from 1919 to 1938. He also worked for sometime as Dwar-Pandit of Patiyal king. He lived in Kashi in the last years of his life.

In Maithili he wrote a short grammar and a *Teeka* on Amarkosha. His historical work in Maithili is his *Mithilabhashamaya Itiahas*. In this work he narrates the history of last ruling dynasty of Mithila – Khandawala Kula, from its first ruler Mahesh Thakur to then ruling Maharajadhiraja Rameshwar Singh. According to Jayakant Mishra ‘it is a valuable work because it contains very detailed history of the entire Khandavalakula Dynasty upto the present day. Numerous sidelights are given on various events and episode in the palace and in the realm during the four hundred years it professes to cover.’ This work of Mahamahopadhyaya Mukund Jha ‘Bakshi’, though he used tough Sankritised words, is still considered as representative text of Mithila in last four centuries.

**MURLIDHAR JHA (1869-1929)**

Murlidhar Jha is regarded as the creator of modern prose in Maithili. Though he was a great scholar of *Jyotish*, through the publication of ‘*Mithila Moda*’ brought a new space for Maithili writers and provided a distinct direction to the Maithili movement.
His paternal village was Bharam in Madhubani district but he was settled in Shyamshidhap. He studied at Queens College at Kashi (now Banaras) and later became the professor of Jyotish at the same college.

His works are – Arjun Tapashya (novel), Hitopadesh, and Maithili Vyakaran. But main reason for his popularity in Maithili literary world is his publication and edition of Mithila Moda. This magazine had an influence on Mithila and created for the first time a limited but steady Maithili reading public. It is said that the publication of Mithila Moda had brought a new age in Maithili writings. Many famous writers like Kavivar Sitaram Jha, Jyothish Baldeva Mishra, Mahamahopadhyaya Umesh Mishra, Trilochan Jha, Ramchandra Mishra, Anoop Mishra and Kusheshwar Kumar etc., were first introduced into Maithili world by Mithila Moda. This journal was published from 1907 to 1927 and again after his death from 1936 to 1941. The publication of Mithila Moda is a milestone in Maithili language and the movement. He was also successful in arousing the conscience of Maithils through his fierce and critical statements.

It is believed that he played a critical role in recognition of Maithili in Calcutta (now Kolkata) University. He established Kashi-Vidvatjan-Samiti. He was also in favour of one standard format of Maithili writing. He was the fierce supporter of Maithili against Hindi and openly regarded Hindi as an obstruction for the proper growth of Maithili.

SIR GANGANATH JHA (1871-1941)

Dr. Sir Ganganath Jha was the first student in Mithila who studied in English medium. He was a great scholar of Sanskrit, Mimansa and Indology. Although, he spent most of his life in Allahabad, his association with Mithila and Maithili culture was unfading. His contribution in shaping modern discourses and ideas among the highly conservative society of Mithila was remarkable. His time was very crucial and shows intense aversion to English education. Higher and credible studies were conceivable only in Sanskrit and English education was considered to be an attack on the very soul of Maithili culture.

In this atmosphere he was born at Sarisab-Pahi village in Madhubani district. As per the family customs he started early education in Sanskrit in his maternal village, Gandhavar. His family was closely associated with Raj Darbhanga. When Maharaja Lakshmishwar Singh, himself well aware of the importance of modern education
especially English, advised his family that the boys should be taught in English medium, the family of Sir Ganganath Jha gladly accepted it. Then he along with his brothers came to Darbhanga and studied in Raj School under the patronage of Maharaja Lakshmishwar Singh. Thereafter he went to Kashi and got admission in prestigious Queens College. He was the first in the region to complete post graduation in 1892. For some years he worked under Lakshmishwar Singh and thereafter Rameshwar Singh in newly established Raj library, Darbhanga. Then he joined Queens College in 1902 as a Sanskrit teacher. He went on to become the Vice Chancellor of Allahabad University for three terms. Though he lived in Allahabad rest of his life, yet he remained closely attached to Mithila and Maithili culture.

Most of Dr. Jha’s work is in English and Sanskrit, yet he also wrote in Maithili. He along with his son Dr. Amarnath Jha edited Chandrakavi Praneet Maheshwani Sangraha in 1920 published from Indian Press, Allahabad. He was closely associated with the Maithili Sahitya Parishad – one of the earliest literary organisations which played pioneering role in creating the literary culture in Maithili. He wrote Vedant Deepak in Maithili which was published by the Parishad in 1936. In its session of 1937 in village Sarisab-Pahi Dr. Jha proposal that Maithili should be recognized by the Patna University was passed unanimously. He also wrote a critical essay on Mithilak Gati in Maithili which was published in Mithila Mihir (Mithilank, Vasant Panchami, 1936). When in 1930’s and 1940’s Mithila society (mainly Shrotriya Samaj) was divided between Swadeshi and Vilayati, he took the side of the Vilayati group. This division was so intense that it is also called Swadeshi and Vilayati movement. Maharaja Kameshwar Singh was boycotted by the shrotriya samaj for his travel to England to attend Round Table Conference. Dr. Jha not only supported Maharaja but permitted his son Dr. Amarnath Jha to visit Europe. This was the heaviest blow on highly conservative and obstructive society of Maithili shrotriya Brahmans.

For his translation of Jaimini’s Mimansa Sootra in English, the Royal Asiatic Society, Bombay branch gave him Campbell gold medal. He was also made honorary member of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland. In 1941, British Akademi selected him as its distinguished member and in the same year British government conferred upon him the title of ‘Sir’. He died on November 17, 1941 in Allahabad.
DEENBANDHU JHA (1878-1955)

Mahavaiyakaran Pandit Deenbandhu Jha was regarded as the ‘Panini’ of Maithili language, for he was the first to write a grammar of Maithili on the pattern of Panini’s Sanskrit grammar. To establish and strengthen the status of Maithili as an independent language his book ‘Mithilabhasha-Vidyutan’ had played a critical role, which was published in 1945. This book of Maithili grammar is still considered as one of the finest grammars of Maithili.

He was born at village Issahapur in Madhubani district. His father name was Vidyanath Jha. After his primary education he went to Kashi for higher education in 1893 where he received regular training in learning from Mahamahopadhyaya Shivkumar Shastri. He passed Dhautparikha in 1908. He spent all his life in learning and teaching in his own village Issahapur, Devaghar, Lakshmipur, Darbhanga, and Sarisab. He was known for his devotion and equal respect for all kind of works – manual or intellectual.

He wrote mostly in Sanskrit: Rameshwarpratapodayam, Samasashaktideepika, Bakarvivek, Shraddhadhikarinirnaya. In Maithili his four books are published: - Mithilabhasha-Vidyutan (1945), Dhatupath (1949 -50), Mithilabhasha-Kosha (1950), and Alankar Sagar (1967). The last of his Maithili work Alankar Sagar was not completed during his life time and it was published after his death.

He was considered to be the first to provide the dictionary of the Maithili language: Maithilibhasha-Kosha. Together with Dhatupath this work contains more than six thousands Maithili Desaj (indigenous) words, many of them is no longer in use. He had also worked for the standardisation of Maithili but he did not enter into any conflict over it, as his successors did. Though he did not write the creative writings but he did play an influential role in establishing the status of Maithili as distinct and independent language through the writings of grammar and dictionaries. In 1941 Maithili Sahitya Parishad in its Madhubani Session awarded him with the title of Mahavaiyakaran.

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1 It was an exam conducted by the Raj Darbhanga to test the knowledge of different scholars in various branches of learning, primarily Sanskrit. It was considered as the most prestigious testimony of one’s learning. It was instituted by the founder of the Raj Darbhanga Mahamahopadhyaya Pandit Mahesh Thakur.
SHYAM NARAYAN SINGH (1883-1948)

_History of Tirhut_ From the Earliest Times to The End of the Nineteenth Century published from Baptist Mission Press, Kolkata in 1922 is his greatest contribution in history writing of the region. It is the first English book written on the history of Mithila. It is Shyam Narayan Singh who brought the culture, history and society of Mithila to the notice of national and international Indologist and other intellectuals.

He was born at a village called Ahiyapur in Aurangabad district. His father Narsingh Narayan Singh was a Zamindar related to Tekari Raj of Gaya. After completing his early education in his village, he was admitted to Patna College. After obtaining B. A. degree he joined Bengal Civil Service in 1906. He was appointed to several distinguished positions in the administration of Bihar. He was decorated with many awards and honour for his service like MBE (Member of British Empire), OBE (Officer British Empire).

In the course of his service he came in with close contacts of Motilal Nehru, Sachidananda Sinha, Rajendra Prasad. This might have inspired him to think more sympathetically towards his own society, its culture and history. Prior to the publication of _History of Tirhut_ he had also written _The Industries in Bihar and Orissa_. He also wrote a small booklet on Hindu-Muslim Unity which was based on the life experiences of both the communities.

Besides fulfilling his responsibility he was also very conscious of the political and economic condition of the people, particularly of Tirhut. It is though surprising he continue with the use of term Tirhut and not Mithila. Was it because Mithila had not sufficiently caught the imagination of masses to refer to their region? But it is in his account that we find history of Vaishali and Champaran mentioned within the history of Tirhut. He also included the accounts of many dialects or languages, different traditions, economic condition of the masses in his history.

RAJA TANKANATH CHAUDHARY (1884-1928)

Raja Tankanath Chaudhary of Rajaura was a great admirer and patron of Maithili language and literature. He provided much needed financial support for recognition of Maithili in the Kolkata University. Two Maithili chair was established in Kolkata University with the help of Raja Kirtyanand Singh of Raj Banaili. Two professors were appointed for the teaching of Maithili and their salary was paid from the
contributions of these two Rajas. Kumar Gaganand Singh, Babu Gangapati Singh, Brajmohan Thakur, Bidyanand Thakur also played an important role in this recognition of Maithili. This was the first time that Maithili was recognised a modern Indian languages. This perhaps was a base and set the move in motion for greater and greater recognition of Maithili language and literature.

He was born at Durgaganj in Katihar. His father Raja Budhinath Chaudhary died in 1885. Since he was very young at that time hence court of wards took over the administration of his Zamindari. His primary education was imparted at Krishna Nagar of Navadweep district in Bengal. From the Presidency College Kolkata he completed B. A. with English and Philosophy as subjects. He took admission in M. A. but in 1904 when the administration of the court of wards ended he stopped his formal education and started to look after his Zamindari.

Raja Tankanath Chaudhary established a school in 1915 in the memory of his father at Ramnagar. In this Maithili students were given free education, tuitions and food and lodging were also provided free to the poor students. There was also a Maithili Student Union which used to meet regularly. In their meetings Maithili essays and poetry were discussed. The famous Maithili writers like Kashinath Jha and Kanchnath Jha ‘Kiran’ had their education in this school.

He was the member of many public bodies as well – Dinajpur Munincipal Board for fifteen years, member of Bengal legislative council. He was a regular participant in the sessions of the Maithil Mahasabha. He established a huge library of rare books and manuscripts. His contributions to Maithili language is of many facets. In Mithila Moda he started an essay competition in Maithili on socially relevant issues about - whether it will be appropriate for the Maithil Brahmmin to travel abroad? We find many essays in Mithila Moda in favour or in against of this topic. He was a very close friend of Maharajadhiraja Rameshwar Singh of Darbhanga and used to discuss all the important issues concerning Mithila, Maithili and their respective Zamindaris confidentially.

**BRAJ MOHAN THAKUR (1889-1977)**

His contribution in recognition of Maithili by the Kolkata University was an important achievement which laid the foundation for the struggle for the institutional recognitions of Maithili in later years. It was the remarkable achievement at that time which inspired a whole lot of his contemporaries to work more ardently for Maithili.
He was born at Araria Bairgachi, district Araria (then Purnea District). He started his primary education at Araria and passed Entrance Examination from Araria High School. Thereafter, he went to Bhagalpur and passed Bachelor exam in arts from T. N. J. College, Bhagalpur (now TNB College). Then, he went to Calcutta to study philosophy at post graduation level with the financial help of Raja Kalikanand Singh of Srinagar Deorhi. He got Master degree in 1918 with ‘Shankhya and Vedanta’ as his area of specialisation. He also received the B. L. Degree from the Calcutta University by taking admission in the evening classes. While studying Law he met with Rajendra Prasad who was a year senior to him. They became very close friend and together they formed Vidvat Samiti with Dr. Prasad as its President.

After the completion of his studies he was appointed as the translator by the government of Bengal. Very soon he was appointed as a professor of Hindi at the Calcutta University. He continued to be a member of the board of higher studies and a paper setter for Hindi (M. A. Examinations) from 1921 to 1925.

When Calcutta university under the Vice Chancellerorship of Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee started higher studies in fourteen modern Indian languages including Bengali, Marathi etc., Maithili was left out. Brajmohan Thakur was surprised and disturbed to by this omission of Maithili. He met Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee and told him about such mistake and pleaded for recognition of Maithili as a subject of higher studies. Sir Mukherjee himself was very surprised and accepted the mistake but he told him that as the fund available for such studies had been already distributed among different languages. So he could not do anything for the Maithili except if the requisite fund of Rs. 2,500 is made available within few days for the beginning of Maithili studies at the post graduation level. With the help of Raja Tanknath Chaudhary of Rajour and Raja Kirtyanand Singh Bahadur of Raj Banaili a total amount of Rs. 10,000 (Rs. 3,500 by Rajour Estate and Rs. 7,500 by Raj Banaili) was deposited to the Calcutta University and the education committee in its meeting of 7/8/1919 and 8/8/1919 accepted Maithili as a subject of study at the post graduate level. And a Rajour – Banaili chair for Maithili was established at the Calcutta University. It was a milestone for Maithili, as it is widely considered that had Calcutta University denied such recognition to Maithili, the further development of Maithili would have been greatly affected and perhaps Maithili would have been very well appropriated by the supporters of Hindi as its dialects.

The other contributions of Braj Mohan Thakur were to appoint two teachers for the teaching of Maithili and prepare its syllabus. For this purpose he visited Raj
Darbhanga and approached Mahamahopadhyaya Parmeshwar Jha. Parmeshwar Jha accepted the proposal but thought it necessary to take the consent of the Maharajadhiraja of Darbhanga Rameshwar Singh. Rameshwar Singh did not give his consent and increased his salary. The Maharajadhiraja wrote his displeasure to Sir Mukherjee about this act of Braj Mohan Thakur. Finally, Babuaji Mishra and Babu Gangapati Singh were appointed for the post.

Braj Mohan Thakur was, as the letter of the Calcutta University says, dated August 19, 1919 ‘on deputation from the Calcutta University for making a collection of Books and manuscripts in Maithili’. He was given twenty three days for this collection i.e. from August 19, 1919 to September 10, 1919. And he visited different parts of Mithila, Mathura, Kashi, Alwar and collected the published and unpublished books and manuscripts. It is believed that he was the first who prepared the comprehensive list of all the published and unpublished works in Maithili.

Besides Hindi he was a good scholar of English, Sanskrit, Bengali, Maithili and Urdu as well. He was the first M.A., B. L. degree holder in old Purnia district. He on the request of Raja Kalikanand Singh Bahadur returned to Purnia and joined Bar of District Court, Purnia. He was offered the post of Hon’ble Justice at Indore High Court but he could not join it and practiced till 1965 at Purnia District Court. He took mostly civil cases. It is doubtful if he worked for the cause of Maithili during his long and cherished public life in Purnia. He was felicitated with a Tamrapatra by Chetna Samiti, Patna in the year 1972. Later on March 14, 1983 Braj Mohan Thakur Law College was established at Purnia in his memory.

**SITARAM JHA (1891-1975)**

Sitaram Jha’s contribution to modern Maithili poetry is compared with the contribution Murlidhar Jha in Maithili prose. He was a Sanskrit scholar and had written more than seventy five books in *Jyotish-Shastra*. But he was equally committed to the cause of the mother tongue Maithili. He was a disciple of Murlidhar Jha and under his inspiration began to write in Maithili. He wrote mainly poetry. But there are also his acclaimed prose writings. He played an influential role from Varanashi (Kasi or Banaras) in shaping the consciousness among the Maithils about their mother tongue, where he spent most of his life. He also influenced Baidyanath Mishra ‘Yatri’ – one of the most influential writers in modern Maithili – to write in Maithili.
He was born at village Chaugama in Bahera Parishar of Darbhanga district. From 1921 to 1962 he was renowned scholar of Sanskrit at Sanyasi Sanskrit College at Kasi and after that he was appointed in Banaras Sanskrit University.


He was mainly a poet and even his prose writing is testimony of his poetic expressions. He was influenced by the writings of the Murlidhar Jha and Jeevan Jha. He co-edited *Mithila Moda* with Anoop Mishra from 1920 to 1927. He was the follower of Mithila Moda *Shaili* (a writing style in Maithili) but he was not totally against any other Shailis. It is believed it is for the first time through his writings reflects the complete cultural and social life of Mithila. His writings are also famous because of his use of Maithili’s *Desaj (Thenth)* words and proverbs (*Lokoktis*). One can feel the scent of Maithili culture and Society of his time in his writing. He wrote on almost all the aspects of Mithila culture.

His speech as a chairman at the sixth session of the *Maithili Sahitya Parishad* at Muzzafarpur was a call of duty for the Maithils to struggle for the cause of Maithili and Mithila and it became the slogan of the Maithili movement:

पाया थाये अधिकार करतो की बिना झगड़ने?
अछी सेलाहों आणि, बरत की बिना रागड़ने?
(Shall we have any rights without fighting?
There is fire in the matchbox, shall it blaze without rubbing?)

**BADRI NATH JHA (1893-1973)**

Kavishekhar Badrinath Jha was a great scholar of Sanskrit literature. Mainly he wrote in Sanskrit and has written more than twenty books in that language. In Maithili he has written only one Mahakavya *Ekavali-Parinaya*. Besides, he has also edited and compiled a ‘*Maithili Geet Ratnawali*’ which is collection of the Maithili songs from the age of Vidyapati to his times written in traditional style.
He was born at village Sarisab Pahi in Madhubani district. For a very long time he worked as a Professor of literature in Dharmasamaj Sanskrit College at Muzaffarpur. Many poets of modern Maithili like Suman, Madhup, and Mohan were his students.

His *Ekavali Parinay* is considered as the first published Mahakavya in Maithili. It was first published in a serialised form in *Sahitya Patra*, edited by Prof. Ramanath Jha. Later it was published in a book form in 1942 from Raj Press, Darbhanga. Subject matter of this work is based on sixth *Skandha of Devibhagwat*. His language is very sanskritised and almost inaccessible for common readers. But his use of words and poetic style touched the zenith of literary expressions.

**UMESH MISHRA (1895-1967)**

Umesh Mishra’s contribution to Maithili language and the literature is enormous. He contributed in many ways to champion the cause of Mithila and Maithili. He was the last in the line of Mahamahopadhya in Mithila. He was a great scholar of Sanskrit, propagator of Maithili and was good at English also.

He was born at village Gajahara of Madhubani District. His father Mahamahopadhyaaya Jayadev Mishra was also a great scholar of Sanskrit. He studied under the guidance of his father and Mahamahopadhyaaya Dr. Sir Ganganath Jha. He was a professor of Sanskrit at Allahabad University from 1923 to 1959. In meantime he also served as the director of Mithila Research Institute, Darbhanga. He was also the first Vice Chancellor of Kameshwar Singh Sanskrit University, Darbhanga between 1962 and 1965.

His famous works are – *Kamala, Upakhyanmala, Tirhuta Aksharak Utpati aur Vikash, Vidyapati Thakur* (its Hindi translation is also published). He edited *Krisnajanma* written by Manbodh. He also edited *Srikrisnajanma Rahashya Natak* of Srikant Ganak with his son and a great champion of Maithili language and literature, Dr. Jayakant Mishra. He has also translated many Sanskrit works into Maithili.

Some of his speeches, like in the third and sixth session of the *Maithili Sahitya Parishad* at Ghonghradiya and Muzaffarpur respectively put him in the category of the finest essayist in Maithili. In these both speeches he fiercely supported the claim of Maithili against Hindi and provided enough evidence for the assertion of Maithili
as an independent language. He also gave some solution towards developing a standard writing style for Maithili.

**AMARANATH JHA (1897-1955)**

Dr. Amaranath Jha is renowned for his commitment to the growth of healthy culture in educational institutions in India, particularly Allahabad University. His three and a half decades of association with this university saw him in many roles starting from the student and becoming the faculty of English at the age of twenty two, he went on to become the Vice Chancellor of the University at the age of forty one. He was the Vice Chancellor of the Allahabad University from 1938 – 1947. For a brief period he was also appointed as the Vice Chancellor of the Banaras Hindu University in 1948. He was also the chairman of the U. P. Public Service Commission (1947) and the Bihar Public Service Commission (1953). He was elected as the President of the *All India Hindi Sahitya Sammelan* (1941), the *Kashi Nagari Pracharani Sabha*, and the *U. P. Sahitya Sammelan* (1946). He took very keen interest in linguistic affair of the country. But above all he was a great educationist and wanted to keep educational institutions away from the undue interference of politics. He was quite disturbed by the growing political interference in the matter of education.

He was born to the great Indologist Sir Ganganath Jha and spent initial years in Darbhanga before going to Allahabad in 1902. He passed secondary examination in year 1913 in first class with distinction in English, Hindi and Sanskrit. Then he was admitted to Muir Central College from where he passed intermediate examination in year 1915 in second class in arts subjects though he stood fourth in the university. He further continued his studies and passed B.A. examinations in 1917, standing first in first class. The same year he joined department of English as an assistant professor at the age of twenty, on the invitation of Ranford, Principal of the Muir Central College, while simultaneously attending the lecture for M. A. examinations. Later he also joined *Leader* a well known journal published by C. Y. Chintamani. He passed M. A. in 1919 in English. Though his educational and all of his professional life baring a brief period when he was appointed as the chairman of the B.P.S.C., were spent in the city of Allahabad, he remains associated with Mithila and Maithili. He used to visit his village Pahitol of Sarisab in Darbhanga during summer.

Some of the important works of Amaranath Jha includes *Dashkumaracharita, Hindi Sahitya Sangraha, Rasarnava of Shankara Mishra, Chandra Kavi Praneet*
Though he took very keen interest in the language problem in the nation and supported Hindi as the national language against Hidustani, but according to him this whole issue of language is the construction of the ‘our leader’ and for ‘the masses for whom the leader speaks - the problem just does not exist’. He was also a great champion of the mother tongue. He believed that the medium of primary education should be the mother tongue. And thus he supported Maithili instead of Hindi as the medium of instruction at primary level in Mithila region, he eventually succeeded in persuading the concern committee regarding this but for the political reasons the idea was later dropped by the committee in his absence, which he considered ‘forced absent’. He opposed the idea of classifying Maithili as a ‘dialect’ of Hindi.

**BABU BHOLA LAL DAS (1897-1977)**

He is also known as *Maithilik Dadhichi* for his struggle and sacrifice for the cause of Maithil, Mithila and Maithili. He was a great social reformer. His role in Mithila is compared with Raja Ram Mohan Roy of Bengal, but unlike Roy he never got such support from either the British or the Maharajas of Darbhanga. He was also a great organiser, institution builder, a committed leader with high ideals. He played a remarkable role and successfully led singlehandedly the struggle for recognition of Maithili by the Patna University from primary to the University level. He was a lawyer but left his profession and lived a poor life with unmatchable dedication and commitment for the development of Maithil, Mithila and Maithili; from the establishment of press, to publication, distribution and circulation of books. His contribution in Maithili development is greatly admired with reverence by his contemporary and younger generation alike.

He was born in 1897 at village Kasraur in Darbhanga. He had his elementary education in his maternal village Mahishi. After graduation in 1917 from T. N. B. Jubilee College, Bhagalpur and L. L. B. from Allahabad University he took up lawyer as his profession. In the beginning he championed the cause of Hindi as the national

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2 Some people like Dr. Fulchandra Mishra ‘Raman’ established his year of birth as 1894; though many still believe it was 1897.
language, but after shri Raghunandan Das told him about the richness of Maithili language and its literature, he took up the cause of Maithili as his life-long mission. He also participated in Gandhi led national movement and taught in different colleges established by Gandhi and other national leaders. According to Jatashankar Das he was a staunch supporter of Maithili, being a nationalist, he never doubted the claim of Hindi as the national language in India. He was very critical of the imperialist agendas of Hindiwallas.

He was a first-ranked leader of newly formed Akhil Bhartiya Maithili Sahitya Parishad, Darbhanga and was its Pradhan Mantri from 1939 to 1940. The Parishad played a role of crusader for the championing the cause of Maithili. He was basically an andolani\(^3\) so comparatively his literary contribution in Maithili is relatively less. But whatever he wrote proved a milestone in the further development of Maithili language. His major works are – Vyakaran Prabodh, Subodh Vyakaran, Saral Vyakaran, Maithili Sahitya Lahiri (Balpothi Bhag - 4), Sansmaran. He edited Gadya Kusumanjali. He also edited two monthly journals which set the standards in Maithili journalism Mithila and Bharati.


**BABUAJI JHA ‘AGYAT’ (1904-1996)**

His period was considered to be the entire twentieth century which is considered as full of constructive, destructive and reconstructive events. He was born in the beginning of the twentieth century in 1904 and died in 1996. His long life had seen many a great and disturbing happenings in the world and his own region Mithila. These happenings aroused his thinking deeply and these all are vividly reflected in his writings, particularly his poems.

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\(^3\) Loosely translated as revolutionary, but not in a classical sense of the term, but certainly his contribution to the cause of Mithila and Maithili is not less revolutionary.
During this period the condition of Maithili and Mithila was worse. Old system and structure of life was falling apart but new were still not in sight. Sanskrit education for the tiny elite was still regarded as high learning at the cost of modern education and the mother tongue Maithili. It is this narrow mindedness and conservative attitude towards modern learning and life of the Maithili Pandits, combined with feudal structure that restricts the growth of Mithila and Maithili both. It is irony that it is believed that Mithila and Bengal share a very close cultural and social affinities, but in modern times while in the beginning of twentieth century Bengal was aspiring for modern English education, in Mithila focus was still on the establishment of Sanskrit Tola – Pathshala and colleges. This intense focus on preservation of tradition method of learning while produced a great many Sanskrit scholars but it isolated Mithila culturally, socially, economically and educationally.

In such circumstances Babuaji Jha ‘Agyat’ was born at village Bath in Madhubani district, to Kantir Jha and Draupadi Devi. His father was an illiterate Maithil Brahman who did not like his aspiration for education. So he had to struggle and exert a lot for his education after primary. He passed Pratham with first class from Sanskrit school, Garatol. Then he also passed Shastri examination mostly through self education with the help of Pt. Triloknath Mishra of Lohna Vidyapeeth. Only on the dint of his shear love for learning he passed kabyateerth from Bengal, Sahityacharya of Bihar and Sahityotma examination of Baroda state. He also cleared Ayurvedacharya examination from Bengal in 1942.

He worked in Vishudhanand Hospital in Kolkata but soon returned to his native village and started practising Ayurveda. His interests for learning make him to join Sanskrit college in Farbisganj. After that he joined Sanskrit High School in Balua Bajar, Saharsa. He worked there till 1968, only there after he devoted himself completely towards literary pursuits. Though he started writings in Maithili long ago and got some poems and articles published in Mithila Darshan, Mithila Moda, Vaidehi. His most important work is Rukmani Parinaya (1980) and Partigya Pandav (1995). Both of this work is based on story of Mahabharta. His other literary compositions are compiled in Tarangani which is still unpublished.

He was facilitated by Sanskritik Parishad, Madhepura, Vidyapati Seva Sansthan, Darbhanga, Sankalp-Lok, Laheriya Sarai, and Chetna Samiti, Patna. According to Sureshwar Jha poet ‘Agyat’ might be unknown earlier but know he is well known everywhere and is very popular. He is considered as a great poet of Maithili’s ancient tradition though his assessment of modern life and its problem and their solutions in his Muktak Kavitas put him among the modern poets.
RAMANATH JHA (1906-1971)

Dr. Ramanath Jha was first among the Maithili writers who initiated the discussion about the proper scientific standard of prose writing in Maithili. His Sahitya Patra (published quarterly from 1937-1939) played a critical role in formulation of a writing style of prose in Maithili. In this Patra a particular style had been followed so strictly and consistently that for a very long time this form of writing was came to be known as Ramanath School. Although it did not settled the controversy surrounding prose writing style, in the very beginning Mithila Mihir adopted a different form than suggested by Dr. Jha, but no doubt this is to his credit that Maithili writers started to work seriously in prose writing and maintaining some form of uniformity in their writings. However, this controversy even in present time is far from being settled.

Dr. Ramanath Jha was very concerned about the prose writings in Maithili. He was well aware that prose writing is necessary for the proper development of any modern language. So, he spent considerable time and energy to develop standard prose writings in Maithili. Dr. Jha also introduced and strengthened literary criticism and critical enquiry, acutely lacking in modern Maithili literature. He was a dispassionate researcher. Through the serious study of Panji Prabandha he was able to solve many controversies surrounding Vidyapati, Govind Das, Chanda Jha and others.

He was born on Sept 21, 1906 at village Ujan Dharampur in Darbhanga district. He passed M. A. in English from Patna University in 1930. He was headmaster of Madhepur High School from 1930 – 1936. In 1936 he was appointed head librarian of Darbhanga Raj Library. From 1952 – 1962 he taught English in Chandradhari Mithila College. When in 1962 study of Maithili was started at Post Graduation level he was appointed as the reader and the head of the department of Maithili. In 1965 he was elected as the representative of Maithili in Sahitya Akademi and also elected as the member of its executive council. He remained their till Dec 09, 1971 the day he died.

His main research works are: - Nibandhmal, Prabandh Sangrah, based on classical stories, Udyan katha and Baruch Katha is his literary works. He translated Vidyapati’s Purush Pariksha. His compilation and edited works are Maithili Padya Sangraha, Maithili Gadya Sangraha (three parts), Kavita Kusum, Pracheen Geet, Katha Kavya, and Naveen Geet. His famous edited works are Manbodh’s Krishnajanma and Chanda Jha’s Mithila Bhasha Ramayan. His monograph on Vidyapati published by Sahitya Akademi is translated in more than seven Indian
languages. His other famous creative works are *Mithila Bhasha Prakash, Alayi Kul Prakash, Maithilik Vartman Samasya, Maithili Gadyak Prasang, Maithili Brahmano Ki Panji Vyabastha, and the Tales from Vidyapati.*

**KANCHINATH JHA ‘KIRAN’ (1906-1988)**

Kanchi Nath Jha ‘Kiran’ is regarded as ‘a man of the earth and see things from common man’s point of view.’ He was actively engaged in the service of Maithili language through original creative writings as well as through his participation in the Maithili language movement. He was an unrivalled organiser. He strived hard to develop affection for Maithili among the people of the region. He also worked for the organising *Vidyapati Parva*. He made this *Parva* a mechanism to develop *Bhasha Prem* among the Maithils. He was the Prime minister of the *Maithili Sahitya Parishad* for six year (1947 - 1953).

He was born at village Ujan Dharampur in Darbhanga district. He went to Kashi for study. There he played critical role in Maithili language movement. His role in recognition of Maithili as a course of study in Kashi Hindu Vishwavidyalaya is quite commendable. For a very long time he was a teacher in Sarisab High School and later joined Lalit Narayan Maithila University as a reader in Maithili. Dr. Bhimnath Jha has pointed out that in last fifty- fifty five years of the Maithili language movement, Dr. Kiran had always actively participated in each and every event.

His published works are *Chandragrahan* (1932), *Vijeta Vidyapati* (1972), *Dhruv, Abhimanyu, Jai Janmabhumi* (1953). His other famous works are *Madhurmani* and *Parashar*. For *Parashar* he was given Sahitya Akademi Award in 1989.

He was a progressive writer. Going against the dominant belief system of Mithila society he discarded the authority of god and extensively wrote upon the social and economic inequality and vehemently opposed social stagnancy. He was staunch supporter of women literacy and quite apprehensive of the upper castes idleness. The strong support for social reform is quite visible in his writings.

**LAKSHMIPATI SINGH (1907-1979)**

Babu Lakshmipati Singh’s contributed to Maithili literature in various roles – as a journalists, novelist, poet, critique, essayist, and children writer. He edited many
magazines which influence many writers to write in Maithili and increased children literature in Maithili.

He was born in Khandawala ruling dynasty of Mithila to Babu Himpati Singh at Madhepur Dyaudhi (Palace) in Madhubani district. He graduated in 1929 and worked as a teacher in Madhepur High School for some year. He worked at News Papers and Publications (Aryawart Press) at Patna. His wife Lakshmiwati Leela also used to write in Maithili.

His main works are: - *Chamunda* and *Panchavati* (novels), *Atitak Smriti Patal* (autobiography), *Hindi-Maithili Shikshak* (grammar), *Maithili Kusumanjali* (edited). He edited three magazines – *Maithili Bandhu* (from Agara), *Mithila Jyoti* (from Patna) and *Chaupari* (from Patna). He use to write reviews of almost all the books published in Maithili between 1950 to 1977 in English, which use to be published in Indian Nation. He also wrote memoirs of some of his contemporaries like Mahavaiyakaran Deenbandhu Jha, Kavishekhar Badrinath Jha, Acharya Ramanath Jha, and Sitaram Jha. All his life, he tried to contribute in different ways to develop and popularise Maithili literature and language. He worked closely with many organisations and individuals associated with Maithili language and the movement.

**BHUWANESHWAR SINGH ‘BUHWAN’ (1907-1944)**

Bhuwaneshwar Singh Bhuwan’s entry into the Maithili literary field brought about revolutionary changes in Maithili writing and journalism. It was he who persuaded a famous Hindi writer of that time Shri Arshi Prasad Singh to write in Maithili. It is Bhuwan who freed Maithili from the clutches of medieval songs of god and goddesses and brought it closer to reality of the modern life.

He was born in Khandawala ruling dynasty of Mithila at Anandpur Dyaudhi (Palace) in Darbhanga District. He dedicated all his property and life to the cause of Mithila and Maithili. It is said that due to his investments for the cause of Maithili, the last years of his life was extremely depressed. His workplace was mostly in Muzzafarpur. He was mainly a poet but he also wrote prose. His prose writing is unique in terms of the flow of the language, clarity of thoughts and sentence constructions. He used to write in Hindi also.

His main works are: - *Asadh* (1936) and *Smritikan* (1945) collection of poems, edition of Ramadasa’s *Ananda Vijaya Nataka*, translation of Michel Madhusudan Dutt’s
Bangla novel *Virahani Brajangana* into Maithili, about which it is told that it was as pleasing as the original. Dr. Durgananth Jha Shreesh has published the compilation of all his writings including translation by the name of *Bhuwan-Bharati* in 1958.

‘Bhuwan’ also edited one of the highly acclaimed but short lived Maithili magazine *Vibhuti* (1936 - 38). It gave a new direction to Maithili journalism. According to Jayakant Mishra ‘the Vibhuti began well. It was priced very low, considering that it is used to give very interesting, though at times provocative matter and that an established writer like ‘Bhuvana’ was associated with it. Its articles were revolutionary in spirit and envisaged a new line of work – that of ready wit and humour. It met with its end soon because its style of spelling was new to Maithili readers, because it went too far in criticising old institutions and because it gave an impression of malicious propaganda.’

Although it is true that he did not keep the magazine away from his own personal matters particularly with the Raj Darbhanga with whom he was fighting many legal cases, his contribution for the development of Maithili language and literature are extremely important. And he also gave many new and prominent writers to Maithili.

**HARIMOCHAN JHA (1908-1984)**

Harimohan Jha was the first modern Maithili writers who created a big readership for Maithili literature. He was very critical of Mithila’s customs and traditions and through his writings like *Khattar Kakak Tarang, Kanyadan, Pranamya Devta* and others he fiercely attacked on static Mithila’s customs and traditions. He also depicted the uneasiness and contradictions in the interaction of modernity and traditions in the beginning of twentieth century in Mithila and through his writing also tried to establish the possible harmonious relationship between the two. Although, he wrote in all the genre of literature but he is famous for his satirical prose writings in Maithili sphere.

He was born at Kumar Bajitpur in Vaishali District of Bihar. His father Pandit Janardan Jha ‘Janseedan’ was a great scholar of Maithili. Harimohan Jha was a bright student and after completing his M. A. in philosophy he joined B. N. College Patna as a lecturer, then he joined Patna College and finally became the head of the PG Department of Philosophy, Patna University. He was also the Research Professor at Patna University for five years. But throughout his academic career he maintained his interest in Maithili and continuously wrote in it.
His important works are – *Kanyadan* (1933), *Dwiragaman* (1943), *Pranamya Devta* (1945), *Khattar Kakak Tarang* (1949), *Rangshala* (1950), *Charachari* (1960). He also wrote his autobiography entitled *Jeevan Yatra* which was published after his death in 1984.

**SUBHADRA JHA (1909-2000)**

Dr. Subhadra Jha was born at Nagdaha village of Madhubani district on July 09, 1909. After graduating from Scottish Church College, Calcutta (now Kolkata) he worked as a research scholar at the Patna University from 1936 to 1940. In 1941 he joined Chandrdhari Mithila College, Darbhanga, as Professor. Patna University awarded him D. Lit. in 1944. Thereafter for further studies he went to Paris in 1946. For a very long time he worked as librarian in Varanashi Sanskrit University. After that he joined Yogda Satsang College, Ranchi, as a Principal. He then joined as research Professor for Mithilesh Rameshwar Singh Maithili Chair at the Patna University.

His contributions in Maithili literature are – *Pravas-jeewan, Yatra-Prakaran-Shatak,* and *Natik Patrak Utter.* His most important contribution as a linguist is *Formation of Maithili Language,* for which he was awarded D. Lit. Dr. Jayakant Mishra complimented the book by saying that “the study of the Maithili Language as language has been best done by Dr. Subhadra Jha.” His *Natik Patrak Utter* is written in letter-writing style where he depicts social, literary, political and personal issues concerning Maithili language movements. For this work he was also given Sahitya Akademi Award in 1986. According to Prof. Bhimnath jha, Dr. Subhadra Jha will be ever commemorated in Maithili for providing the scientific base to Maithili language, for providing correct explanation of *Vidyapati-Padya* in English and bringing it at the world scale, for providing complete and authentic account of ancient Maithili treasure with his contemporary criticism, and for his unique literary style.

**SURENDRA JHA ‘SUMAN’ (1910-2002)**

Prof. Surendra Jha’s contribution to the development of modern Maithili Literature is enormous. Not only he himself contributed to Maithili but he inspired and promoted many talented poets to write in Maithili – chief among them are Shri Kashikant Mishra ‘Madhup’, Upendra Thakur ‘Mohan’, Shri Chandrakant Mishra ‘Amar’,
Bhimnath Jha, and others. He is considered as the greatest poet in modern Maithili, popular editor, great teacher, essayist of high merit, and a successful critic also. He also translated many works of Bangla and Sanskrit into Maithili and also composed in Sanskrit and Hindi.

Besides literature there is a political part of his personality as well. He was a great orator. He represented Darbhanga in Bihar legislative Assembly and Indian Parliament. He was also a representative of Maithili in Sahitya Akademi from 1983 to 1987 and also a member of its executive board. He was also Mahamantri of the \textit{Maithili Sahitya Parishad} and for many decades worked as its chairman.

He was born on October 09, 1910 at village Ballipur in Samastipur district of north Bihar. He was a meritorious student of Sanskrit literature and completed \textit{Sahityacharya} from Dharmsamaj Sanskrit College, Muzzafarpur. He started his career as a teacher in a high school. But soon in 1935 he joined \textit{Mithila Mihir} as an editor. He was there on this post till 1954. In the year 1953 he joined Chandradhari Mithila College’s Maithili department as a professor, then he joined PG Maithili department of Lalit Narayan Mithila University and retired from there as the head of the department. After retirement he completely devoted his time to politics and literature. He also started the publication of a Maithili daily from Darbhanga- \textit{Swadesh}\textsuperscript{4} from 15 August, 1982. The daily was short lived for the want of readership but it shows his love and affection for the cause of Maithili and Mithila.

He has thirty publications to his credit besides many edited and translated works, which is around fifteen. Important among his own original works are – \textit{Pratipada}, \textit{Archana}, \textit{Savon-Bhado}, \textit{Ankawali}, \textit{Antarnad}, \textit{Bharat-Vandana}, \textit{Payaswani}, \textit{Uttara}. \textit{Purush Pariksha}, \textit{Anugitanjali}, \textit{Ritushringar}, \textit{Badki-Dai} etc., are his translated works. Among his edited works important are – \textit{Varnaratnakar}, \textit{Parijat-Haran}, \textit{Krishna-Janma}, \textit{Anand-Vijay}, \textit{Govind-Gitanjali}.

Among the critique of Maithili literature he was regarded to be more a Sanskritist and conventional than modern. According to Acharya Ramanath Jha, ‘he was more an ancient and less a modern’.

\textsuperscript{4} This daily was published earlier also from 1948, initially as monthly under his own editorship and later as a daily from October 9, 1955 to December 27, 1955.
AARSI PRASAD SINGH (1911-1996)

Shri Aarsi Prasad Singh was basically a Hindi poet and writer. He had also worked as a producer in Akaswani at Lucknow and Allahabad. He resigned from the post for his anti-government stand on Hindi. Then he worked at Khagariya College as a Hindi teacher. Thereafter he wrote as an independent creative writer. He started writing in Maithili much later when Bhuwneshwar Singh ‘Bhuwan’ persuaded him to do so.

He was born at Arout village in Samstipur District. He could not attend college for higher education. But by dint of his own self study he acquired a lot of knowledge and skills. In his time he was considered as one of the foremost writer of Hindi in the province.

He is regarded mainly as a lyricist. But he also wrote in prose and Muktaks Kavya. His main works in Maithili, are – Matik Deep (1958), Poojak Phool (1967), and Suryamukhi (1981). For Suryamukhi he was awarded Sahitya Akademi Award in 1984. Maithili Akademi also gave him Vidypati Puraskar for the same work in the year 1982. He also translated Kalidasa’s Meghdoot, which was first published in the issues of Mithila Mihir (in 1973-74). Later it was published in a book form by the Maithili Prakashan Samiti, Kolkata. His short story on bicycle ‘Hamr Jeevan Sangini’ is quite famous. He also wrote Sanshamaran (memoirs) on Ramlochan Sharan and Prof. Harimohan Jha.

BIADYANATH MISHRA ‘YATRI’ (1911-1998)

‘Yatri’ widely known and appreciated Maithili poet and novelist brought a true Lokbhasha (colloquial) in Maithili literature. He composed in chaste Maithili. He was a wanderer, a revolutionary, a great observer and sympathiser of everyday life of commoners and critical of tradition and orthodoxy. He wrote satirically about the misery of hypocritical life of bourgeoisie. He was a great visionary. He also wrote in Hindi and his immense contribution in Hindi literature is widely recognised. In Hindi sphere he is better known as Baba Nagarjun.

He is regarded as the first Maithili writer who rescued Maithili from the clutches of Sanskritised language and used chaste Maithili to bring it closer to Lokbhasha and his writings acquaints the reader more closely about Maithili culture and society particularly that of Sarvahara. According to Acharya Ramanath Jha, his speciality is that he interpreted communist literature in chaste Maithili, in Bandhahnin Chhanda.
He was born at village Tarauni in Darbhanga district to a low-middleclass Maithili Brahman family. He did his education partly in his village and partly in his maternal village Satlakha. He also studied Sanskrit literature for sometime in Kashi. Then after becoming a Baudh Bhikshu he went to Sri Lanka.

His works are – Chitra and Patrahina Nagna Gachha, both are poetry collection, Paro, Navaturiya, and Balchanma, these are novels. All his work is quite famous and their uniqueness lies in style and minute observation of subject matter. Particularly Balchanma is considered path-breaking novel in modern Maithili literature. Regarding his poetry Dr. Jayakant Mishra writes – ‘The change in the idiom of these poems is remarkable. The poet does not use Sanskritized words, and raise a colloquial style to the poetic level. Ingenious thought, epigrammatic and terse style, colloquial diction, unparalleled speed and tempo and pointed observation characterise these poems’. About his well known poem Anhar Jinagi, where he describes the atheistic, unstable and confused life in modernity, Dr. Jayakant Mishra writes ‘the greatest lyric he has written –Anhar Jinagi- can very well claim to be the greatest single poem of modern Maithili’. For his poetry work, Patrahina Nagna Gachha he was awarded Sahitya Akademi Award in 1968.

UPENDRA THAKUR ‘MOHAN’ (1913-1980)

Upendra Thakur ‘Mohan’ served the interest of Maithili language and literature for more than half a century. By profession he was a journalist. His profession made him to study closely the major and minor social, cultural, political and economic events of his time and this shape his writings as well. He was a Sanskrit scholar as well.

He was born at Chatariya village of Darbhanga district. He passed the examination of Sahityacharya with first division. By the government scholar examination of Raj Baroda he was awarded with ‘Sahitya Ratna’. He worked in the research division of Aryawart from the beginning of its publication. Then he joined Mithila Mihir in 1960 and since then worked in it as a sub-editor in the beginning and then as an assistant editor. He was retired from there in 1977.

He wrote many essays by different pseudo names like Vijayanand, Kunjranjan, Sudarshan, Pundarid, Baman Shastri, Baman, Kashyap, Shri Thakur etc. in different issues of Mithila Mihir and other magazines and newspapers. These prose writings of him are not compiled in any book form to judge its merit. But it is claimed to be of very high standard. His three collection of poetry is published – Fuldali, Baji Uthal
Murali (1977), and Itishree (published in 1982 after his death). He also published a book in Sanskrit – Ugravansha-Prashastih. For Baji Uthal Murali he was awarded with Sahitya Akademi prize in 1978.

**LAKSHMAN JHA (1916-2000)**

Dr. Lakshman Jha was a staunch supporter of separate Mithila State. He played a critical role in Mithila movement in 1950s. He was a great scholar. In 1949 he was awarded PhD from the London University on Mithila and Magadh. He was, for some years, deputy director of Kashi Prasad Research Institute, Patna. In 1952 he left this job and fought MP election on Socialist Party’s ticket. He lost the election. Thereafter he extensively wrote on the issues concerning Mithila and championed the struggle for separate state of Mithila. He was also appointed as the Vice Chancellor of Lalit Narayan Mithila University, Darbhanga (1977 - 78) he accepted this job without payment and left it within ten months. In personal life he maintained utmost austerity inspired by Mahatma Gandhi.

He was born to Smt. Kirti Devi and Kari Jha of Rashiyari village in Darbhanga. He did his primary education in his village and for middle and high schooling he joined Coronation High School, Madhepura. He passed high school in 1937. During this time Dr. Ramanath Jha was the Head Master of that School. Then he joined T. N. J. College, Bhagalpur and passed intermediate in 1939. In 1941 he graduated with first class in Sanskrit from Patna College. In 1941 he got admission in M. A. but soon he left college and joined Quit India Movement. He was arrested and sent to jail. After he was released from jail he went to England on the scholarship of Bihar Government and was awarded M. A. in 1947 and PhD in 1949 on Mithila and Magadh.

Since 1952 – 53 Lakshman Jha continuously fought for the upliftment of Mithila. When his endeavour for creation of separate Mithila state did not succeed he started to fight for the sovereign republic of Mithila. Firstly, under Mithila Socialist Party he launched a movement – Gorkha Payak Virodh, to protest against the treaty of Sugauli (March 04, 1816) by which five thousand square miles of land handed over to Gorkha King by the East India Company. The people of this region who speaks Maithili have been always treated differently in Nepal. Dr. Jha wanted to reunite them by creating the republic of Mithila. He also worked for the revival and promotion of Mithilakshar or Tirhuta Lipi. He has created an institution – Mithila Mandal – for the publication
purposes in Maithili. Through this, he also awoke Maithils about the demand for the separate state of Mithila. He was the founder editor of a weekly journal *Mithila*.

His famous published works in English are – *Mithila a Union Republic, Mithila in India, Mithila A Sovereign Republic, Mithila Will Rise*, and *The Northern Borders*. In Maithili his published works are – *Mithila Bhasha, Mithilak Uddhar*, and *Mithilak Mukti*. He also wrote one hundred and thirty columns in Indian Nation, Patna during February 1963 to March 1972 as a regular columnist. Besides there are twenty eight books in English, seven in Sanskrit, Six in Maithili and ten in Hindi which are unpublished.

**BABU SAHEB CHAUDHARY (1916-1998)**

He was a lifelong campaigner for Maithili. He supported the Maithili language movement and also separate statehood demand. It was due to his tireless activities that he was able to persuade many non Brahmins Maithili speakers to participate in the Maithili movement. He believed that all those who had born in Mithila were a Maithil. Those who joined the movement because of his persuasion were – Varahil Mandal, Mohamad Abdulla, Shrikant Mandal and Vindeshwari Mandal. He also tried to expand the narrow definition of Maithili by the *Maithil Mahasabha* in its Maldah conference. He supported Dr. Lakshman Jha’s demand for separate statehood for Mithila. He was able to garner the support of all the sections of Maithili speakers. In his endeavour he was supported by Prabodh Narayan Singh, Devnarayan Jha, Pitambar Pathak, Upendra Narayan Chaudhary. For a very long time Babu Saheb Chaudhary became synonymous with Maithili movement in Kolkata.

He was born into a Brahmin family at village Dularpur in Darbhanga district. He had education till tenth class. Immediately after the world war two he came to Kolkata. Here he worked in a transport company as a supervisor and helped many Maithils in getting appointment in the company. One of such person was Devnarayan Jha. He was recruited as a time Keeper. Later he became a great organiser and supporter of Maithili and the Mithila movement. And throughout his life, he supported Babu Saheb Chaudhary. According to Rajnandan Lal Das, Chaudhary himself became a great supporter of Maithili, while listening to a speech in Maithili by Harischandra Mishra ‘Mithlendu’ at Kalighat Park of Kolkata on December 31, 1944. He joined his organisation *Maithil Sangh*, when demand for separate statehood for Mithila was being raised. He along with Devnarayan Jha and Prabodh Narayan Singh formed
**Mithili Lok Sangha**, later when with the help of Prof. Harimohan Jha and Braj Kishore Verma ‘Manpadma’ *Akhil Bhartiya Mithila Sangh* was formed in 1957 he joined it and remained committed to *Akhil Bhartiya Mithila Sangh* till the end of his life but later on in his life he tried to associate himself with all the organisations and individuals concerned with the Maithili movement. And he himself became an institution.

Besides an activist he was a writer and established *Maithili Art Press* to promote publication in Maithili. He edited and published *Maithili Darshan* from his press from 1974 to 1977. On the occasion of *Vidyapati Parva* organised by the Chetna Samiti, Patna in 1974, former Prime Minister of Nepal Matrika Prasad Koirala was invited, he spoke in Maithili. But in the presidential address Janardan Mishra began to speak in Hindi. Babu Saheb Chaudhary once objected to it and when Mishra started his speech again in Hindi, he boycotted the whole event. He could not compromise on Maithili in any event connected to Maithili and Mithila. His contributions in developing cooperation among Maithili Organisations through the organisation like *Maithili Mahasangha* (1982 - 83), protest marches in Patna, leading the delegations to Chief Minister, Governors and Prime minister and other government functionaries to express the grievances of Mithila and Maithili, are well recognised by the institutions and the activists of the Maithili movement. He also openly criticised the focus of Maithili organisation on Vidyapati alone, he wanted that Lori, Salhesh, Deen-Bhadri, Chanda Jha, Lal Das, Sitaram Jha, Kanchinath Jha ‘Kiran’, Kashikant Mishra ‘Madhup’, Surendra Jha ‘Suman’ should be given their due place too. He believed that *Vidyapati Parva* is only the means and end is all round development of Maithili and Mithila.

His important works are – *Kuhesh, Achhinjal*, and a transliteration of D. L. Roy Bangla play *Chanakya* into Maithili. The last years of his life his economic situation worsened and he had to sell his press and to leave Kolkata. All his life he remained committed to the cause of Maithili and Mithila.

**BRAJ KISHOR VERMA ‘MANIPADMA’ (1918-1983)**

Dr. Braj kishor Verma better known as ‘Manipadma’ was not only a literary writer, but also a courageous freedom fighter and a great orator. He was also a follower of Tantrism and historian. He was also a homeopathic doctor and had interest in drawing and hunting. He wrote almost in every genre of literature but his contribution is more
in Maithili novels. His novels are based on social, historical and mythological stories. He like many other Maithili literary figures started his writings in Hindi and English too and of late he began to write in Maithili and committed himself, from then, to promote and propagate the cause of Maithili and Mithila.

He was born on September 07, 1918 in his maternal village Jagtapur. His father Jugal Kishor Das, shifted his home from Baur to Bahera due to the fear of flood. He worked there in registry office. His mother Gangawati Devi was daughter of Sonelal Das – Deewan of Ganhbriya Deodhi, of Jagat Pur. He spent his childhood in his maternal village Jagat Pur under the guidance of Krishna Ballabh Lal Das. For higher education he went to Kolkata and studied in Shanti-Niketan. He also obtained M. D. degree in Homeopathy and came back to his village and practised as a doctor in village Kamad Bishan Pur and earned high respect in neighbouring village. It is here that he devoted his time also to literary pursuits. He also joined the quit India Movement in 1942, British government had arrested him and sent to a jail for four years. He spent one year there and studied Socialism and came out as a great believer in communist philosophy. After that he settled in his village Bahera and practised homeopathy and pursued his literary interest with looking after his agricultural duties. It is said he used to follow an unusual routine. He used to get up at early in the morning at 2 a.m. and after an hour of Padmashan used to write till 6 a.m. Then after 8 a.m. he used to sleep again for an hour or two thereafter he look after his other household and professional work.


He was associated with many Maithili organisations- Founder member, Maithili Akademi, Patna, Member, Maithili Paramarsh Samiti, Sahitya Akademi, Delhi, Member, Rashtra Bhasha Parishad, Patna, Founder Chairman, Harinandan Smarak Trust (for the propagation of Maithili), Darbhanga Nyasi (Trust), and Vidyapati Seva Sansthan, Darbhanga.
SUDHANSHU SHEKHAR CHAUDHARY (1922-1990)

Sudhanshu Shekhar Chaudhary was editor of the famous Maithili journal *Mithila Mihir*, published from Patna for twenty two years (1960 – 1982). Before that he was worked as editor along with Prof. Surendra Jha ‘Suman’ and Prof. Krishnakant Mishra for *Vaidehi*, published from Darbhanga. His contributions to Maithili movement were through coverage of the issues and events big and small related to Mithila and Maithili in *Mithila Mihir*. He continuously tried to mobilise the opinion of Maithili masses, awaken the authorities about the concerns and demands of the Maithils.

He was born at the centre of Mithila – Maithili activities and movements, at Darbhanga in a locality called Mishratola. He worked at Kolkata, Jameshedpur and as a high school teacher for some time, before entirely devoting his time and energy for language and literature. He was actively involved in Maithili journalism and inspired a new generation of writer to write in Maithili. He also took interest in printing and publishing in Maithili.

He wrote in all the genres of literature but he considered himself mainly as a play writer. His plays are – *Bhapait Chahak Jinagi* (1975), *Letait Anchar* (1976), and *Pahil Sanjh* (1982). His plays are quite successful for stage performance. It was because of his involvement with and practical experience of the stage performances. His other works are – *Tar Tatta Upar Patta, Ee Bataha Sansar, Daridrachhimari, Nivedita* (all novels), *Sandarbha* (1981, a collection of critical essays). For *Ee Bataha Sansar* he was awarded with Sahitya Akademi prize for Maithili in 1980. All his writings revolve around the contemporary social, political and economic life of the people.

JAYAKANT MISHRA (1922-2009)

He is credited with providing the first highly acclaimed history of Maithili language and literature in English language. His work, namely *A history of Maithili literature* volume – I & II, first published from Tirbhukti Publication, Allahabad in 1949 – 1950, according to Bhimnath Jha, not only familiarised the scholars of other languages about the chronological history of Maithili language but also provided to its own speakers the history of the language in one text which was otherwise dispersed at different places. For the first time the speaker of the Maithili language got the sense of the great treasure of the history of their own language. His work since then has
become an indispensable base book for any kind of research in Maithili language and literature. He had spent all his life in researching and recovering the almost lost texts, facts and figures of Maithili language and literature. In short his contribution in the development of modern Maithili language is immense and widely acclaimed.

He belonged to village Gajahara in Madhubani district, but he was born in Kashi, where his father Mahamahopadhyaya Umesh Mishra was renowned scholar of Sanskrit and Oriental Studies, on November 19, 1922. Though he did his masters in English literature from Allahabad University, he had the sound knowledge of Sanskrit and Maithili language as well. He joined the same university as an assistant professor of English in 1944 and retired from there in 1983 after being appointed as the head of the department.

He formed Akhil Bharat Maithili Sahitya Samiti, and also established a press by the name of *Tirbhukti Publication* in Allahabad. These two organisations played a crucial role in the development of Modern Maithili language. He was for the first-time organised a book exhibition of Maithili books in Ajad Bhawan, Indraprastha State, Delhi, on December 09 – 11, 1963, which was inaugurated by the then prime-minister of India, Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru. This exhibition played a solid foundation for the demand of Maithili to be included initially as the modern Indian languages in the Sahitya Akademi and then into the eighth schedule of the Indian constitution. Sahitya Akademi recognised Maithili in 1965, and after the death of first Maithili representative in Sahitya akademi, Ramanath Jha, in 1972, Jayakant Mishra represented Maithili in Sahitya Akademi till 1982. He also demanded and fought for the use of the mother tongue in the primary education in Mithila. He believed that it should be imparted through Maithili medium, and only then, Maithili can regain its lost glory. For this purpose he organised a conference on primary education in Maithili, at Bihar Chamber of Commerce Bhawan, Patna on August 11, 1973. He also supported the demand for separate Mithila state and wrote a pamphlet for this purpose ‘*Why Mithila a Separate State*’ which became very popular.

His other major works are: *The Folk Literature of Mithila, part – I, Kirtaniya Natak, Tirhuta Kakahara Pothi, Brihat Maithili Shabdakosha, Fascicule – I & II, Maithili Samachar* (English and Maithili) *I & II*. Besides he published many other works in Maithili, English and edited important works of Maithili. He wrote extensively on the issue of Mithila and Maithili.
He was awarded with *Bhasha Samman* by Sahitya Akademi in 2000. For his immense contribution for championing the cause of Maithili he was called *Field Marshal of Mithila Movement* by Dhanakar Thakur, and *Illahabadak Maithili – dhwaja* (Symbol of Maithili in Allahabd) by Jeevkant.

**RAMKRISHNA JHA ‘KISHUN’ (1923-1970)**

Mainly a poet Ramkrishna Jha ‘Kishun’ worked tirelessly to expand the base of Maithili literature and made it accessible to the common masses. He was a pillar in Saharsa and Supaul with regards to activities of the Maithili movement. It is to his credit that people of this region became much more conscious of Maithili language and gradually this region started to play a significant role in the movement. He inspired many, including Mayanand Mishra to write in Maithili. He himself came to Maithili literary field after the persuasion of Kavichudamani Kashikant Mishra ‘Madhup’.

He was a brilliant student of Sanskrit literature. He taught throughout his life Sanskrit in high school, Supaul. In the beginning he followed traditional style of writing songs and poems. But soon he made himself acquainted with modern style and use to get equal respect among the both.

*Aatmanepad* (1963) is collection of thirty one poems which was published in his lifetime. He also edited *Maithili Navakavita*, a collection of sixteen new poems. It was published after his death. In this collection he had discussed the importance of modern poetry in Maithili. Not just the collection but also because of its deep analysis of modern poems it is still considered as a representative texts in Maithili. He also wrote a play, *Ugana re mora katay gelah* which was played in 1956 on the occasion of first session of *Akhil Bhartiya Maithili Lekhak Sammelan* at Darbhanga. All his writings are compiled in three volumes – *Kramshaha, Swayamvar* and *Vaicharik*, which was published in 1982 under the joint editorship of Mayanand Mishra and Kedar Kanan.

**RAJESHWAR JHA (1923-1977)**

Rajeshwar Jha was one of the few writers in Maithili who devoted his attention to develop all the genres of Maithili literature. His greatest contribution to Maithili
literature is his research on the different aspects of Maithili and Mithilakshara. Besides that, he also wrote plays, stories, novels, folk literatures etc in Maithili.

He was born at Rasuar village in Saharasa District. He could not continue his study after passing matriculation. But through his interest and efforts he published many works in Maithili of immense value. He began his career by joining the service of Raj Darbhanga. But after the abolition of Zamindari he worked in the office of Indian Nation for some time. But he soon moved to Bihar Research Society, Patna and worked there as a clerk. Here, he devoted all his efforts in enriching Maithili language and literature. And it is regarded that he had become an institution in himself with regards to the activities of Mithila and Maithili for a very long time.

His important works are – Maithili Sahityak Aadikal, Mithilaksharak Udbhava O Vikas, Madhyakadin Purvanchalak Vaishnav Sahitya, Vidyapati Sangeet me Varnit Nayak – Nayika Bhed evam Rag Raginik Vargikaran, Menka, Ekadashi, Vidyadharak Katha, Urvarshi, Dharmabyadha Katha, Jata-Jatin Nrityageet, Shyama Chakeba Nrityageet, Dukhiya Babak Khatras, Abhatta: Udbhava O Vikas. He also published three books in Hindi – Kalchakra Ki Utpatti Evam Utpanna Kramo Ki Samkshipta Vyakhya, Maharaja Lakshmishwar Singh, Shakhya Shree Bhadra Ki Jivani. His three plays in Maithili – Mahakavi Vidyapati, Kandarpighat, and Shastrarth – are of historical importance. For his Abhatta: Udbhava O Vikas he was awarded Sahitya Akademi Prize in 1977. He was main source behind the establishment of Maithili Sahitya Sanshan and edited its famous quarterly research journal Mithila – Bharti.

**PANDIT GOVIND JHA (1923- )**

Pandit Govind Jha is a grammarian, lexicographer, translator, creative-writer, poet, and a champion for the cause of Maithili. He also writes in Sanskrit and Hindi. In his inclination towards Maithili he was greatly influenced by his father Mahavaiyakaran Pandit Deenbandhu Jha. He was born at village Issahapur in Madhubani district. In the beginning he received his education from his father and under his able guidance he learned grammar, literature and philosophy of Sanskrit language. Besides that he also studied Bangla and English literature.

His famous published works are: Plays- Basat (1954), Raja Shivsingh (1972), Antim Pranam (1982); Grammar: Chhandshastra (1960), Laghuvidyotan (1963), Uchchtar Maithili Vyakaran (1979); Linguistic: Maithilik Udgam O Vikas (1968); Biography:

PRABODH NARAYAN SINGH  (1924-2005)

Prof. Parbodh Narayan Singh was born on February 12, 1924 at Partapur in Saharsa district. During Quit India movement he joined militant freedom struggle. He started his serious academic career initially with Sahityalankar (1945) and Sahityratna (1947) from Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, Prayag. He worked as a part of editorial team of a Hindi journal ‘Mel-milap’. Then he settled down in Kolkata first as an assistant editor of a Hindi daily Dainika Lokmanya and later as a Professor in the University.

He was married to Anima Singh (originally Anima Dhar from Mymensingh now in Bangladesh) on July 28th, 1950. Anima Singh worked as a team for various cause related to Maithili Language development and later on became a celebrated scholar in Maithili folklore studies. She later became a Prof. of Hindi at Lady Brabourne College, Calcutta. Ila Rani Singh, daughter of Prof. Singh from his first wife Bindu Devi, became an eminent poetess in Maithili as well as a scholar teacher in Maithili and Hindi, having taught at Bhagalpur and Calcutta University. She passed away in 1995.

Prabodh Babu edited a Maithili Monthly Mithilia Darshan since 1951, and also few anthologies like Caryariksa (1952), Tatka Gapp (1968). Later he also indulged in the theatre movement in Maithili. His translation of Qurratuleen Haider’s Patjhar Kii Awaaj (1997) from Urdu to Maithili brought him Sahitya Akademi award for translation in 2002. As a social organiser he was always at the forefront of the Maithili Language movement. He worked hard to set up the Akhil Bhaariya Mithila Sangh at Calcutta, jointly with Babusheb Chawdhury and Devnarayan Jha, and later he worked for Akhil Bhartiya Mithila Mahasabha – which was an umbrella organisation of numerous Maithili outfits.

His house at Kolkata always throbs with activities and many Maithili writes - which include prominent Maithili writers like Baidynath Mishra ‘Yatri’ (Nagarjun), Subhadra Jha, Jaykant Mishra, used to visit there. He was also associated with Maithili Rangmanch – an organisation devoted to the performing arts, Lok Sahitya Parishad – devoted to folklore studies of Mithila. He also set up a printing press for
Maithili publications. He was also a member of the advisory board of the Sahitya Akademi (New Delhi) and associated with the organisations like – Maithili Akademi (Patna), Rajendra Chhatra Bhawan (Calcutta), and Hanuman Mandir Sahitya Nyas (Calcutta). Now there has been a prize instituted on his name – Prabodh Sahitya Samman – since 2004.

MAYANAND MISHRA (1934-2013)

Prof. Mayanand Mishra was mainly a poet and a lyricist but he also wrote stories, novels and criticisms. Although, he has followed traditional style of literary writings he has also composed a number of well thought out poems following modern style. He is also famous for his satirical as well as psycho-analytical stories.

He was born at village Banainiya in Saharsa District. He completed M. A. in Hindi and Maithili respectively and joined the Chaupal programme of All India Radio at Patna for some time. Thereafter he joined Saharsa College, Saharsa as a lecturer of Maithili and retired from there. He was very active in Kavi Sammelans and stage performances. He was well acknowledged as the Mancha Sanchalak.

His important works are – Bhangak Lota (1951), Aagi Mom aa Pathat (1960), Chandrabindu (1983), Bihari Paat Paathar (1960), Dishantar. He also wrote a novel in serialised form in Mithila Mihir from 1965 entitled Khonta aa Chirai. It has not been published as a book. He also edited a critically acclaimed Maithili journal Abhivyanjana. It is believed that he also gave birth to new ism in Maithili literature – Abhivyanjanavad. He actively participated in the protests and demonstration for the demands of Maithili. He led the protest march at Patna in 1990s and also in Ranchi, Jharkhand.