

India's Renaissance into *Bhārata*: Examining nation, *dharma* and literature in the light of select works of Sri Aurobindo

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Abstract

Article 1 of the Constitution of India declares, 'India, that is Bharat shall be the union of states' which while reinforcing the duality of its identity, also underlines the vital role that a 'name' plays in constructing and reconstructing a national identity (1950, p.1). References from ancient times substantiate the fact that the concept of 'India' existed in various names and forms-whether as *bhāratas* in the *Rgveda* (2000 BCE) or as *Bhārata Shakti* in Sri Aurobindo's *The Renaissance in India and other essays on Indian culture* (1997). Sri Aurobindo, one of the torchbearers of the Indian nationalist movement, wrote the above series of essays, in defence of Indian culture and civilisation, when the national identity of a people was suppressed under colonial rule leading to the need for redefining its national ethos or *svadharma* that is encapsulated in the concept of *dharma*. The efforts made by Sri Aurobindo and his co-revolutionaries in the beginning of the twentieth century to reclaim their oppressed national identity during the colonial era included the upholding of the literature of the land because texts like the *Veda* and the epics, viz. the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* played and continue to play a seminal role in infusing the *bhāratīya* psyche with *dhārmik* principles. This thesis attempts to position India's renaissance as *Bhārata* in the contemporary scenario when there is a reawakening of national identity through the restoration of the dharmic essence of the land and the role that literature can play in it based on select writings of Sri Aurobindo where he expounds on the concepts and relationships of nation, *dharma* and literature. This study follows a qualitative research methodology including scoping method, thematic, narrative and content analysis for achieving its objectives to establish the above.

Key words: India, *Bhārata*, Sri Aurobindo, nation, *dharma*, literature, renaissance