

# NALANDA LITERATURE FESTIVAL 2025

21 -25 DECEMBER

Nalanda Lit Fest: The Thought Leaders  
and Manifesto





**MESSAGES  
FROM  
ESTEEMED DIGNITARIES**





THE DALAI LAMA

### MESSAGE

I extend my warm greetings and good wishes to the organizers and participants of the upcoming Nalanda Literature Festival, to be held from 21<sup>st</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> December 2025 at the Rajgir International Convention Centre in Bihar. I am happy to learn that this prestigious festival is being organized by Dhanu Bihar with the support of various State and Central Government organizations.

It gives me particular joy to know that this significant gathering is dedicated to celebrating learning, dialogue, and the timeless wisdom that has enriched human civilization through the ancient seat of Nalanda. For centuries, Nalanda shone as a radiant beacon of scholarship, compassion, and intellectual inquiry. The profound Buddhist heritage that flourished there—rooted in the principles of non-violence, universal responsibility, and profound philosophical reflection—continues to inspire people across the world today.

It is truly heartening to see this precious legacy being thoughtfully revisited, studied, and shared with younger generations through initiatives such as this Festival. I deeply appreciate the efforts of the organizers, scholars, writers, artists, students, and all participants who are contributing to this noble endeavour. By promoting literature, culture, and interfaith understanding, you are helping to nurture a more peaceful, reflective, and compassionate world. In our rapidly changing times, such spaces for learning and open dialogue are especially vital.

May the Nalanda Literature Festival serve as a gentle reminder of the great masters who once walked its paths, and may it strengthen our shared commitment to inner transformation, harmony, and the sincere pursuit of knowledge. I extend my prayers and blessings to all involved, and sincerely hope that this initiative brings benefit, joy, and inspiration to many.

December 17, 2025

आरिफ मोहम्मद खां  
Arif Mohammed Khan



सत्यमेव जयते

राज्यपाल, बिहार  
GOVERNOR OF BIHAR

बिहार लोक भवन  
पटना-800022  
BIHAR LOK BHAVAN  
PATNA-800022

19<sup>th</sup> December, 2025

### *Message*

It gives me immense pleasure to know that the Nalanda Literature Festival is being held from 21<sup>st</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> December at the Rajgir International Convention Centre, Bihar. It is heartening that an event of this scale celebrates literature, culture and India's rich civilizational wisdom.

Nalanda represents a glorious chapter in our intellectual heritage, having shaped global thought as an international centre of learning. Reviving this legacy through such platforms is both, timely and significant.

I commend the organizers for bringing together authors, thinkers, academicians and cultural practitioners from diverse fields. I am confident the festival will inspire young minds, strengthen cultural dialogue and reaffirm Bihar's historic role in knowledge dissemination.

I wish the event all success and hope it continues to grow year after year.

(Arif Mohammed Khan)

हरिवंश  
Harivansh



उप सभापति, राज्य सभा  
Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha

### Message

It is indeed a matter of great pleasure to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the organisers of the Nalanda Literature Festival being held from 21-25 December, 2025 at the Rajgir International Convention Centre. This celebration of ideas, creativity and intellectual exchange stands as a fitting tribute to the timeless spirit of Nalanda - a name that has symbolised global learning and enlightenment for centuries.

Literary festivals like this one play a vital role in fostering dialogue between cultures, generations, and disciplines. They celebrate the power of words to inspire thought, encourage creativity and bring people together. By providing a platform for writers, scholars and readers to engage in meaningful discussion, the Nalanda Literature Festival not only honours India's literary legacy but also strengthens the values of critical thinking and cultural harmony that our society cherishes.

Hosting this event in Rajgir, near the ancient seat of Nalanda University, adds profound symbolic value - linking our glorious past with a vibrant intellectual present. May this festival continue to grow as a beacon of creativity, knowledge and shared wisdom for years to come.

Warm congratulations once again to everyone involved in making this remarkable event a success.

  
(Harivansh)

New Delhi  
08.12.2025



**SOUTH AFRICAN HIGH COMMISSION**

B-18, Vasant Marg, Vasant Vihar, New Delhi - 110057 Tel.: 91-11-26149411-14

Respected, Mr. Ganga Kumar

Date: 04.12.2025

It gives me immense pleasure to extend my greetings and congratulations to all those involved in organising the Nalanda Literature Festival, to be held from 21<sup>st</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> December at the Rajgir International Convention Centre. The festival stands as a remarkable initiative that honours the cultural, intellectual and literary spirit of the ancient seat of Nalanda.

Events like this play a vital role in fostering meaningful conversations, encouraging creative expression and building bridges between communities. By bringing together writers, scholars, artists, students and cultural enthusiasts on a common platform, the festival beautifully reflects the collective effort to keep our literary traditions vibrant and relevant.

I commend the organizing committee for their unwavering dedication, meticulous planning and commitment to excellence. Their vision has allowed this festival to become a distinguished space where ideas flourish, perspectives broaden and collaboration thrives.

May this edition of the Nalanda Literature Festival inspire new ways of thinking, nurture emerging voices, and strengthen our shared belief in the transformative power of knowledge. I extend my heartfelt congratulations and wish the event resounding success in all its endeavours.

Yours sincerely,

Prof Anil Sooklal

High Commissioner

South African High Commission to India

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## About Nalanda Literature Festival (NLF)

The Nalanda Literature Festival (NLF) 2025 is a cultural, academic, and literary initiative inspired by the ancient legacy of Nalanda—one of the world’s earliest and greatest centres of learning. NLF seeks to revive India’s intellectual spirit by creating a vibrant platform where literature, language, heritage, and contemporary expression converge. Held at the Rajgir Convention Centre, the festival reflects the values of dialogue, scholarship, and creativity that defined ancient Nalanda, reinterpreted for a modern audience.

NLF 2025 is part of a comprehensive cultural movement supported by the Nalanda Literature Development Programme (NLDP), a multi-stage effort to promote regional languages, young writers, creative storytelling, and global cultural exchange. The festival expects over 50,000 attendees, featuring authors, poets, scholars, filmmakers, translators, and cultural practitioners from India and abroad.

## About Dhanu Bihar

Dhanu Bihar is an autonomous national trust committed to strengthening India’s cultural, linguistic, and artistic ecosystem. With a mission to preserve regional languages, empower youth, and promote knowledge-led development, the trust undertakes projects that build cultural awareness and facilitate lifelong learning.

Through initiatives spanning literature, folk arts, heritage preservation, community engagement, and policy advocacy, Dhanu Bihar plays a key role in reviving Bihar’s intellectual and artistic identity. The organization’s flagship project, the Nalanda Literature Development Programme, reflects its commitment toward nurturing a culturally confident and creatively empowered society.

## About the Nalanda Literature Development Programme (NLDP)

The Nalanda Literature Development Programme (NLDP) is a nine-month cultural initiative designed to cultivate literary engagement, regional language development, and intellectual discourse across Bihar and beyond. Spread from September 2025 to March 2026, the programme includes workshops, school engagements, masterclasses, translation labs, folk art interactions, and travelling exhibitions that connect communities directly with literature.

One of its key features is the ‘Bhasha Rath’, a travelling cultural exhibition that showcases India’s linguistic diversity and engages with students across districts. The programme culminates in the annual Nalanda Literature Festival, which serves as the grand platform bringing together the outcomes, voices, and creative outputs generated throughout the NLDP journey.

## Background

The Nalanda Literature Festival draws its inspiration from the timeless legacy of Nalanda Mahavihara, which for centuries stood as a global centre of wisdom and learning. Built upon this heritage, NLF aims to re-establish Bihar as a crucible of literature, language, and knowledge-driven dialogue. The festival acts as a bridge between ancient traditions and contemporary creativity, attracting participation from scholars, cultural workers, readers, and students worldwide.

The 2025 edition strengthens Bihar's cultural positioning by amplifying regional linguistic traditions such as Maithili, Bhojpuri, Magahi, Angika and Bajjika, while celebrating literary excellence from across India. A significant focus is placed on the literary richness of the North Eastern states, creating a meaningful cultural dialogue between two culturally vibrant regions.

## Concept & Importance

The festival is built on the foundational pillars of Legacy, Language, and Literature. 'Legacy' highlights the intellectual traditions anchored in Nalanda and Bihar's historical depth. 'Language' emphasizes India's linguistic wealth and the need for preservation, documentation, and creative revitalization. 'Literature' showcases a wide spectrum of voices—from classical poetry and folk narratives to modern fiction, digital writing, and diaspora storytelling.

NLF 2025 includes numerous curated sessions, panel discussions, book launches, poetry readings, cultural performances, youth conclaves, and academic forums. Through these formats, the festival aims to nurture literary talent, foster cross-cultural understanding, and spark conversations that shape India's present and future cultural landscape.

## Theme : States of Stories - Bihar & The North East

The theme for NLF 2025 underscores the rich literary traditions, lived histories, and storytelling cultures of Bihar and the North Eastern region. Both regions share a deep connection to oral narratives, multilingual identity, and cultural resilience. By bringing these two literary geographies onto a single platform, NLF encourages deeper understanding and collaboration, fostering translation efforts, folk exchanges, and academic dialogue.

This theme celebrates the diversity of voices—from tribal folklore and classical poetry to modern fiction and contemporary social narratives. It highlights the profound capacity of stories to capture identity, preserve memory, and connect communities across distances. Bihar and the Northeast, through their unique yet interconnected literary traditions, represent the 'states of stories' that shape the Indian imagination today.



# **ORGANIZING COMMITTEE**

## Sonal Mansingh, (Chairperson)

Padma Vibhushan Dr. Sonal Mansingh is an iconic Indian cultural personality, internationally acclaimed as an Indian classical dancer, guru, scholar, author, motivational speaker, and social activist. Renowned for blending philosophy, literature, and mythology into her performances, she has used dance to address issues like environmental protection, women's empowerment, and social justice. She has performed, lectured, and conducted workshops in over 90 countries, created path-breaking choreographies such as Devi Durga, Draupadi, and Mukti, and revived the ancient art of Natya-Katha. Founder-President of the Centre for Indian Classical Dances (1977), she has trained thousands of artists worldwide. She was the first classical dancer nominated to the Rajya Sabha (2018), selected as a Navaratna of the Swachh Bharat Mission (2014), and received the Srimanta Sankardeva Award (2023). She has served as Chairperson of the Sangeet Natak Akademi, trustee of IGNC, and visiting professor at IIT Kharagpur. Through her writings, including Incredible India – Classical Dances of India and A ZigZag Mind, she continues to inspire a global audience. Her mastery of classical Indian music, multilingual proficiency, and deep engagement with cultural philosophy reflect her vision of the performing arts as a force for harmony, coexistence, and the universal ethos of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam. Dr. Mansingh's life and work remain a testament to the transformative power of art in shaping society and fostering intercultural dialogue. Dances of India, and her recent writings were compiled into a book titled A ZigZag Mind.

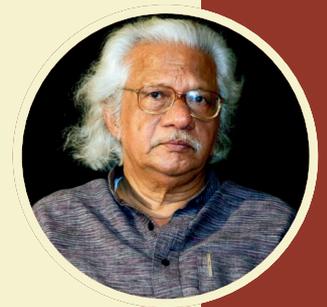


## Adoor Gopalakrishnan (Eminent Writer)

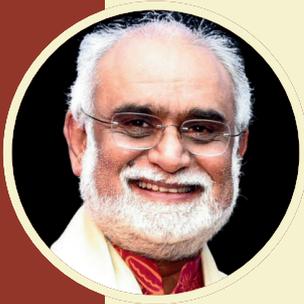
Padma Vibhushan Shri Adoor Gopalakrishnan is an acclaimed Indian filmmaker and screenwriter, widely regarded as a pioneer of New Indian Cinema. Known for his artistic vision and realistic storytelling, he has directed several modern classics, including Swayamvaram, Elippathayam, and Mathilukal.

Over a distinguished career spanning more than five decades, he has been honoured with the Dadasaheb Phalke Award, multiple National Film Awards, and prestigious international recognitions such as the French Legion of Honour – Commander of the Order of Arts and Letters and the British Film Institute Award.

Deeply rooted in Kerala's cultural landscape, his films are celebrated worldwide for their originality, narrative depth, and cinematic excellence.



## Sachchidanand Joshi (Member Secretary, IGNCA)



Dr. Sachchidanand Joshi, Member Secretary of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), New Delhi, is a distinguished academic, writer, and cultural thinker. A passionate advocate for the arts, he has been actively associated with theatre, television, and literature.

He is the author of three poetry collections and six short story collections, including the widely acclaimed *Putrikameshti* and *Maidan Mat Chhodna*. His literary work spans multiple genres — poetry, fiction, satire, drama, travelogues, essays, and art criticism. His publications also include two books on the history of journalism and the popular anthology *Sachchidanand Joshi Ki Lokpriya Kahaniyan*.

Dr. Joshi has edited several significant works, most notably *Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas*, a seven-volume compilation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speeches, and *Connecting Through Culture*, an influential book on India's soft power.

Over the course of his career, he has held several prestigious academic positions, including a Registrar at the age of 32 and a Vice Chancellor at 42. He also played a key role in establishing two journalism and mass communication universities in India.

## D. Aaliya (Festival Chairperson)



Ms. D. Aaliya is a successful entrepreneur and social activist from Bihar, dedicated to the preservation and promotion of art, culture, and community welfare. She is deeply committed to empowering marginalised communities, especially women and children.

As the Managing Trustee of *Dhanu Bihar* and the *Shining Muskan Foundation*, she plays a pivotal role in implementing a wide range of welfare initiatives focused on education, healthcare, rural development, and cultural preservation. Under her leadership, *Dhanu Bihar* has significantly expanded its outreach, ensuring that individuals from all backgrounds have access to essential resources for a better and more dignified future.

## FESTIVAL ADVISOR Harshvardhan Neotia



Shri Harshvardhan Neotia is the founder of one of India's earliest joint-sector companies, *Bengal Ambuja Housing Development Limited*, established in partnership with the Government of West Bengal. His maiden project, *Udayan*, was recognised by the Government of India as a Model Housing Project, marking a milestone in socially inclusive urban development.

He serves as a Member of the Board of Governors of *IIM Calcutta* and as a Board Member of the *Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA)*, Ministry of Culture, New Delhi. In recognition of his pioneering contributions to social housing, he was conferred the *Padma Shri* in 1999.

Shri Neotia has also been honoured with the *Young Presidents' Organization (YPO) Legacy of Honor Award*. He serves as the *Honorary Consul of Israel in West Bengal*, reflecting his strong international engagement.

A passionate advocate for India's cultural heritage, he remains deeply committed to promoting and preserving the country's rich artistic and cultural legacy.

## Pankaj KP Shreyaskar

Dr. Pankaj KP Shreyaskar, a career bureaucrat from the 2000 batch, has served in several key positions across the Government of India. He is currently posted as Joint Secretary, Ministry of Education, Government of India.

Dr. Shreyaskar is also a noted author, columnist, and poet. He has written three books, over 50 articles, and numerous poems. His poetic voice in Hindi was first recognised in 1996 when one of his poems was published in Kadambini, a renowned Hindi magazine.

During his university years in Delhi, he authored several ballets, including Toota Ye Vishwas Kyun, which was performed by a prominent Kathak danseuse of the city. His first collection of poems is expected to be published soon.



## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

### Ganga Kumar (Festival Director)

Shri Ganga Kumar is a career bureaucrat and social activist, deeply committed to the preservation and promotion of India's cultural heritage. An M.Phil. graduate from the University of Delhi and a gold medallist in his post-graduation, he has made significant contributions to heritage conservation in Bihar.

He is the author of the four-volume series Bihar Ke Sanskritik Dharohar, as well as Kalpvirksh and Kalaazar Menace in Bihar, works that collectively address themes of cultural heritage, environmental awareness, and public health challenges.

In recognition of his remarkable contributions across engineering, art, and culture, Shri Kumar has been honoured with more than ten state and national-level awards, including the prestigious Visvesvaraya Memorial Award.



### Sanjay Kumar (Executive Director)

Shri Sanjay Kumar is a highly accomplished civil servant and social activist, currently serving as a Joint Secretary in the Government of India. He brings extensive experience across diverse sectors, including health, finance, law, administration, and technology-driven governance, having held critical leadership roles throughout his career.

In addition to his administrative contributions, Shri Kumar has been actively engaged in various forums dedicated to culture, education, and health, using social platforms and public initiatives to promote awareness and positive social impact.





## Vinod Anupam

Shri Vinod Anupam is a distinguished film and art critic, honoured with the National Film Award for Best Film Critic (2002). He has served on the jury for the National Film Awards and Indian Panorama, and has been a member of the Innovation Committee of the National Museum of Indian Cinema.

A former Secretary of the Bihar Sangeet Natak Akademi, he holds a Master's degree in Hindi and a Film Appreciation diploma from FTII, Pune. His accolades include the State Award for Best Youth Writer (1988).

Shri Anupam has edited Bihar ke 100 Ratn and Bihar Vihar, and is a regular columnist for several leading publications, contributing incisive commentary on cinema, culture, and the arts.



## Vinay Kumar

Shri Vinay Kumar is an artist, editor, and cultural activist, currently serving as the Secretary of the Bodhgaya Biennale and Honorary Editor of Canvas. He is also the founder of Canvas, a trust dedicated to the promotion of visual arts.

He has previously held several significant positions, including Deputy Secretary of the Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi, and Regional Director of ICCR, Bihar. He has also served as a Member of the Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi, and the Bihar Lalit Kala Akademi. In addition, he is the editor of Lalitya, the official bulletin of the Bihar Lalit Kala Akademi.

Shri Kumar has been actively engaged in art activism since 1988, curating numerous exhibitions in Patna and Delhi. He is a founder member of the Nand Lal Bose Nukkad Art Gallery, Patna.

A prolific writer, he has been contributing writings on art and culture to Janshakti, India Today, Outlook, The Times of India, and Navbharat Times since 1988. He has authored three books on contemporary and folk arts, further cementing his role as a leading voice in India's art and cultural landscape.



## Rajiv Ranjan Dwivedi

Shri Rajiv Ranjan Dwivedi has been practicing law for over 26 years and became an Advocate-on-Record in 2010. He has handled a wide range of cases before the Supreme Court of India, several High Courts (including Delhi, Patna, Chandigarh, and Kolkata), as well as the NCLT, NCLAT, DRT, and various consumer forums.

He is empanelled with several major banks and institutions, including the Central Bank of India, Bank of Baroda, Punjab National Bank, Canara Bank, Reliance Group entities, BSES, and HUDCO.

Shri Dwivedi is also closely associated with multiple cultural organisations and actively works to promote the cultural values and heritage of India.

## FESTIVAL CURATOR

### Pankaj Dubey

Shri Pankaj Dubey is a pop-culture storyteller, bilingual novelist with Penguin Random House, columnist, podcaster, and curator of leading literary festivals. A former broadcaster with the BBC World Service, London, he now hosts the YouTube show Small Towns Big Stories.

He is the bestselling author of several popular novels, including *What a Loser!*, *Ishqiyapa*, *Love Curry*, *Trending in Love*, and his latest Penguin release, *One String Attached*.

Pankaj Dubey is also the founder of the Sadak Chhaap Film Festival, a unique street film festival for children from slums and villages. He is widely recognised for bringing small-town narratives to national and global platforms through his writing, films, and creative initiatives.



## FESTIVAL COORDINATOR

### F. Azzam

Shri Faroghe Azzam (Azmi) is a Patna-based cultural activist and musician. He is the founder of Community Jamming, a platform that brought together underground musicians in Bihar and popularised busking and public jamming, fostering a vibrant band culture in Patna.

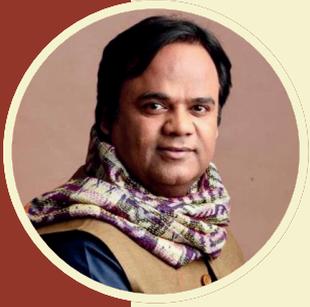
Azmi has collaborated with organisations such as Oxfam India, Save the Children, and Bihar Ek Virasat. In 2021, his work featured in Shantanu Moitra's series *Songs of the River*. He has also produced a music album based on poems by Bihar's poets and supports filmmakers and musicians through music and video production.

Over the last three years, Azmi has directed several documentaries, including *Bihar ke Qisse*, which received widespread acclaim. Since 2022, he has been leading Patna Beats, an initiative aimed at redefining Bihar's cultural identity.





# **AUTHOR'S SECTION**



## Aalok Shrivastav

Shri Aalok Shrivastav is a Hindi poet, lyricist, and journalist celebrated for his lyrical depth and evocative expression. His debut collection *Aameen* won the Dushyant Kumar Award and the International Pushkin Award, making him one of the youngest Indians to achieve such recognition. His second collection, *Aafreen*, was launched at the World Hindi Conference in South Africa. His ghazals, sung by legends such as Jagjit Singh, Amitabh Bachchan, and Shubha Mudgal, have been translated into multiple languages, including Russian and Japanese. He has been honoured with the Katha Hindi UK Ghazal Award and was felicitated at the British Parliament for his contribution to Hindi literature and ghazals.



## Abhay K

Shri Abhay K. is an Indian diplomat, poet, artist, and editor, known for his nationally bestselling book *Nalanda: How it Changed the World* and several poetry collections including *Celestial*, *Monsoon*, and *Stray Poems*. He has edited major anthologies such as *The Book of Bihari Literature* and *The Bloomsbury Book of Great Indian Love Poems*. His work has been recognized internationally, earning the SAARC Literary Award and the KLF Poetry Book of the Year Award for his translations of Kalidasa's *Meghaduta* and *Ritusamhara*. His poems have appeared in over 100 literary magazines, and his "Earth Anthem" has been translated into more than 150 languages. His artwork on Buddhist philosophy has been exhibited in prestigious museums across India.



## Abhay Sinha

Shri Abhay Sinha is a renowned film and television producer, founder and managing director of Yashi Films Pvt Ltd, the President of Indian Motion Pictures Producers Association (IMPPA) and Vice President of International Federation of Film Producers' Associations (FIAPF). He has played an instrumental role in the growth and development of the Indian film industry and has been involved in all major film festivals like the Cannes Film Festival, WAVES Summit etc.

## Abhishek Anand

Dr. Abhishek Anand has done MPhil & PhD in ancient Indian history from Jawaharlal Nehru University, earning the highest grades consistently. He is currently working as a Senior Research Fellow at the Bharat Ki Soch Foundation, inspired by ancient Indian wisdom. The work involves researching in ancient Indian wisdom/knowledge systems & traditions to address contemporary issues.

He has also worked at the Dept. of History, Indira Gandhi National Open Univ. (IGNOU) Main Campus for four years. His academic interest & expertise lie in the textual rigour of ancient India foregrounded by the Shastric literature. He has widely published a series of research papers & chapters in edited books on the same.



## Aditi Maheshwari

Ms. Aditi Maheshwari is an editor, publisher, and educationist. She holds master's degrees in English Literature (Hansraj College, Delhi University) and Business Management (Strathclyde Business School, Scotland), and an M.Phil. in Social Sciences (Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai). She also holds a diploma in Public Relations and Advertising and is currently pursuing the Executive Programme in AI and Digital Marketing from IIM Calcutta.

She is the CEO of the Vani Prakashan Group and Managing Trustee of the Vani Foundation. She is the Chairperson (Jury) of the Iron Lady of the Hills Award, Dehradun Literature Festival. She has published white papers in Scroll, Publishing Perspectives, The Book Review, and Indian Publishing. She is a recipient of the Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres (Knight of Arts and Letters) by the Government of France. She has been invited to international editors' exchange programmes organized by the German Book Office, Swedish Book Office, Oslo Literature Festival, Polish Book Institute, and French Book Office.



## Ajay Dubey

Prof. Ajay Dubey is a senior faculty member at the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. His research interests include Diaspora Studies, Foreign Affairs, and African Studies. He has traveled widely, served as a visiting professor in several foreign universities, authored multiple books and articles on international affairs, and supervised more than a dozen doctoral theses.

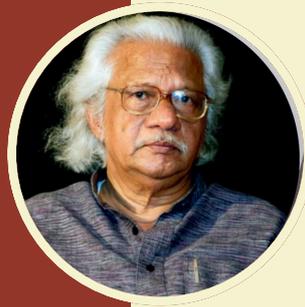




## Ajit Pradhan

Dr. Ajit Pradhan, a pioneering cardiac surgeon, founded the Navras School of Performing Arts (NSPA), a leading NGO promoting Hindustani classical music and other arts. Under his leadership, NSPA has organized over 155 free public concerts. He also initiated the Patna Literature Festival in 2013, followed by its second and third editions, and India's first "Festival of Literature on Music," whose second edition recently featured 42 musicians.

During the lockdown, Dr. Pradhan launched weekly online raga-based concerts for 1.5 years, supporting classical musicians and receiving national recognition and wide viewership.



## Adoor Gopalakrishnan

Padma Vibhushan Shri Adoor Gopalakrishnan is an acclaimed Indian filmmaker and screenwriter regarded as a pioneer of New Indian Cinema. Known for his artistic and realistic storytelling, he has directed classics like *Swayamvaram*, *Elippathayam* and *Mathilukal*. Over his five-decade career, he has won the Dadasaheb Phalke Award, multiple National Film Awards and international honors including the British Film Institute Award. His films rooted in Kerala's culture, have earned global recognition for their human depth and cinematic excellence.



## Akhilendra Mishra

Shri Akhilendra Mishra is an Indian film and television character actor best known for his role as Kror Singh in the 1990s Doordarshan fantasy television series *Chandrakanta*. His other notable works include the character of Mirchi Seth in the 1999 critically acclaimed film *Sarfarosh*. He has authored *Abhinay*, *Abhineta aur Adhyatma*. He is recipient of many awards including Atal Samman and National Award for Outstanding Contribution to Indian Theatre, Television and Cinema.



## Amar Mitra

Shri Amar Mitra is a Bengali fiction writer and recipient of the Sahitya Akademi Award (2006) for his novel *Dhruboputra* and the Bankim Award (2001) for *Aswacharit*. His works, including *Aswacharit*, *Dhanapatir Char* and *Radcliff Line*, explore history, folklore and social realities. In 2022, he became the first Indian language writer to win the O. Henry Prize for his short story *Gnaoburo*. He represented India at the First Forum of Asian Writers in Kazakhstan (2019) and has been a featured speaker at festivals like the Times LitFest.

## Ami Ganatra

Ms. Ami Ganatra is an alumna of the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad (IIMA). A management professional, she is also a dedicated yoga practitioner, certified yoga instructor, and a student of Sanskrit and Indian knowledge systems. Her three books—Mahabharata Unravelling 1, Mahabharata Unravelling 2, and Ramayana Unravelling—aim to return to the original itihasa texts to present their stories, learnings, and nuances accurately, rather than retelling or reimagining them. With the same intention, she has recently published three illustrated books for children: Avadhut and His Teachers, My Friend Arjun, and My Sister Devi.



## Amit Kumar Pandey

Shri Amit Kumar Pandey, PhD (Robotics & AI) is a globally recognized scientist, innovator and thought leader committed to advancing social innovation through technology. He is President of Socients AI and Robotics, France and has held leadership roles at SoftBank Robotics Europe, Rovial Space and Hanson Robotics (the company which created Sophia Robot). With 60+ publications and 100+ invited talks worldwide. His honors include Top 3 PhD in Robotics in Europe, the Innovation Leadership Award, Global Excellence Award and Achievers Award.



## Amit Lodha

Shri Amit Lodha is a 1998-batch Indian Police Service officer of the Bihar cadre, currently serving as Additional Director General of the State Crime Records Bureau, Bihar. He has received multiple honours, including the Police Medal for Gallantry, President's Medal for Meritorious Service, Internal Security Medal, and Utkrisht Seva Medal.

He co-founded the portal BharatKeVeer.gov.in with actor Akshay Kumar. He is the author of three bestselling books—Bihar Diaries, Life in the Uniform, and Police Affairs.



## Amitabh Kant

Shri Amitabh Kant is a retired IAS officer who served as CEO of NITI Aayog and as India's G20 Sherpa. He is renowned for steering transformative national campaigns such as Make in India, Startup India, Incredible India, and Ease of Doing Business.

He is the author of influential books including Branding India – An Incredible Story, Incredible India 2.0, Made in India: 75 Years of Business and Enterprise, and How India Scaled Mt. G20: The Inside Story of the G20. He has written more than 500 articles in leading Indian and international publications. Widely regarded as one of India's foremost policy innovators, his vision has significantly shaped India's development and global positioning.



## Anantashutosh Dwivedi



Shri Anantashutosh Dwivedi is the President of the World Heritage Olympiad and Chairman of the Heritage India Olympiad Development Federation. He is the founder and current Director General of Heritage Society. He also serves as a visiting faculty member at the National Institute of Fashion Technology (Ministry of Textiles, Government of India).

He has been associated with the Archaeological Survey of India and has led several archaeological projects in various capacities. He directed the Lari Archaeological Excavation and has participated in numerous other excavations and explorations in Bihar. He has authored two books and published several research papers, book chapters, and edited volumes on heritage and culture.

## Anil Sharma



Shri Anil Sharma 'Joshi' is a writer, thinker, and former Vice-Chairman of the Kendriya Hindi Shikshan Mandal. He has served as a Hindi & Culture Attaché in the UK (2000–05) and as Second Secretary (Hindi) and Cultural Centre Director in Fiji (2015–19). With 27 years of experience in the Central Translation Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, he has played a significant role in promoting Hindi worldwide.

He has authored poetry collections such as *Morche Par* and *Neend Kahaan Hain*, and has edited several important literary works. He is also Chairman of *Vaishvik Hindi Pariwar*, which connects Hindi scholars across more than 75 countries.

## Anuradha Kanniganti



Dr. Anuradha Kanniganti is a researcher and lecturer based in France, affiliated with the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales (INALCO), Paris. She holds a Ph.D. in Statistics and training in linguistic anthropology and Indian studies. Her research focuses on multilingualism, vernacular economies, and language-based inequality in India.

Her work examines how the dominance of English and the marginalization of regional languages affect educational access and economic mobility in multilingual societies. Dr. Kanniganti's contributions draw from statistical analysis, ethnographic methods, and policy-oriented insights.

## Aquil Ahmad

Prof. Aquil Ahmad is an author, researcher, and cultural administrator. With over 30 years of teaching and scholarship, he has served as Director of the National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language (NCPUL) and the National Council for Promotion of Sindhi Language (NCPSL). He is a Professor of Urdu at Satyawati College.

He has authored several acclaimed works, guided numerous research projects, and published widely in Urdu literature and linguistics. His contributions to Urdu language, literature, and cultural promotion have earned him several prestigious awards.



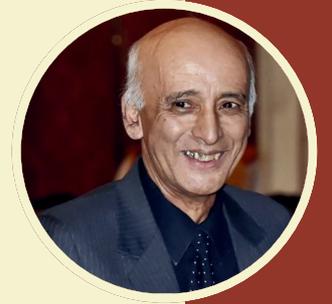
## Ambika Chopra

Based in France, Ms Ambika Chopra brings a unique blend of experience across the education sector, new technologies, and the business ecosystem. With a foundation in Education and an MBA in Marketing and Business from Paris School of Business, France, she works at the intersection of artificial intelligence, social robotics, and education to develop innovative approaches for learning, skill development, language teaching, and cultural awareness. She is deeply engaged in advancing Indo-French collaboration in education, innovation, and emerging technologies. As the Founder and CEO of ShaktiNova, France, she focuses on creating inclusive, future-ready educational solutions that connect pedagogy, technology, and global collaboration.



## Arup Kumar Dutta

Padma Shri Shri Arup Kumar Dutta is an internationally acclaimed author, journalist, and social commentator from Assam, regarded as a pioneer of English-language writing in Northeast India. Over five decades, he has authored 40 books including *The Anagarika's Swansong* (2009), *The Bag* (2018), *The Brahmaputra* (2001), *Unicornis* (1991), *Cha Garam – The Tea Story* (2001), *The Roving Minstrel* (2002), *The Ahoms* (2022), *Saint; Saviour; Soul; Society* (2024), *The Kaziranga Trail* (1978), and *The Blind Witness* (1983). His works span fiction, non-fiction, adventure writing, and satire. He has received the Padma Shri (2018), honorary D.Litt. degrees from Dibrugarh and Gauhati Universities, and the Madhavdev Award (2022).



## Arvind Mohan

Shri Arvind Mohan is a journalist, writer, and translator with nearly forty years of experience, having worked with Jansatta, India Today, Hindustan, Amar Ujala, and ABP News. He has authored books on Gandhi's Champaran Satyagraha, Gandhi's methods of communication, and patterns of labor migration.

He has translated over a dozen books, including works by Rajmohan Gandhi, Jean Drèze, Sachchidanand Sinha, Vimal Jalan, and Ashutosh Varshney. He has also been active in social and political movements through organizations such as Chhatra Yuva Sangharsh Samiti, Samata Sangathan, and Samajwadi Jan Parishad.



## Asim Siddiqui



Prof. Asim Siddiqui is a Professor of English at Aligarh Muslim University. His doctoral thesis focused on American novelist Mark Twain. His research interests include South Asian Literature (in English, Urdu, and Hindi), Literary Theory, 19th and 20th-century English and American fiction, Film Studies, and Research Methods in the Humanities. His recent books include *Muslim Identity in Hindi Cinema: Poetics and Politics of Genre and Representation* (Routledge, 2025), *Shahryar* (Sahitya Akademi, 2021), and the co-authored *A History of Aligarh Muslim University 1920–2020* (Bennett and Coleman, 2021). He has published with Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press, Routledge, Orient Blackswan, Sahitya Akademi, Viva, Bloomsbury, and Springer. He was a Fulbright Fellow at New York University (2007).

He contributes regularly to newspapers, journals, and online platforms such as *The Guardian*, *The Hindu*, *Hindustan Times*, *The Statesman*, *Scroll*, *NDTV*, *Frontline*, *India Today*, *Cafe Dissensus*, *The Book Review*, *Biblio*, and *Indian Literature*. He translates from Urdu and Hindi into English, with recent translations published by Routledge and Sahitya Akademi.

He has also hosted a fortnightly webcast on English books on Urdu literature and language for Anjuman Taraqqi Urdu Hind.

## Ashutosh Agnihotri



Shri Ashutosh Agnihotri is an Indian poet, writer, and 1999-batch IAS officer. He currently serves as Chairman and Managing Director of the Food Corporation of India and Chairman of the Central Warehousing Corporation. With extensive experience across administration, finance, urban development, skill development, and transport, he has held key roles in both state and central governments, primarily in the Assam–Meghalaya cadre. A passionate writer, he has authored several books, including *Piece of Mind*, *Colours of My Wall*, *Spandan*, *Kuch Adhure Shabd*, *The Light of Love and Other Stories*, and *Looking at the Skies & Beyond*, as well as Assamese translations and Hindi poetry collections.

## Bhairab Lal Das



Shri Bhairab Lal Das is a prominent writer and thinker from Bihar, renowned for his extensive work on Mahatma Gandhi and Indian history. He has authored notable books such as *Gotradhyaya*, *History of Kaithi Script*, *Batukeshwar Dutt and the Revolutionary Movement*, *Gandhi's Creative Journey in Champaran*, and *Pandit Rajkumar Shukla, the Third Guru of Mahatma Gandhi*, among others. He has also edited over 30 books and published more than 20 research papers. Currently, he serves as Secretary of Maithili Sahitya Sansthan, Patna, and Convener of INTACH Bihar and Patna Chapter, as well as a member of the General Council of INTACH, New Delhi.

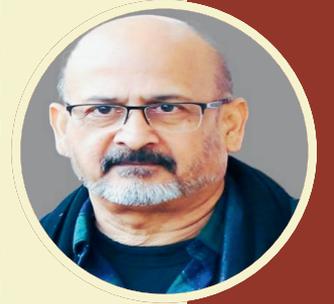
## D. Venkat Rao

Prof. D. Venkat Rao teaches at Nalanda University, Rajgir. He completed postdoctoral research at the University of Chicago, the University of California, Berkeley, and the University of Washington, Seattle. He has taught at various universities in India as well as at the University of Washington in the USA. In addition to books in English and Telugu, he has published several articles in national and international journals.

His recent works include *Envisioning Voice and the Aphasic Ears: Of Sanskrit Reflective Traditions Today* (Bloomsbury, 2025), *India, Europe and the Question of Cultural Difference* (Routledge, 2021), *Performative Reflections of Indian Traditions: Towards a Liveable Learning* (Springer, 2021), and *Critical Humanities from India: Contexts, Issues, Futures* (Routledge, 2018). His other publications include *Cultures of Memory in South Asia* (Springer, 2014), *In Citations: Readings in Area Studies of Culture* (1999), and a Telugu translation of Ashis Nandy's *The Intimate Enemy* (2005).

Earlier, he translated into English a Telugu intellectual autobiography titled *The Last Brahmin* (2007, 2012, 2017). He has also authored a full-length work on literary-cultural criticism in Telugu, titled *Saamskritika Chaanakyaalu* (2005).

His areas of interest include literary and cultural studies, image studies, epic traditions, visual cultures, comparative thought, translation, and mnemocultures. He has designed several courses that interface culture, technology, literary studies, cultural studies, and Sanskrit traditions. He developed a research programme under the rubric of *Critical Humanities* and is the editor of the Routledge book series *Critical Humanities Across Cultures*.



## Devdutt Pattanaik

Shri Devdutt Pattanaik is a Mumbai-based mythologist, author, illustrator, and speaker who has written over 50 books and 1,000 columns on the relevance of sacred stories, symbols, and rituals in modern life. His bestsellers include *My Gita*, *Business Sutra*, and his illustrated retellings of the *Mahabharata*, *Ramayana*, *Bhagavata*, and Greek epics. He is also known for his TV show *Devlok on Epic*, his radio show on *Mirchi*, and his columns in *Dainik Bhaskar*, *Deccan Herald*, *Tribune*, *Indian Express*, and *Economic Times*.





## Divya Mathur

Ms. Divya Mathur, F.R.S.A., is the founder of Vatayan–Europe, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, and a founding member of the Asha Foundation. She is an award-winning Hindi writer with eight story collections, eight poetry collections, three novels, children’s literature, and edited anthologies to her credit.

Her works, taught in universities and researched in nearly fifty theses, have earned her honours such as the Padma Bhushan Moturi Satyanarayana Lekhan Samman, Vanmali Katha Samman, and the Arts Achiever Award (Arts Council England). Recognized among the “Inspirational Women of the 21st Century,” she is a prominent voice in Hindi literature and diaspora writing.

## Dinesh Kumar Mali



Shri Dinesh Kumar Mali, a resident of Sirohi district of Rajasthan, has made his special identity in the literary world as a writer, poet, translator and famous critic. He is particularly adept at translating Odia and English literature into Hindi. He wrote his first book, 'Na Hanyate' as a tribute to his father. He has done important work on the works of eminent Hindi poet Udbhrant, Dr. Vimala Bhandari, Prof. Prabha Pant, English, Prof. Nandini Sahu and former Coal Secretary Shri Prakash Parakh. He has been the guest editor of the Gandhi special issue of the famous Hindi magazine 'Duniya in Dinon' edited by Dr. Sudhir Saxena and the Haldhar Nag special issue of the magazine 'Urvashi' edited by Dr. Rajesh Srivastava. He has played a vital role in designing the academic program/curriculum through his chapters in IGNOU Course under guidance of Prof. Nandini Sahu.

Three works translated from Odia to Hindi namely 'Pak Shivs', 'Vishadeshwari', 'Rape' and other stories have been translated into Kannada and one work 'Mahishasur ka Mouh' into Manipuri. His original work, 'Cheen Mein Saat Din' has been translated into Odia under the title 'Chinare Saat Din' by renowned Hindi to Odia language translator Kanak Manjari Sahu. 'Radha Madhav - Ek Samagra Chintan' is translated as 'Radha Madhav - A Holistic Contemplation' in English by Ritu Bhatnagar, 'Treta: Ek Samyak Mulyankan' is translated in English as 'Treta: An Apposite Evaluation' by Ritu Bhatnagar.

## Ganga Kumar

Shri Ganga Kumar is a career bureaucrat and social activist, deeply committed to the preservation and promotion of India's cultural heritage. An M.Phil. graduate from the University of Delhi and a gold medallist in his post-graduation, he has made significant contributions to heritage conservation in Bihar.

He is the author of the four-volume series Bihar Ke Sanskritik Dharohar, as well as Kalpvirksh and Kalaazar Menace in Bihar, works that collectively address themes of cultural heritage, environmental awareness, and public health challenges.

In recognition of his remarkable contributions across engineering, art, and culture, Shri Kumar has been honoured with more than ten state and national-level awards, including the prestigious Visvesvaraya Memorial Award.



## Ganesh N. Devy

Prof. G. N. Devy is a critic, cultural activist, and author of over a hundred works in Marathi, Gujarati, and English in the fields of literary criticism, education, linguistics, anthropology, and history. He founded the Bhasha Research Centre and the Adivasi Academy, and he also led the monumental People's Linguistic Survey of India, which documented 780 living languages. His acclaimed works include After Amnesia, Of Many Heroes, Nomad Called Thief, and India as a Linguistic Civilization. A recipient of prestigious awards including the Padma Shri and the Sahitya Akademi Award, he is recognized nationally and internationally for his contributions to literature and culture.



## Haldhar Nag

Padma Shri Dr. Haldhar Nag is a Sambalpuri poet and writer from Bargarh, Odisha, India. Popularly known as "Lok Kabi Ratna" (meaning "folk poet gem"). He was awarded the Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian award of India by Government of India in 2016. In 2019, He was awarded an honorary doctorate in literature by Sambalpur University

In the year 2020, translations of "Haldhar Nag Ka kavya- Sansar" into Hindi from Sambalpuri by renowned Hindi writer and translator Dinesh Kumar Mali were released and intensively discussed by participants from India and abroad during a two-day international seminar organized by Professor Jaishankar Babu, head of the Department of Hindi, Pondicherry University, under the guidance of its vice-chancellor Professor Gurmeet Singh.

In 2021, under the joint editorship of Professor Jaishankar Babu and translator Dinesh Kumar Mali, the book "'Haldhar ke Lok-sahitya par vimarsh'" and the book "Ramayan Prasangon par Haldhar ke Kavya aur yugin Vimarsh " were translated by Dinesh Kumar Mali based on Ramayana contexts and published by Pandulipi Prakashan from New Delhi.



## Hrishikesh Sulabh



Shri Hrishikesh Sulabh is a noted Hindi writer, playwright, and theatre critic. His works draw deeply from rural life and folk traditions, and he is especially credited with bringing the Bidesiya style of theatre back into the mainstream. Among his well-known works are the story collections *Vasant ke Hatyare*, *Agnileek*, and *Daataa Peer*, along with several plays that reflect both social concerns and cultural depth. Over the years, he has been honoured with the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (2019), the Indu Sharma International Katha Samman (2010), and many other literary recognitions.

## Ilaria Torre



Dr. Ilaria Torre is an Assistant Professor of Interaction Design at Chalmers University of Technology, Sweden. Her research explores how humans and robots communicate—both verbally and non-verbally—including the design of gender-ambiguous voices and other cues to improve trust and inclusivity. Dr. Torre holds a PhD from the University of Plymouth (UK) and has held postdoctoral positions at Trinity College Dublin and KTH Royal Institute of Technology before joining Chalmers in 2023.

Her recent work includes investigations into how robot voice design affects trust, how humans perceive robotic cues in shared spaces and how to avoid reinforcing stereotypes in robot design. By combining linguistics, cognitive science, and interaction design, Dr. Torre brings a fresh, interdisciplinary perspective to human-robot interaction and inclusive technology.

## Jay Ram Singh



Shri Jay Ram Singh is a former Indian Air Force veteran with 26 years of distinguished service, and is now serving as Rajbhasha Officer in the Indian Audit and Accounts Department, Mumbai. Originally from Vaishali, Bihar, he pursued higher education alongside his military career, earning multiple postgraduate degrees. A prolific critic and writer in Hindi and Bajjika, he has authored over 100 short stories, poems, and a forthcoming novel in Bajjika. He is also a classical singer and composer, with a published bhajan album to his credit. Known for his humility, he is deeply committed to preserving India's cultural and literary heritage.

## K.C. Lalthlamuani



Prof. K.C. Lalthlamuani is head of the Department of English and Culture Studies at Mizoram University with 30 years of teaching experience. Specializing in Women and Gender Studies, Postcolonial Literature, and Interdisciplinary Studies, she has guided numerous M.Phil. and Ph.D. scholars and presented papers at national and international conferences in India, Thailand, and Switzerland. She also serves as Editor of the *Journal of Literature and Cultural Studies*.

## Kishore Keshav

Shri Kishore Keshav is a versatile cultural practitioner with nearly four decades of experience as a poet, writer, translator, and full-time journalist. He is also founder member-director of the Maithili theatre group Bhangima and Joint Secretary of the Patliputra Natya Mahotsav. He is actively engaged in literature, culture, theatre, radio, television, and film. He is also a skilled announcer, dubbing artist, and theatre trainer with specialized expertise in Maithili language, literature, and theatre.

He has written scripts for around a dozen TV documentaries/serials and acted in about two dozen teleplays. He is a seasoned theatre professional who has directed two dozen plays and designed for over 125 productions. He has notably dubbed Roshan Seth's portrayal of Jawaharlal Nehru in the Maithili version of Bharat Ek Khoj. He has also translated seven acclaimed plays into Maithili and published eleven books of poetry, criticism, and edited works.



## Muzaffer Ali Shahmiri

Prof. Muzaffer Ali Shahmiri is a scholar, poet, and author with over four decades of teaching and research experience. He has served in various administrative posts including the Vice-Chancellor of Dr. Abdul Haq Urdu University, Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh. Author and editor of several acclaimed works on Urdu poetry, criticism, and translation, he has received numerous honors including the Sir Syed Award and Bharat Ratna Maulana Abul Kalam Azad National Award. He is a respected figure whose contributions have left a lasting imprint on Urdu language and culture.



## Kiran Bhat

Shri Kiran Bhat is an Indian-American author, traveller, and polyglot. He is known as the author of *awe of the forsaken world...*, and has published books in five different languages. His writing has appeared in journals such as *The Caravan*, *Outlook India*, *Sahitya Akademi*, *The Kenyon Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, *The Colorado Review*, *3:AM Magazine*, *Cordite Poetry Review*, *SOFTBLOW*, and many other publications.

He has visited 177 countries, lived in 25 cities around the world, and speaks 12 languages. He currently lives in Mumbai, where he serves as the Co-chair of the Environmental Sustainability Subcommittee of the Global Indian Council.



## KK Muhammed

Padma Shri K. K. Muhammed is a renowned Indian archaeologist and former Regional Director (North) of the Archaeological Survey of India. He is credited with key discoveries such as the Ibadat Khana at Fatehpur Sikri and major Buddhist monuments, along with restoring the Bateshwar temple complex and 46 monuments in Delhi. For his outstanding contributions to archaeology and heritage conservation, he was awarded the Padma Shri in 2019.

## K. N. Shrivastava

Shri K.N. Shrivastava, joined Indian Administrative Service in 1978 and was allotted Karnataka Cadre. He held several important positions in Karnataka State in Power, Irrigation, Urban Transportation and Mining sectors. His most notable achievement was implementation of an Irrigation and Power Project across Krishna River which has provided irrigation to about a million hectares of agriculture lands and is generating 1000 megawatt of power. In the Central Government, he worked in the ministries of Civil Aviation, External Affairs and Culture. He contributed immensely to the development of airport infrastructure all over the country. He retired from the post of Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs in 2014.

Post retirement from Government Service, he worked as a member of National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and as a Judge in Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT). He joined as Director of India International Centre, New Delhi in January 2019 and is continuing as such. He has vivid knowledge about art and culture of the country and works extensively on Bhojpuri language, art and culture.

## Kuladhar Saikia

Dr. Kuladhar Saikia, a Sahitya Akademi Award awardee and former Director General of Police (DGP), Assam, has authored 25 short story collections, six plays, one novel, and two telefilms. "If a River and Other Stories" and "Painting of the Sky and Other Stories" are among his short story collections in English. Some of his books have been published by the Sahitya Akademi and the National Book Trust. He is a regular contributor to literary magazines and national dailies.

His unique storytelling craft, marked by an inward journey into the complex mental universe of his characters, has earned him a distinctive space in contemporary fiction writing. In addition to being invited to prominent literature festivals, he has represented India as a panelist at the London Book Fair.

A former President of the Asam Sahitya Sabha, Dr. Saikia holds an MA from the Delhi School of Economics and PhD from IIT. He taught Economics at Hindu College, University of Delhi, before entering public service. He has been a guest speaker at IIMs, INSEAD (Paris and Singapore), the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy (National University of Singapore), and several other institutions.

A recipient of the Katha Prize for Best Fiction, Dr. Saikia is a General Council Member of the Sahitya Akademi. He was a Fulbright Fellow at Pennsylvania State University and has served as a consultant to the World Bank in Washington, D.C. Presently, he is a Distinguished Senior Fellow at the Delhi School of Public Policy and Governance, University of Delhi.

## Kynpham Sing Nongkynrih

Shri Kynpham Sing Nongkynrih is the winner of the Shakti Bhatt Prize 2024. He writes poetry, drama, fiction, and non-fiction in Khasi and English. His latest works include *The Distaste of the Earth* (Penguin, JCB Prize longlisted, 2024); the epic novel *Funeral Nights* (Westland/And Other Stories); *Late-Blooming Cherries: Haiku Poetry from India* (co-ed., HarperCollins); and *Lapbah: Stories from the North-East* (co-ed., Penguin). His other recent works include *Dancing Earth: An Anthology of Poetry from the Northeast* (co-ed., Penguin), *The Yearning of Seeds* (HarperCollins), and *Time's Barter: Haiku and Senryu* (HarperCollins). He teaches literature at North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong.



## Lakshmidhar Behera

Prof. Laxmidhar Behera is the Director of IIT Mandi and a distinguished expert in robotics, intelligent control systems, and AI applications. He previously served as a Professor at IIT Kanpur, where he led pioneering research in vision-based robotics and autonomous systems.

A Ph.D. graduate of IIT Delhi, he has over 25 years of academic and research experience. Prof. Behera has collaborated with leading industries on automation, drones, and cyber-physical systems. His leadership and innovation continue to shape India's technological and research landscape.



## Lipika Dey

Prof. Lipika Dey is a Professor of Computer Science at Ashoka University. Previously, she was a Chief Scientist at Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) Research, where she led initiatives in Economic and Financial Intelligence and Context-Aware Enterprises. Her research focuses on Artificial Intelligence, Natural Language Processing, and Multimodal Data Analytics, with applications in healthcare, food computing, and sustainability. She has authored numerous publications and patents, and is an elected Fellow of the Indian National Academy of Engineering (2021). She received the TCS Distinguished Scientist Award (2012) and actively contributes to ACM India, mentoring young researchers and serving as an Eminent Speaker.



## Madhumita Barbora

Prof. Madhumita Barbora is a distinguished linguist and former Professor at Tezpur University, specializing in syntax, typology, and the documentation of Tibeto-Burman languages of Northeast India. She has published extensively, supervised 13 Ph.D. students, led six research projects, and presented at numerous international conferences. She has also served on academic boards and delivered invited lectures, making significant contributions to applied linguistics and language documentation.



## M. J. Warsi



Prof. M. J. Warsi, a renowned linguist and former Chairperson of the Department of Linguistics, AMU, is widely respected for his scholarship, teaching, and leadership. He has served at leading U.S. universities, authored over a dozen books, and published extensively in applied linguistics. His pioneering work includes the first grammar of Mithilanchal Urdu (2014). A recipient of several national and international awards, including the James McLeod Faculty Award, Colin P. Masica Award, and M. B. Emeneau Scholar of Excellence Award, he has also received prestigious research grants from the University of Chicago, the University of Michigan, and UC Berkeley. Currently, he serves as President of the Linguistic Society of India, continuing to inspire and advance linguistic research.

## Manisha Kulshreshtha



Ms. Manisha Kulshreshtha is an acclaimed Hindi novelist, short story writer, translator, and cultural curator. Author of six novels, including Shigaf, Shalbhanjika, and Swapnapash, and eight story collections, her work is noted for its lyrical style and social depth. She received the Bihari Puraskar (2018) for Swapnapash and the KLF Book Award (2025) for Vanya. As a translator, she has introduced Hindi readers to international voices such as Maya Angelou and Jorge Luis Borges, while her own writings have been translated into several Indian and foreign languages. She is the founder of HindiNest and curates the annual Kathakahan series in Jaipur.

## Manoj Bhawuk



Shri Manoj Bhawuk is a screenwriter, lyricist, editor, anchor, and Bhojpuri researcher. He has played a pivotal role in promoting Bhojpuri language and culture across India and abroad through his works including Tasveer Zindagi Ke, Chhalni Mein Paani, and Bhojpuri Cinema ke Sansar. He has edited the Bhojpuri Junction, and has been honored with several awards, including the Bharatiya Bhasha Parishad Samman, Bihar Kala Shri Samman, and the Mauritius Bhojpuri Gaurav Samman.

## Mohammad Aslam Parvaiz



Dr. Mohammad Aslam Parvaiz is an author, and former Vice Chancellor of Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad. He is the founder and editor of "Urdu Science," and has authored seven books, more than 350 popular science write-ups. His latest book "The Scientific Muslim-Understanding Islam in a New Light (2021), is well received and reviewed internationally. He has delivered Arup international lectures at institutions including Harvard, Yale, and Toronto. He has contributed to global scholarly works on Islam and ecology and has been recognized with prestigious awards and international fellowships.

## Milee Ashwarya

Ms. Milee Ashwarya is the Publisher of the Adult Publishing Group at Penguin Random House India. Throughout her career, she has published numerous bestsellers across various genres. An award-winning publisher, Milee is dedicated to championing diverse voices and discovering talented debut writers.



She has the distinction of publishing three Booker Prize winning books in three years - *The Seven Moons of Maali Almeida* by Shehan Karunatilaka, *The Tomb of Sand* by Geetanjali Shree, translated by Daisy Rockwell and *Heart Lamp* by Banu Mushtaq, translated by Deepa Bhashti.

Milee has played a pivotal role in building and expanding the inclusive publishing program at Penguin Random House India, ensuring a broad representation of voices and stories.

Her authors include Orhan Pamuk, Salman Rushdie, Jhumpa Lahiri, Sudha Murty, Devdutt Pattanaik, S. Hussain Zaidi, Rahman Abbas, Gurcharan Das, Harish Bhat, Bibek Debroy, Karan Johar among others.

## Pankaj Dubey

Shri Pankaj Dubey is a pop culture storyteller, bilingual novelist with Penguin Random House, columnist, podcaster, and curator of leading literary festivals.

A former broadcaster with BBC World Service, London, he now hosts the YouTube show *Small Towns Big Stories*. His bestselling novels include *What a Loser!*, *Ishqiyapa*, *Love Curry*, *Trending in Love*, and his latest Penguin release *One String Attached*.



He has initiated the *Sadak Chhaap Film Festival*, a street film festival for children in slums and villages. He is known for bringing small-town stories to global platforms.

## Pankaj KP Shreyaskar



Dr. Pankaj KP Shreyaskar, a career bureaucrat from the 2000 batch, has served in several key positions across the Government of India. He is currently posted as Joint Secretary, Ministry of Education, Government of India.

Dr. Shreyaskar is also a noted author, columnist, and poet. He has written three books, over 50 articles, and numerous poems. His poetic voice in Hindi was first recognised in 1996 when one of his poems was published in Kadambini, a renowned Hindi magazine.

During his university years in Delhi, he authored several ballets, including Toota Ye Vishwas Kyun, which was performed by a prominent Kathak danseuse of the city. His first collection of poems is expected to be published soon.

## Pavan K. Varma



Shri Pavan K. Varma is a distinguished diplomat, celebrated author, and public intellectual. A former Press Secretary to the President of India, Ambassador to Bhutan, and Director General of the ICCR, he has also served as a Member of Parliament in the Rajya Sabha. His widely praised books, including Being Indian, Becoming Indian, and The Great Indian Middle Class, along with his translations of Ghalib, Kaifi Azmi, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and Gulzar, have made him one of India's most influential cultural voices.

## D. Aaliya



Ms. D. Aaliya is a successful entrepreneur and social activist from Bihar, dedicated to the preservation and promotion of art, culture, and community welfare. She is deeply committed to empowering marginalised communities, especially women and children.

As the Managing Trustee of Dhanu Bihar and the Shining Muskan Foundation, she plays a pivotal role in implementing a wide range of welfare initiatives focused on education, healthcare, rural development, and cultural preservation. Under her leadership, Dhanu Bihar has significantly expanded its outreach, ensuring that individuals from all backgrounds have access to essential resources for a better and more dignified future.

## Prakash Ambwani

Shri Prakash Ambwani is Head of Software Engineering at the Smart Machines & Robotics Lab, TCS Research & Innovation, with over 20 years of experience in technology and management. He previously served as Product Manager for the Smart Machines Research & Innovation Program and as an Enterprise Architect at TCS. Based in Sweden, he leads research in robotics, AI, and intelligent automation. Mr. Ambwani is recognized for driving innovation in enterprise-scale smart machines and AI applications. His expertise bridges technology strategy, software engineering, and applied robotics, making him a thought leader in intelligent systems.



## Pramod Kumar

Dr. Pramod Kumar is the Country Head at Tech Mahindra with 30+ years of global experience in IT strategy, delivery management, and consulting. He has led multi-billion-dollar projects for British Telecom, Siemens, and ABN AMRO across Europe, APAC, and the US. A PhD in IT Strategy, M.Tech (BITS Pilani), and MBA (Symbiosis) graduate, he is certified in Six Sigma, PRINCE2, ITIL, and Agile. His expertise includes AI, cloud, big data, IoT, and smart city implementations.



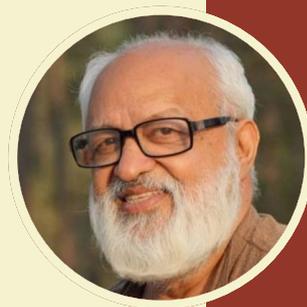
## Purushottam Agrawal

Shri Purushottam Agrawal is a leading scholar, critic, and novelist, renowned for his influential works on modern Indian history and Bhakti-Mimamsa, including Akath Kahani Prem Ki: Kabir Ki Kavita Aur Unka Samay and Kabir, Kabir: The Life and Work of the Early Modern Poet-Philosopher. His novel Nakohas is celebrated for its incisive political commentary. A former Chairperson of the Indian Languages Centre at JNU and Member of the UPSC, he has held visiting fellowships at Cambridge and Mexico. He has received the prestigious Sahitya Akademi Indian Language Award and is currently working on the Mahabharata.



## Pushpesh Pant

Shri Pushpesh Pant is a celebrated Indian academic, food critic, historian, and author, best known for his expertise in Indian cuisine and cultural history. A retired Professor of International Relations at JNU, he has also been a prolific columnist for Forbes, Outlook, and The Times of India. His acclaimed works include India: The Cookbook, Lazzatnama, and Classic Cooking of Punjab. He has appeared on popular shows like Raja, Rasoi Aur Anya Kahaniyaan and has anchored many food and travel documentaries. For his contributions, he has been honored with the Padma Shri (2016) and Honoris Causa D.Litt. (2024).



## Pushyamitra



Shri Pushyamitra is a journalist and author with over 17 years of experience, currently working with India Today. A keen observer of rivers, environment, society, and development, he writes on history, culture, and grassroots issues across media and social platforms. His published works include Radio Kosi, Jab Neel Ka Daag Mita, reportage works like Rukatpur and Kosi ke Vatavriksh, and the novel Sunnair Naika.

## Ravishankar Upadhyay



Shri Ravishankar Upadhyay is an award-winning author, journalist, and researcher from Bihar, known for documenting the state's cuisine and cultural heritage. His book Bihar ke Vyanjan: Sanskriti aur Itihas earned the Rajbhasha Hindi Manuscript Award (2021–22). He has also received the Pt. Pratap Narayan Mishra Young Litterateur Award (2024) and the Laadli Media Awards (2020, 2021). With over 15 years of experience, he regularly writes for national newspapers. He is a sought-after speaker at cultural and literary forums across India.

## Rita Chowdhury



A prominent Asamiya novelist, poet and activist, Dr Rita Chowdhury's oeuvre includes Makam, a poignant portrayal of Assamese Indian community of Chinese origin; Deo Lankhui, a novel of epic proportion on the glorious Tiwa Kingdom of Assam; and Ei Xomoy Xei Xomoy, a fictionalized account of the societal and political changes brought in by historic Assam Agitation against illegal immigration from Bangladesh to Assam. Her other novels are Abirata Yatra, Tirtha Bhumi, Maha Jibanar Adharxila, Papiya Tarar Sadhu, Raag Malkosh, Jal Padma, Hridoy Nirupai, Papi Nakshatrar Galpa, Razeeb Ishwar, Jahnabi and Mayabritta. Her 4 poetry collections viz. Pratyaxar Swapna, Sudoor Nakshatra, Alap Poharar Alap Aandharar, and Baga Matir Tulashi too have been well received.

Her first novel Abirata Yatra (Incessant Journey) got her Asam Sahitya Sabha's best manuscript award in 1981. Her Sahitya Akademi Award (2008) winning novel Deo Langkhui (The Divine Sword) got her a host of other awards including Kalaguru Bishnu Prasad Rabha Award. Her novel Makam, a poignant portrayal of Assamese Indian community of Chinese origin, translated to Marathi as Makam and to English as Chinatown Days brought her national and international acclaim.

## Reshma Prasad

Ms. Reshma Prasad is an author, social activist, academic, and currently serves as a judicial officer at the Trial Court in Patna. Holding a Ph.D. and a law degree, she is the first transgender person in India to serve as a judicial officer in a trial court. Her book *Bhartiya Vangmay evam Kaalakram: Kinnar Darshan* (Prabhat Prakashan) has been published, and she also writes poetry. She trains individuals on transgender laws and has been a member of the national committee that drafted these laws, as well as an expert member of the National Transgender Council. Recently, she was nominated by the Governor as a member of the Senate of Patna University.



## Rituparna Neog

Ms. Rituparna Neog is a queer rights activist, researcher, and development professional from Assam. She is the Founder and Director of the Akam Foundation, a transgender-led feminist organisation advancing education, livelihood, and gender justice in Northeast India. An alumna of TISS, she has been mobilising queer communities, promoting entrepreneurship for transgender people, and creating feminist community libraries as inclusive spaces. Rituparna also serves as a Member of the National Council for Transgender Persons, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Government of India, and the Assam State Transgender Welfare Board, where she contributes to shaping policy and ensuring inclusive governance.



## Rodolphe Hasselvander

Dr. Rodolphe Hasselvander is a French robotics and AI entrepreneur, best known as the founder of Blue Frog Robotics, the company behind the personal robot "Buddy". He also co-founded initiatives such as RobotLab and has played a leading role in France's "Silver Economy" and robotics ecosystem.

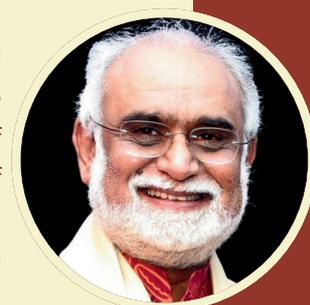
Under his leadership, Blue Frog Robotics has focused on socially assistive robotics for ageing populations, education, and inclusion use-cases. Rodolphe is a frequent speaker and has been recognized internationally for innovation in robotics and AI. His vision combines human-centric robotics, ethical deployment, and scalable innovation, making him a compelling voice at tech and society events.



## Sachchidanand Joshi

Dr. Sachchidanand Joshi is the Executive and Academic Head of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) in New Delhi. He was the founding Vice Chancellor of Kushabhau Thakre University in Raipur and the founding Registrar of Makhnallal Chaturvedi National University in Bhopal. He has also edited speeches of the Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi for the Publication Division.

He is the author of *Sachchidanand Joshi ki Lokpriya Kahaniya* (2017), *Kuchh Alpa Viraam* (2018), *Pal Bhar ki Pahchan* (2019), and *Mera Desh Mera Dharm*.



## Sachin Chaturvedi



Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi is currently the Vice Chancellor of Nalanda University. Before joining Nalanda, he was associated with the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), a New Delhi based think tank, where he worked extensively on issues of development economics, including development finance, SDGs, South–South cooperation and global trade, investment and innovation linkages, with a special focus on the WTO. Professor Chaturvedi has held visiting positions at several leading global institutions, including the MacMillan Center for International Affairs at Yale University (as Global Justice Fellow, 2009–10), Jawaharlal Nehru University, the University of Amsterdam, the Institute of Advanced Studies (Shimla), and the German Development Institute. He currently serves as an Independent Director on the Board of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

## Sanjay Kumar



Shri Sanjay Kumar is a highly accomplished civil servant and social activist, currently serving as a Joint Secretary in the Government of India. He brings extensive experience across diverse sectors, including health, finance, law, administration, and technology-driven governance, having held critical leadership roles throughout his career.

In addition to his administrative contributions, Shri Kumar has been actively engaged in various forums dedicated to culture, education, and health, using social platforms and public initiatives to promote awareness and positive social impact.

## Sanjay Mishra



Shri Sanjay Mishra is an Indian actor known for his work predominantly in Hindi cinema and television. He has twice won the Filmfare Critics Award for Best Actor for his performances in the films *Ankhon Dekhi* (2015) and *Vadh* (2022), along with several other awards and nominations.

An alumnus of the National School of Drama, he made his acting debut in the 1995 film *Oh Darling! Yeh Hai India!*. His later films include *Rajkumar* (1996) and *Satya* (1998). He also appeared as Apple Singh, an “icon” used by ESPN Star Sports during the 1999 Cricket World Cup. He is known for his performances in both drama and comedy genres. He is widely known as the “Brand of Bihar” and is fond of Bihari-style food.

## Santa Khurai

Ms. Santa Khurai is a gender rights activist, scholar, writer, artist, and Secretary of the All Manipur Nupi Maanbi Association (AMANA). She collaborates with various national and international organizations, including the United Nations, to protect and promote LGBTIQ+ human rights. She is a poet and the author of *The Yellow Sparrow*. Some of her published works include *Pheida – Gender at Periphery*, *The Forbidden Prophecies*, and *The Dwindling Identity*.

Her poems, such as “My Father” and “Nupi Maanbi Thabal,” appear in *The World Belongs to Us* (HarperCollins), and “Looming” is included in *South Asia Queer Assemblage* (Routledge). Her book *The Yellow Sparrow* has been shortlisted for Asia’s largest Rainbow Award and the Ramnath Goenka Sahitya Samman Award 2024. *Hell O Heterosexual* is her upcoming book, co-authored with her partner John.



## Sarita Boodhoo

Dr. Sarita Boodhoo is a social activist, writer, and journalist. She is well versed in Indology and Indian Diasporic Studies. She has an in-depth knowledge of Bhojpuri and Bhojpuri culture and heritage, having conducted significant grassroots research in the Bhojpuri Belt of India and elsewhere. Her publications derived from this work are highly referred to and well received by academicians, linguists, and researchers worldwide.

Dr. Boodhoo set up the Mauritius Bhojpuri Institute in 1982 as an NGO. As Founder Director, she presented several ballets, conducted Bhojpuri Weeks across Mauritius, and produced CDs. This helped to bring esteem to the Bhojpuri language, folklore, and oral traditions and ensured their transmission. She took the initiative to research the first settlement of Girmitiyas at Antoinette Phooliyar, where she created a temporary immigrant village and organized a major 7-day national celebration. She was also instrumental in proposing to the National Organising Committee the setting up of a monument dedicated to the Girmitiyas at Antoinette Phooliyar.



## Shahu Patole

Shri Shahu Patole is a notable writer in Marathi language and a retired government officer from 1991 batch of Indian Information Service, (IIS). He has held numerous respectable positions in the Press Information Bureau, Defence PRO, Directorate of Field Publicity, All India Radio and Mumbai Doordarshan (news sections). So far, his five books have been published in Marathi i.e. *Bharat Jodo Uswalele Divas*; *Ann He Apurnbrahma* (translated in English: *Dalit Kitchens of Marathwada*); *Khilgaa*; *Kuk Na LIM* (on socio economic Nagaland); *Kadusa & a book on Manipur in Marathi*, 'Manipur Samjun Ghetana.'

Mr. Patole’s book *Anna He Apoornbrahma* was a landmark work in documenting Dalit food history through the culinary practices of two Maharashtrian communities–Mahar and Mang. It was later translated as *Dalit Kitchens of Marathwada*.



## Shashank Shekhar Sinha



Dr. Shashank Shekhar Sinha is an author, historian, and Publishing Director at Routledge (South Asia), Taylor and Francis Group with over 30 years of experience in academia and publishing. He worked with Oxford University Press and the University of Delhi, and his research explores tribes, gender, witch-hunting, and heritage. His recent books include *Casting the Buddha* (2024), *Gender in Modern India* (2024), and *Delhi, Agra, Fatehpur Sikri* (2021). He also writes for leading media platforms and appears frequently on television channels like NDTV 24X7, AajTak, Lallantop, Rajya Sabha TV, News 18, and Global Journalist (University of Missouri) to discuss history and culture.

## Shashi Tharoor



Dr. Shashi Tharoor is an author, diplomat, politician, and public intellectual. Currently serving as the Member of Parliament for Thiruvananthapuram, he earlier held a long and successful career at the United Nations, rising to the post of Under-Secretary-General. A celebrated writer and public intellectual, he has authored over 23 books across genres including fiction, history, politics, and religion. His notable works include *The Great Indian Novel*, *Inglorious Empire*, *Why I Am a Hindu*, and *An Era of Darkness*, which won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 2019. He has also been recognized with the Commonwealth Writers' Prize, the Crossword Lifetime Achievement Award, and, most recently, the 21st P. Kesavadev Literary Award (2025). He is one of India's most admired voices in literature, politics, and culture.

## Shiva Kumar Mishra



Dr. Shiva Kumar Mishra, Co-Convener, INTACH Bihar state Chapter, is editor of *Mithila Bharati*, an International Research Journal, published by Maithili Sahitya Sansthan, Patna. He has worked in the Bihar Research Society, Patna one of the oldest Research Institute in India for about three decades. He has also written a Monograph, *Upendra Thakur* published by The Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi. A number of articles, written by him, have been published by The Sahitya Akademi. More than one hundred research papers have been published in the national and international research journals and Books. He is member of Maithili Sahitya Sansthan, Patna, Chetna samiti, Patna, Akhil Bhartiya Mithila sangh, Delhi and other prestigious institutions.

## Shovana Narayan

Padma Shri Ms. Shovana Narayan, a name synonymous with Kathak, is a performer, choreographer, guru, researcher, and author deeply rooted in Hindi and Sanskrit literature and Hindu philosophy. She is the recipient of the Padma Shri, the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, and several state honours, and has authored 19 books and numerous articles on dance and culture. Her research has uncovered the living Temple Kathak tradition in the Gangetic belt and documented 19 Kathak villages.

She has been featured in films such as Born to Dance (2018), Shovana (2019), and the German documentary Das Geheimnis des Indischen Tanz (1987). In addition to her artistic achievements, she was crowned Miss UN in 1974. Shovana is regarded as one of the foremost exponents of the art form, and her performances are celebrated for their emotive depth, vivacious expression, and rhythmic brilliance.



## Siddharth Singh

Prof. Siddharth Singh is the Vice Chancellor of Nava Nalanda Mahavihara University, (Deemed University), Ministry of Culture, Government of India. In a permanent position, he is a Senior Professor in the Department of Pali & Buddhist Studies at Banaras Hindu University (B.H.U.), Varanasi, India. Prof. Siddharth Singh was also a Diplomat and Director of the Indian Cultural Centre, Embassy of India, Tokyo, from 2018 to 2022, where he worked extensively to promote Indian culture in Japan and strengthen the India-Japan soft-diplomatic relationships. He has also been the recipient of the Japan Foundation Fellowship, Japan (2003-04), Fulbright Senior Research Fellowship, USA (2011-2012), and Vadravayana Vyas President Award, India (2005).

Dr. Siddharth Singh has published four books namely, Saddhammasangaho (History of Buddhism till 13th Century) (Pub. by Motilal Banarsidass), Jinacarita (Biography of the Buddha) (Pub. by Pilgrims Publishing House, Delhi), Zen Buddha Dharma-Sangeet (Pub. by Sahitya Bhandar, Allahabad) and Remembering the Legend: Kosetsu Nosu (Pub. by Mahabodhi Society of India).

He has published more than 80 papers in Hindi, English, and Japanese encompassing various aspects of Indian Culture and Buddhism and delivered lectures and presented several National and International papers on different occasions in India and countries like the USA, Japan, China, Sweden, Estonia, Thailand, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Vietnam and Nepal etc.



## Sonal Mansingh



Padma Vibhushan Dr. Sonal Mansingh is an iconic cultural personality of India, internationally renowned as an artist, cultural educator, guru, scholar, author, motivational speaker, kathakar, and social activist. She is acclaimed for her ability to interlink cultural interpretations of philosophy, literature, sculpture, and mythological parables with their influence on India's socio-cultural fabric.

As a celebrated dancer, Dr. Mansingh has uniquely used her art to address significant issues such as ecological imbalance, environmental protection, women's empowerment, and social justice, particularly for marginalised communities. Her creative contributions have led to path-breaking choreographies that have inspired audiences globally. Dr. Mansingh has performed, lectured, and conducted workshops in over 90 countries.

Her vibrant creativity has redefined traditional Indian repertoires through her innovative work. She revived the ancient art form of Natya-Katha, blending her singing, narrative skills, and abhinaya to create a captivating experience for audiences, where stories from mythology, literature, and social themes are brought to life.

Her renowned choreographies such as Devi Durga, Draupadi, Indradhanush, Manavata, Sabras, Aatmayan, Mera Bharat, and Mukti reflect her love for Indian mythology and its timeless relevance in contemporary times.

As the Founder-President of the Centre for Indian Classical Dances (est. 1977), Dr. Mansingh has trained thousands of performers who continue to carry the message of Indian culture worldwide. Her institution remains one of the most respected cultural hubs for classical dance education in India.

In July 2018, Dr. Mansingh was nominated by the President of India to the Rajya Sabha, India's Upper House of Parliament. This marked a historic moment as she became the first classical dancer to receive this honour. She was also selected as one of the Navratnas for the Swachh Bharat Mission (Clean India Mission) by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2014, where she continues to promote cleanliness and social responsibility. Assam government has bestowed the prestigious Srimanta Sankardeva Award for 2023 on her in recognition of her outstanding contribution to the cultural heritage of Bharat.

## Sunaina Singh

A globally recognized academic leader and administrator, Prof. Sunaina Singh is celebrated for her profound impact on higher education in South Asia. Her career is marked by a unique blend of scholarly excellence and visionary institutional leadership.

Her transformative leadership is best exemplified by her pivotal role in re-establishing Nalanda University as its Vice Chancellor until recently, a historic achievement that has garnered international acclaim for her visionary leadership. Prof. Singh's ability to revitalize institutions is further demonstrated by the key leadership roles she held, including as Vice President of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR); Governing Board member Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, Shimla; Visitor's Nominee (President of India) on the Executive Boards of over 12 Central Universities; as the first Indian woman President of the Bi-National Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute; and as Vice Chancellor of The English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU), she implemented key reforms to enhance academic culture and build interdisciplinary research clusters along with bringing in operational transparency.

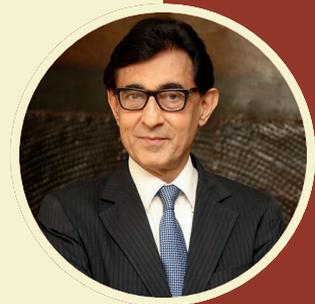


## Sunit Tandon

Shri Sunit Tandon is President of the Delhi Music Society and was, till recently, Director of the India Habitat Centre. Former positions include Director-General of the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC); Chief Executive of the Lok Sabha Television Channel (LSTV); Festival Director, International Film Festival of India (IFFI, Goa); and General Manager, National Film Development Corporation (NFDC), among others.

A prominent face on Indian television as a news anchor on Doordarshan and LSTV from the late 80s onwards, he was also a radio broadcaster. He continues to be a theatre actor, sound designer, director, and enthusiast, having acted in about 250 productions and directed about 30, including plays by William Shakespeare, Jean Racine, George Bernard Shaw, Noel Coward, Neil Simon, Tom Stoppard, Gurcharan Das, and Nicholas Kharkongor. He has also done stage direction for three Western Classical Opera productions.

Recently, he has acted in a few feature films as well, including Dil Bechara, Bell Bottom, and Tejas.



## Umesh Prasad



Shri Umesh Prasad “Umesh” is a famous Magahi writer and native of Nalanda. He has immensely contributed in Magahi literature. He has written so many books such as Drishti Patrika, Maanjar, Vichar Drishti, Magahi Patrika, Wang Magdhi and so many more. He has worked as Secretary, Akhil Bhartiya Magahi Mandap & Nalanda district Hindi sahitya Sammelan, and worked as a director with several eminent organization also.

## Vandana Rag



Ms. Vandana Rag is an Indian writer, translator, and cultural critic from Siwan, Bihar. She has published four story collections, including Utopia and Khayalnama, and two novels, Bisat Par Jugnu and the upcoming Sarak Fanda. Her work explores culture, history, and fading art forms, and she has translated notable works like E. J. Hobsbawm’s The Age of Capital into Hindi. She actively engages with rural communities through creative camps and children’s literature, including Kisse Labalab. Vandana has received honours such as the Krishna Pratap Memorial Award, Ladli Media Award, and Mahadevi Verma Award.

## Vidya Choudhary



Ms. Vidya Choudhary is an archaeologist, historian, social activist, and a celebrated writer in the Bajjika language. She has authored noted works such as Aa Hmgar Ghar, Bajjika Bal Manjari, and Bajjika Viyah Sanskar Geet. Her contributions to language and literature have earned her numerous national and international awards. She is also an editor of Bajjika Varshiki. She is recognized for her efforts in preserving and promoting Bajjika culture and heritage.

## Vinay Kumar



Shri Vinay Kumar is currently Secretary, Bodhgaya Biennale, an Honorary Editor, Canvas and an artist. He is founder of a trust for visual arts, Canvas. He has previously been Deputy Secretary of Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi, Regional Director of ICCR, Bihar. Ex-Member of Sangeet Natak Akademi, Delhi and Bihar Lalit Kala Akademi. He is also an editor of Lalitya (BLKA Bulletin). He has been involved in Art Activism since 1988. He has also curated several art exhibitions in Patna and Delhi. He is a founder member of Nand Lal Bose Nukkad Art Gallery, Patna. He has been writing on art since 1988 in Janshakti, India Today, Outlook, The Times of India and Navbharat Times. He has published three books on Contemporary and Folk Arts.

## Vinod Anupam

Shri Vinod Anupam is a film and art critic, awarded the National Film Award for Best Film Critic (2002). He has served as a jury member for the National Film Awards and Indian Panorama, and as a member of the Innovation Committee, National Museum of Indian Cinema. A former Secretary of the Bihar Sangeet Natak Akademi, he holds a Master's degree in Hindi and a Film Appreciation diploma from FTII, Pune. His awards include the State Award for Best Youth Writer (1988). Anupam has edited Bihar ke 100 Ratn and Bihar Vihar, and regularly contributes columns to leading publications.



## Upen Rabha Hakacham

Prof. Upen Rabha Hakacham is a celebrated Assamese writer, folklorist, and linguist from Assam. Renowned for his prolific works on the Rabha language, folklore, and Northeast Indian cultural heritage, he has authored and edited over two dozen influential books spanning folk literature, creative essays, and ethnographic studies. His writings beautifully capture the traditions, languages, and everyday lives of Assam's diverse communities. He has received numerous awards for his literary contributions and is widely recognized for his role in preserving and promoting the region's vibrant oral and written traditions.



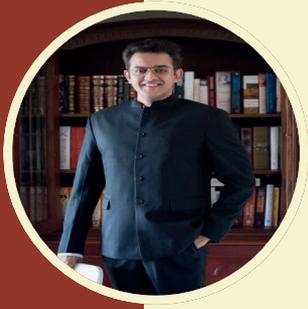
## Z. D. Lalmangaihzauva

Dr. Z. D. Lalmangaihzauva is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English and Culture Studies at Mizoram University. His research interests include literature, cultural and trauma studies, gender studies and postcolonial theory. He has authored five book chapters (2014–2023), published by prominent presses such as Bloomsbury, Sahitya Akademi, and Writers Workshop, and nine peer-reviewed research papers exploring themes of cultural memory, globalization, gender, trauma, and disability in literature.

Dr. Lalmangaihzauva has delivered several invited lectures (2023–2024) on popular culture, postcolonial readings of Mizo cultural expressions, and Men's Studies. He has also presented eleven research papers (2013–2025) at national and international seminars and conferences, including those organized by Pachhunga University College, Aizawl, New Literaria and University of Rome Tor Vergata, Italy, LCIR Cambridge, University of Rome Tor Vergata, Tamanghasset University, Algeria, and Mizoram University.



## Vikram Sampath



Bangalore-based historian Dr. Vikram Sampath is the author of ten acclaimed books on Indian history, including *Splendours of Royal Mysore: The Untold Story of the Wodeyars*, *Voice of the Veena: S. Balachander*, *Women of the Records*, and *Indian Classical Music and the Gramophone*. His two-volume biography *Savarkar: Echoes from a Forgotten Past* and *Savarkar: A Contested Legacy*, as well as his books *Bravehearts of Bharat: Vignettes from Indian History* and *Waiting for Shiva: Unearthing the Truth of Kashi's Gyan Vapi*, have all become national bestsellers. His latest book, *Tipu Sultan: The Saga of Mysore's Interregnum (1760–1799)*, has been creating waves even before its release, and within just a month of publication went into its third reprint.

In 2021, Vikram was elected a Fellow of the prestigious Royal Historical Society. He was awarded the Sahitya Akademi's first Yuva Puraskar in English literature and the ARSC International Award for excellence in historical research in New York for his book *My Name Is Gauhar Jaan: The Life and Times of a Musician*. The book has been adapted into a play, *Gauhar*, by Lillette Dubey. He was among four writers and artists selected as writers-in-residence at the Rashtrapati Bhawan in 2015.

Vikram holds a doctorate in history and music from the University of Queensland, Australia, and was a Senior Research Fellow at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi. He was also a Fellow of the Aspen Global Leadership Network, an Eisenhower Global Fellow, and a Visiting Fellow at the Wissenschaftskolleg Berlin. He is currently an Adjunct Senior Fellow at Monash University, Australia. He is the founder of the Archive of Indian Music, the Foundation for Indian Historical and Cultural Research (FIHCR), and NAAV AI, a tech startup he established with Sandeep Singh Chauhan that translates content from English to Indian languages.

## Vijayarajamallika



Ms. Vijayarajamallika is a transgender poet deeply committed to exploring and representing the experiences of marginalized queer communities in her work. Vijaya Raja Mallika's poetry has been recognized with several awards and has been published in various literary journals and anthologies. Additionally, her poems are included in the undergraduate and postgraduate syllabuses of many universities in India. She believes that poetry has the power to give voice to the experiences of marginalized communities and to promote empathy and understanding.



**ARTIST'S  
&  
PERFORMER'S**

## Ashok Kumar Biswas



Shri Ashok Kumar Biswas is a renowned Tikuli Painting artist and cultural revivalist from Bihar, India. He has spent over five decades dedicated to the revival, preservation, and contemporary development of this declining art with roots in the Mauryan era. He has created over two million Tikuli pieces over his career, many of which have been exported worldwide.

Honoured with the Padma Shri in 2024, Shri Biswas has received numerous national and international awards such as The State Award, Govt. of Bihar, Swami Sahajanand Saraswati Samman, Navin Sinha Pratibha Samman, Appreciation Award, Royal Govt. of Bhutan for his lifelong commitment to the craft. Under his guidance, Tikuli art has reached global platforms, with exhibitions in Japan, Spain, Bhutan, South Korea, Mauritius, London, and other countries. His works have been showcased in prestigious venues including the Bihar Museum, Raj Bhawan, CM Nitish Kumar's collection, IOCL, Sudha Dairy, and private collectors. He has also participated in numerous exhibitions in India, including Bharat TEX, Yashobhoomi & Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, Indradhanush (Hastshilp Mela), Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India, Patna, India International Science Festival, Science City, Kolkata, and Bihar Utsav, New Delhi, many others.

Shri Biswas has trained more than 8,000 women artisans, many of whom have earned State Awards. For fifty years, he has contributed to the empowerment of rural women and youth by offering them free training. He has worked as a faculty member with organisations like UMSAS and MSME, and has participated in the Guru Shishya Parampara Scheme. He has attended workshops at prestigious institutions such as IIT Madras, IIT Patna, Nalanda University, NIFT Patna, and various national cultural bodies. His work was recognised at the national level when Tikuli art was selected as the official gift for the 1982 Asian Games under the recommendation of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. These engagements highlight his stature as both a cultural ambassador and an influential educator.

## Ayan Prakash



Shri Ayan Prakash is an emerging artist, deeply connected to the traditional Bajjikanchal Art he learned from his parents and grandparents. Growing up surrounded by this heritage, he developed a strong passion for art, craft, sketching, clay work, and music. Ayan is skilled in communication, teamwork, digital tools, and organizational planning. He has participated in multiple exhibitions, art fairs, workshops, and cultural events, including programs organized by the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts. His work focuses on bridging tradition with modern platforms through innovation and outreach.

## Bibha Devi

Ms. Bibha Devi is an experienced Sujani embroidery artisan from Muzaffarpur, Bihar, with over 25 years of work in this traditional craft. She began her journey in 1995 with the Mahila Vikas Samiti Bhushra, and has grown into a respected artisan, leader, and trainer, known for her expertise in Sujani techniques. She currently works with the Sujani Mahila Jeevan Foundation. Over the years, Bibha has participated in many Sujani training programmes across various districts, promoting the art form to the youth.

Sujani art is rooted deeply in the Bajjikanchal region's folk traditions and has been passed down through generations. Traditionally, the patterns were created on the mud walls of village homes, but as such houses have become rare, Bibha now keeps the tradition alive by creating these designs on paper and canvas. Through this adaptation, she ensures that the art form remains vibrant and accessible, allowing future generations to witness, appreciate, and inherit their cultural legacy.



## Kanchan Prakash

Ms. Kanchan Prakash is a Folk Contemporary Artist from Muzaffarpur. She completed her Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) from Banaras Hindu University (1994–98) and her Post-Graduation from NIFT Delhi (1999–2001). With an immense love for art since childhood, Kanchan creates Folk art, nature drawings (feminine themes) and paintings based on the topics of daily life and Traditional Gods and Goddesses' Stories.

One of her most significant contributions to Indian folk art is the creation of Bajjika Art, an art form inspired by Sujani embroidery and Bhatti Chitra, the wall painting traditions practiced by women in mud homes across rural Bihar. Drawing from the memories of her grandmother and mother stitching Sujani, and from mural traditions unique to Bajjikanchal, she developed a modern visual vocabulary that preserves the region's heritage while offering it fresh contemporary relevance. Today, under her guidance, numerous male and female artisans of the region practice Bajjika Art on cloth, paper, and canvas, enabling both cultural preservation and livelihood generation.

Kanchan's works have been showcased across prestigious platforms such as the Bihar Museum, Lalit Kala Akademi, and leading national art exhibitions. Her paintings have also been displayed internationally, including at the Museum of Sacred Art in Belgium. She has received numerous accolades for artistic excellence, including the Senior Fellowship from CCRT, the AIFACS Award, a government-provided studio at Garhi, and the Bihar State Award (Kumud Sharma Senior Contemporary Female Artist Award).





## Divya Prakash

Shri Divya Prakash is a young Bajjika artist from Muzaffarpur who blends the motifs of Sujani embroidery and Bhatti Chitra with modern artistic expression. Trained initially within his family and later under the guidance of Kanchan Prakash, he brings village narratives to life through vibrant canvas work. He is skilled in painting, metal craft, photography, cinematography, clay modeling, and fine arts. Divya's art blends traditional motifs with modern expressions, honouring the roots while exploring new artistic horizons.



## Indrajeet Kumar

Shri Indrajeet Kumar is a Bajjika artist from Muzaffarpur who blends inherited traditions with contemporary expression. He transforms the traditional Sujani embroidery and Wall Bhatti Chitra into contemporary fine art. Inspired by his grandmother's unique "pointing" style and guided by mentor Mrs. Kanchan Prakash, he works to preserve and modernize indigenous Bajjika aesthetics. Skilled in acrylics, watercolour, oil painting, and sketching, he is professionally trained with Chitra Visharad (2020) and Chitra Bhaskar (2022) from Prachin Kala Kendra, Chandigarh.



## Ira Dubey

Ms. Ira Dubey is a young Bajjika folk artist based in Greater Noida, committed to studying and preserving the aesthetics of Bajjika visual traditions. She has trained for four years under eminent artist Kanchan Prakash, and explores cultural motifs, daily-life narratives, and heritage elements in her artworks. Ira is currently a Class 12 Arts student, where she has been recognized multiple times as Best Artist. She has participated in school exhibitions, festive art stalls, and design competitions, including IIAD's "Imagine Tomorrow."



## Jagmohan Kumar

Shri Jagmohan Kumar is a contemporary Bajjika artist whose work is deeply rooted in traditional folk practices and rural cultural narratives. He learned the foundations of Bajjika art through his grandmother, particularly drawing inspiration from Sujani embroidery techniques, which he later adapted onto canvas. Under the mentorship of noted artist Mrs. Kanchan Prakash, he has developed a distinctive visual language that merges traditional motifs with modern artistic expression. His artworks offer vivid glimpses of village life, celebrating the richness, detail, and vitality of Bajjika heritage while thoughtfully reinterpreting it for present-day audiences.

## Kriti Kumari

Dr. Kriti Kumari is a Bajjika artist from Sitamarhi, Bihar, committed to preserving eco-friendly artistic traditions. She holds a Ph.D. in Home Science and brings a unique blend of academic knowledge and inherited artistry, inspired by the rich cultural legacy of Bajjika women.

Her skills include sustainable weaving using sundried grass, traditional mud wall painting, folk singing, storytelling, and cultural ritual art. She has participated in workshops led by renowned artist Kanchan Prakash and contributed to community-based festivals and cultural events. She is driven by a mission to highlight the environmental and cultural significance of Bajjika arts, and she works to promote traditional crafts on broader platforms.



## Manoj Kumar Pandit

Shri Manoj Kumar Pandit is a Manjusha artist from Bhagalpur, Bihar, celebrated for his lifelong contribution to the preservation, promotion, and innovation of Manjusha painting. Over the years, he has been honoured with numerous prestigious awards, including the Senior Fellowship (2019–20) from the Centre for Cultural Resources and Training (CCRT), Ministry of Culture, Government of India; the First State Award in Manjusha Art (2012–13) by Upendra Maharathi Shilp Anusandhan Sansthan; the Manjusha Guru Samman (2013–14) by EZCC Kolkata; the Bihar Kala Puraskar (2016); Guru Shiksha Samman (2016) by Dainik Bhaskar Group; Ang Gaurav Samman (2017); Tilka Manjhi National Award (2019); Ang Ratna Samman (2023); and several other recognitions from literary and cultural institutions.

He has been associated with major cultural institutions such as the Eastern Zonal Cultural Centre (Kolkata), Lalit Kala Akademi (Patna), Ministry of Culture (Government of India), SPIC MACAY, National Institute of Design (NID), and Upendra Maharathi Shilp Anusandhan Sansthan. His contributions include live demonstrations at the India International Trade Fair (IITF), design development workshops, training programs for artisans, and multiple government-sponsored cultural events.

He has conducted more than 30 years of training programs under government and institutional initiatives, including the Bihar Education Project, JEEViKA, Design Development Centres, and various national-level art festivals. He organised the Manjusha Mahotsav from 2005 to 2014.



## Pubali Shyam

Ms. Pubali Shyam is an experienced textile designer from Assam, specializing in design development, handloom projects, and marketing. She has professional experience under the Integrated Handloom Development Scheme and the National Handloom Development Programme in Saridhun and West Golaghat, where she has contributed as Textile Designer. She has a Diploma in Textile Chemistry and Design and seeks to contribute through her creativity and technical skills to innovative textile and fashion projects. She has additional certifications in computer applications, jute product development, and fashion workshops at NIFT.



## Meghali Chetia



Ms. Meghali is a passionate Textile and Fashion Designer driven by creativity, craftsmanship, and a love for detail. With hands-on experience in fashion designing, textile development, and handmade jewellery, she transforms ideas into thoughtfully designed garments and accessories. Her work seamlessly blends traditional artistry with contemporary design sensibilities, resulting in unique and refined creations. Skilled in concept development, material selection, and finishing, she ensures every piece reflects quality and originality. Backed by formal training in fashion design, jewellery design, and art & craft, she continues to evolve her creative practice while exploring new techniques and trends within the fashion industry. Fluent in Assamese, Hindi, and English, she brings both artistic vision and effective communication to collaborative design environments.

## Pinki Kumari



Ms. Pinki Kumari is a Sujani embroidery artisan from Muzaffarpur, Bihar, with 25 years of experience in practicing and promoting this traditional craft. She has worked for various groups and community organizations, contributing to Sujani craft development, design creation, training of women artisans, and leading community-based embroidery initiatives. She has conducted numerous training programmes for women artisans and SHGs. Pinki has received the Daksha Award, and has also showcased her craft at exhibitions including Dastkar, Delhi and Dastkari Haat, gaining recognition for her skill and dedication to Sujani embroidery.

## Rekha Jha



Ms. Rekha Jha is a Bollywood playback and Indian folk singer, best known for her iconic performance of “O Womaniya” in Gangs of Wasseypur, directed by Anurag Kashyap. She has sung for films, television, and major cultural events, and has been featured on leading platforms such as BBC News, IMDb, and national media outlets. Rekha Jha has appeared in TV shows including Aashish Chhathi Maiya Ke (Enterr10 channel) and has organized live concerts across Pune, Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, and Bangalore.

She is known for presenting Bihar’s rich cultural heritage through Maithili, Bajjika, Angika, Magahi, and Bhojpuri music. She has been awarded multiple times by the Governor of Bihar (2012, 2025), by the Governor of Goa (2017), by the Government of Bihar (2016), Makhana Mahotsav (2023), and the Vindhyavasini Devi Varishth Puraskar. She was also a Nominee for the APSARA Award for Best Female Playback Singer for “O Womaniya”.

## Raushan Kumar

Shri Raushan Kumar is a young Bajjika artist whose work transforms the traditional techniques of Sujani embroidery and Wall Bhatti Chitra into contemporary art forms. Inspired by his grandmother and deeply mentored by Kanchan Prakash, he uses his canvas to create a modern dialogue with ancestral forms. He is skilled in acrylics, oils, watercolour, and sketching, and is currently pursuing science studies while simultaneously advancing his fine arts training at Prachin Kala Kendra.



## Rajiv Kumar

Shri Rajiv Kumar is a Bajjika artist and craft educator committed to the preservation and propagation of indigenous art forms. His artistic journey began with close observation of his grandmother's Sujani embroidery, which continues to inform his creative practice. Guided by his mentor, Mrs. Kanchan Prakash, he translates traditional needlework patterns and rural experiences into expressive paintings that bridge folk traditions and contemporary aesthetics. In addition to his artistic practice, he serves as an Art and Craft Teacher at Kilkari Bal Bhawan, Muzaffarpur, where he actively engages in nurturing creativity and cultural awareness among young learners.



## Sandeep Kumar

Shri Sandeep Kumar is an artist from Muzaffarpur, Bihar, known for his expressive paintings that capture natural landscapes, local festivals, and everyday life. A Fine Arts Diploma holder from Prachin Kala Kendra, Chandigarh (2023), he also holds an M.Tech from IIT Bombay and a B.Tech from IIT Roorkee. His versatility includes portraits, caricatures, digital art, and graphic novels. Sandeep has exhibited his works at Kaladarshan Art Exhibition (Mumbai, 2017) and Heartistic Exhibition (Muzaffarpur, 2019). Inspired by artists like Kanchan Prakash, he explores the depth and beauty of Bajjika cultural art forms.



## Sujit Kumar

Shri Sujit Kumar is a professionally trained visual artist with a BFA and MFA in Painting, educated at Patna Art & Craft College and Tripura Central University respectively. His artistic career includes participation in exhibits such as Muzaffarpur Art Exhibitions (2008–09), Lalit Kala Akademi (2015), and multiple university and cultural art showcases. Alongside his fine arts career, Sujit holds additional qualifications in computer applications and traditional martial art forms like Kalari and Chhau.



## Shibani Biswas

Ms. Shibani Biswas is a highly skilled Tikuli painting artisan with 36 years of experience. She is the owner of Sona Art, a leading studio for traditional Tikuli paintings. She is known for preserving ancient techniques, while bringing innovation to designs. Over the course of her career, Shibani has participated in numerous workshops, exhibitions, and craft promotional events at regional, national, and international platforms. She has worked alongside Padma Shri awardee Shri Ashok Kumar Biswas, contributing to major exhibitions and demonstrations, including the India International Trade Fair (New Delhi), Bihar Utsav, Bharat TEX, the Inter-Gift International Trade Fair in Madrid, and cultural programmes at Nalanda University and Gopal Narayan Singh University. Her active involvement in these events has helped expand the visibility and appreciation of the Tikuli art tradition in India and abroad.

Shibani has conducted workshops, training programs, and community activities to spread awareness of the craft among younger generations and emerging artisans. She manages all aspects of Sona Art, including business operations, client relations, product development, and sales. She has collaborated with cultural organizations, brands, and events to promote and sustain Tikuli painting. Throughout her career, Shabini has highly contributed to the preservation and revitalization of the Tikuli art.

## Savita Kumari

Ms. Savita Kumari is a folk artist from Bhojpur, Bihar. She has been recognised for her exceptional contribution to folk art. She has received the Sahyog Society and Welfare Society Award (2008), the award from Nibandhan Utpad and Madhya Nished Vibhag, Patna for a poster competition (2013), the Dakshya Deshaj Rajya Shilp Samman in Bhojpuri Folk Art (2023–24), and the Second State Level Award from Bihar Lalit Kala Akademy (2025) for Folk Art.

She has marked her artistic presence in numerous exhibitions, including the Rangoli Exhibition (2008), the Group Bhojpuri Art Exhibition in Arrah (2014), the Varishth Lok Kala Group Exhibition "Kala Mangal" (2025), the National Exhibition of Folk Art by Folkartopedia (2025), and the Second State Level Art Exhibition (2025).

Savita has also engaged extensively in training and workshops that span a wide spectrum of traditional crafts. She received training under the Mithila Kala Guru–Shishya Parampara Bharat Sarkar, 2013. In addition, she acquired training in sewing, embroidery, flower making, and applique work. She has participated in art camps and workshops including the Bhojpuri Lok Kala Workshop and Exhibition (2015), the Terracotta Festival at Upendra Maharathi Shilp Anusandhan Sansthan (2016), the Rajgir Mahotsav Workshop (2019), "Lockdown Me Srijan Kareng Hum" (2020), and several Bhojpuri folk art and clay sculpture workshops up to 2025.

Through her work, Savita showcases the beauty of Bihar's folk traditions and also contributes to their preservation and revival for future generations.



## Sadhana Devi

Ms. Sadhana Devi is a traditional artist from Samastipur, Bihar, renowned for her mastery in Madhubani painting, Sujni art, applique, and other indigenous craft forms. She pursued her formal arts education up to the BFA at Pracheen Kala Kendra, Chandigarh, and further strengthened her artistic foundation through advanced training in Madhubani painting under the Government of Bihar's Upendra Maharathi Shilp Anusandhan Sansthan in 2014, where she graduated with First Division.

Sadhana Devi is a highly respected practitioner and trainer of Madhubani painting. Her contributions to the preservation and promotion of folk art have earned her several prestigious honours. She received the esteemed 'Seeta Devi Yuva Puraskar' (Lok Kala) under the Bihar Kala Puraskar (2015–16), presented by the Honourable Chief Minister Shri Nitish Kumar.

Her work has been showcased in major art exhibitions and festivals across Bihar, including the Bihar Lalit Kala Akademi's Lok Kala Exhibitions (2014, 2018, and 2025), exhibitions by Bihar Mahila Udyog Sangh in Patna and Nalanda, Rajgir Mahotsav exhibitions, Koshi Mahotsav (2015), and the Bihar Museum Exhibition (2022).

With her 27 years of artistic practice, Sadhana Devi has played a significant role as a trainer, mentor, and cultural resource person. She has provided extensive training in Madhubani painting through various organisations, including Sangharsh (Danapur), Gyan Vikas Samiti (Patna), Akhil Bharatiya Parivartan Seva Samiti (Madhubani), the Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, and several government-affiliated institutions across Patna, Sonpur, Arrah, Gaya, Munger, Aurangabad, and Bihta. She has also served as a judge for art competitions organised by PM Shri Kendriya Vidyalaya AFS Bihta and other institutions. In addition to institutional training, she teaches traditional crafts from her home, nurturing new learners in Madhubani art, acrylic work, zardozi embroidery, and Sujni craft.



## Sanju Devi

Ms. Sanju Devi is an artisan, trainer, and leader in the field of Sujni embroidery (Bajjikananchal Art). She is the Director of the Sujani Mahila Jeevan Foundation and an accomplished traditional hand embroiderer from Muzaffarpur, Bihar, with over 20 years of experience in Sujni embroidery. She has received numerous honors, including the UNESCO Award of Excellence (2006), Bihar State Award (2013–14), and the World Craft Council Award of Excellence (2016). She has showcased her work at premier platforms such as Dastkar Delhi, Dastkari Haat, and the Craft Council of Chennai, and has contributed to Lalit Kala Akademi's tribal and folk-art initiatives



## Shradha Priya



Ms. Shradha Priya is an artist from Sitamarhi deeply rooted in the folk traditions of Bajjikanchal. Her creative expression developed through family practices such as basket weaving for Sama Chakewa, mud wall art for festivals, and ritual crafts for regional celebrations. Under the guidance of senior artists including Kanchan Prakash and her own family elders, she aims to preserve the innocence, sustainability, and cultural value of Bajjika traditions. Her skills include grass weaving, traditional storytelling, natural pigment wall painting, and festival craft design.

## Santosh Kumar



Shri. Santosh Kumar is a Tikuli and Madhubani (Mithila) artist from Bihar, recognized for his exceptional contribution to traditional Indian art forms. He is a State Awardee and a recipient of the Bihar Kala Puraskar (Sita Devi Samman), and has built a dedicated career in both artistic practice and art education. He holds a Master's in Fine Arts from Pracheen Kala Kendra, Chandigarh, and a Diploma in Tikuli Art from Upendra Maharathi Shilp Anusandhan Sansthan, Patna.

Santosh has served as Faculty at Upendra Maharathi Shilp Anusandhan Sansthan during multiple tenures and has represented Bihar at the India International Trade Fair (IITF), Delhi through live demonstrations in 2017 and 2022. He has also contributed as a Fine Art Teacher at prominent institutions, including Dr. D. Y. Patil P. L. Patil International School and Litera Valley School, Patna.

His achievements include a Silver Medal at Skill India (2018) and a prestigious State Award (2013–14) for Tikuli Art. He has conducted training programs and practical demonstrations for government-led workshops, including those organized by the Ministry of MSME and Udyog Vibhag, Government of Bihar.

## Sakshi Sharma



Ms. Sakshi Sharma is a young Bajjika artist from Muzaffarpur, currently a student of Class 9. She is deeply interested in Bajjika Painting, and has inherited the traditional art from her mother and grandmother and further developed it under the guidance of senior artist Kanchan Prakash Shri With interests in drawing, craft, communication, and cultural creativity, Sakshi represents the new generation of young artists carrying forward the legacy of Bajjika painting.

## Taskeen Ali Khan

Shri Taskeen Ali Khan, son of Late Ustad Mumtaz Ali Khan Sahab, is a well-known musician of the renowned Bhindi Bazar Gharana, a gharana founded by Late Ustad Aman Ali Khan Sahab, the guru of Bharat Ratna Lata Mangeshkar ji. Taskeen Ali Khan trained in vocal music and harmonium under the guidance of his father, carrying forward the legacy of the gharana.

He is an All-India Radio-graded artist and a National Youth Festival second-prize awardee. He has performed internationally to audiences in Dubai, Bahrain, Bangkok, etc.

Taskeen Ali Khan, he has shared the stage with some of India's legendary musicians, including Padmashree Suresh Wadekar, Padmashree Sonu Nigam, Javed Ali, Padmashree Anup Jalota, and the legendary duo Padmashree Ahmad Hussain and Mohammad Hussain. He has also performed in several concerts across India, including the Navchandi Concerts in Muzaffarnagar, Meerut, and Bulandshahr.



## Vinita Singh

Ms. Vinita Singh is an artist from the Bajjika region, committed to preserving and promoting Bajjika art. With an M.A. in Home Science (2024) from B.B.A.B.U., and is also engaged in different types of craft activities such as handmade clothing and clay work. Vinita works as an Amazon seller and regularly exhibits her artwork, including at Bal Kilkari, Muzaffarpur (2025), and with Sobsagar Art Institute in Ayodhya. She draws inspiration from senior artist Kanchan Prakash, whose influence shapes her artistic direction.



## Md. Jani

Shri Md. Jani has been an active theatre musician, instrumentalist, and director since 2002. He currently serves as the Secretary of the theatre group Naad. As a Music Director, he has worked for a wide range of plays, including Khoobsurat Bala, Yahudi Ki Ladki, Saide Havas, Janeman, Ghashiram Kotwal, Charandas Chor, Sadachar Ka Taweez, Pehla Raja, Thakur Ka Kuan, Mazhabi Sakina, Reshma-Chohramal, Rashmirathi, Saat Shaheed, Baby Doll, Sarai, Ravan, and Ujbak Raja Teen Dakat, among others. He has also composed and directed music for stage productions, such as Amla, Uchakkon Ka Chorus, Mridangiya, Hey Husband Wife and Virus, Beti Biyog, Gabargichor, Bhai Virodh, Batohiya, and Andher Nagri Chaupat Raja. He has contributed over two decades of creative work to Indian theatre and music direction.





# **ORGANIZING TEAM**

## Mir Islam



Dr. Mir Islam teaches at Nalanda University, integrating scholarship, creativity, and pedagogy across disciplines. His work spans world literature, narratives of pain, climate change, and Indigenous cultures, and he engages deeply with creative and visual arts as a translator and independent painter. Exploring the intersections of text, image, and environmental thought, Dr. Islam develops innovative approaches to reading and learning that connect aesthetic experience with ecological awareness. Committed to fostering critical inquiry and cultural dialogue, his scholarship and art together seek to inspire compassionate, reflective, and sustainable ways of engaging with the world.

## Aradhana Pradhan



Ms. Aradhana Pradhan is the Director of Masi Inc., a company established in 2015 to curate literary and cultural events and to provide a platform for meaningful literary interactions. She also serves as a Trustee of Muktaangan, a Delhi-based organisation dedicated to offering vocational training to underprivileged children and youth, along with promoting cultural and literary activities.

## Bineet Kumar Mishra



Shri Bineet Kumar Mishra is an experienced entrepreneur and technology enthusiast with over 15 years of expertise in web and mobile application development, IT security, and digital marketing. He holds a Bachelor of Engineering degree from Visvesvaraya Technological University (2011).

Over the past decade and a half, he has built a strong foundation in creating innovative digital solutions, leading technology projects, and driving business growth through strategic technology adoption. Currently, he is heading IT Management for NLF-2025.

## Abhay Kumar



Shri Abhay Kumar is a Doctoral Fellow in English Literature, specialising in translation theories. He holds master's degrees in both English Literature and Linguistics, which inform his interdisciplinary approach to the study of language and cultural transposition.

A native speaker of Bajjika, his personal and academic interests intersect at the confluence of literature and linguistics. He has contributed as a translator to *The Book of Bihari Literature*, edited by Abhay K. His current project, a translation of *Gitiya*, the first novella in the Bajjika language, is scheduled for release this year.

## Anirudh Sharma

Shri Anirudh Sharma is an Advocate at the Supreme Court of India. He trained under the legendary K. Parasaran, Senior Advocate and former Attorney General for India, a name that commands respect across the political spectrum.

He has handled a wide range of cases, including Constitutional, Commercial, and Criminal matters, with particular expertise in white-collar crimes, representing and advising both state and private parties. In addition to his legal practice, he is an accomplished writer, contributing articles and columns.

His latest book, published by Rupa, is titled *Case For Ram: The Untold Insiders' Story*, which details the preparation and unfolding of the landmark Ayodhya Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute and the courtroom drama surrounding it. His writings uniquely interweave culture, history, law, faith, storytelling, and modernity.

He is currently working on his first novel, which again aims to blend history and culture with modernity, set around the historic sites of Bodhgaya and Nalanda.



## Soumya Jha

Ms. Soumya Jha is a communication and content specialist with expertise spanning journalism, technical documentation, digital media strategy, and large-scale government communication systems. She has played a key role in multiple national-level projects, developing bilingual (Hindi–English) content, process documentation, knowledge reports, and platform-ready communication material tailored for policymakers, administrators, and grassroots users alike.

With a foundation in storytelling and a keen understanding of user behaviour, she crafts content that is not only accurate and accessible but also strategically aligned with project goals. Her work blends creativity with structured research, ensuring clarity, engagement, and public impact. She continues to contribute to initiatives that strengthen digital governance, enhance citizen outreach, and promote meaningful communication across India's diverse audiences.



## Rajesh Ranjan



Shri Rajesh Ranjan completed his MBA in 2014 and has since built a versatile professional career across leading organizations, including Mahindra Automobiles, Nagarjuna Construction Company, and prominent national news channels. His experience across these diverse sectors has strengthened his capabilities in management, operations, communication, stakeholder engagement, and strategic problem-solving.

He is currently serving in the Government of India, where he works towards addressing key challenges faced by the industry and contributes to strengthening governance processes. Rajesh is known for his strong work ethic, adaptability, and commitment to continuous learning. His broad professional exposure and solution-focused approach enable him to make meaningful, impactful contributions to every role he undertakes.

## Anshu Ahuja



Ms. Anshu Ahuja is the Founder of Media Things, a full-service PR and digital marketing agency. With over 13 years of experience in public relations and communications, she has established a strong reputation for crafting compelling brand narratives and securing high-visibility media presence.

Her expertise spans content strategy, publicity, digital storytelling, and journalism, supported by a deep understanding of media dynamics and audience behaviour. Known for her strategic, results-driven approach, Anshu helps brands enhance their visibility, build credibility, and communicate with clarity and influence.

## Amit Kumar Jha



Shri Amit Kumar is an Aeronautical Engineer with a B. Tech in Aeronautics. He possesses a strong technical foundation in aircraft design, development, and testing, complemented by skills in problem-solving, CAD, and project management. A highly motivated individual, he brings a deep passion for aviation, strong analytical abilities, and a collaborative mindset. His commitment to precision, teamwork, and innovation enables him to contribute effectively to advancements in flight technology and aerospace safety.

## Manya Rajlaxmi

Ms. Manya Rajlaxmi is a multidisciplinary creative professional whose work brings together graphic design, visual storytelling, and purposeful communication. Currently pursuing her BA.LAW. at the National Law University, Odisha, she draws upon a rich background in theatre, art, and digital content creation to inform her practice.

A passionate theatre artist and youth activist, Manya uses performance and narrative as tools to spark dialogue on social awareness and community development. She is a registered theatre artist under the Department of Art, Culture, and Youth, Government of Bihar, and has received training from the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA)—India's oldest collective dedicated to cultural awakening—and Kilkari Bihar Bal Bhawan, Government of Bihar.

Alongside her academic and theatre pursuits, Manya works with organisations and platforms as a visual designer, digital content creator, and social media strategist. Her creative vision focuses on producing work that resonates emotionally, engages diverse audiences, and inspires meaningful change.



## Harmit Singh Chawla

Shri Harmit Singh Chawla is a dynamic professional known for his expertise in event management and creative conceptualization. He leads 2G Events, a firm that specializes in crafting memorable and seamless experiences for corporate gatherings, social celebrations, and large-scale festivals.

Renowned for its meticulous attention to detail, innovative designs, and client-centric approach, 2G Events ensures that every event is uniquely tailored to the client's vision. Under Hermit's leadership, the team is dedicated to delivering impactful, stress-free, and thoughtfully curated experiences, earning the trust and appreciation of clients across diverse industries.



## Mukesh Kumar Singha

Shri Mukesh Kumar Singha serves as a Coordinator at Jeevan Jyoti Super Specialty Hospital, where he plays a key role in ensuring seamless patient care and smooth administrative functioning. With a strong background in communication, patient handling, and hospital coordination, he works diligently to enhance the overall healthcare experience for patients and their families. In his role, he act as an essential bridge between patients, medical staff, and hospital administration. His responsibilities include managing patient queries, facilitating consultations, supporting admission and discharge processes, and ensuring that all departments remain well-coordinated.

His calm approach, clarity in communication, and compassionate handling of patient concerns contribute significantly to building trust and comfort among those seeking medical care. Beyond operational duties Mukesh Kumar Singha is committed to upholding high service standards within the hospital.

He actively assist in streamlining workflows, improving patient support systems, and maintaining a patient-centric environment. His dedication, professionalism, and sincere focus on service make him a valued member of the healthcare team at Jeevan Jyoti Super Specialty Hospital.

## Shailesh Kumar

Shri Shailesh Kumar brings a strong foundation in administration, public service, and security management. His professional journey reflects a deep commitment to organizational discipline, community welfare, and effective leadership across diverse sectors.

He possesses robust team management abilities and proven supervisory skills, which he now applies in his role at Unity International School. Here, he oversees operational coordination, staff supervision, and the implementation of structured administrative processes, ensuring a safe, efficient, and student-friendly environment.

A fluent Hindi speaker with an academic degree in the subject, Shri Shailesh Kumar also contributes to strengthening communication and cultural alignment within the institution. His dedication to service, combined with his grounded leadership style, makes him an integral part of the school's management and development.



## The Way Forward

The Nalanda Literature Festival represents a meaningful confluence of India's intellectual heritage and the evolving ideas of the contemporary world. Inspired by the legacy of ancient Nalanda as a global centre of learning, the festival seeks to create a space where literature, knowledge, science, culture, and critical thought intersect in thoughtful dialogue.

By bringing together writers, scholars, artists, scientists, and public intellectuals from diverse disciplines and traditions, the festival affirms the role of literature as a catalyst for inquiry, empathy, and social understanding. It celebrates languages, narratives, and ideas that reflect the complexity of our times while remaining rooted in cultural depth and academic rigour.

At its core, the Nalanda Literature Festival looks toward the future. It places special emphasis on engaging young readers, students, researchers, and emerging writers—encouraging them to question, imagine, and participate actively in the shaping of intellectual and cultural discourse. By fostering curiosity, interdisciplinary thinking, and respectful exchange, the festival aims to nurture a new generation of thinkers who carry forward the spirit of dialogue and learning.

As the festival continues to evolve, it remains committed to inclusivity, excellence, and the free exchange of ideas. The Nalanda Literature Festival invites all who value knowledge, creativity, and thoughtful conversation to join this journey—one that honours the past, engages the present, and shapes the future.

**For More Information  
Dhanu Bihar**

[www.dhanubihar.org](http://www.dhanubihar.org)  
[www.nalandaliteraturefestival.com](http://www.nalandaliteraturefestival.com)  
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