

# *Aavarana*: Unveiling Distorted History and Challenging the Popular Narrative of Indian Culture

**Anjana S. and Savitha A. R.**

## **Abstract**

The Indian subcontinent has been the cradle of a multitude of civilizations, cultures and literatures. The wealth of India has attracted invaders through the ages, culminating with the colonization of the land by the British. The culture and language underwent constant changes, and the process was partially documented, mostly according to the interests of the people in power. This article examines the complex interplay of history, literature, and the subjective nature of truth, with the focus on the impact of colonialism on Indian culture and the distortion of its history. Drawing on S. L. Bhyrappa's thought-provoking novel, *Aavarana: The Veil*, this article explores the manipulation of historical narratives by both colonial powers and historians, and the lasting effects these have had on India's cultural identity. I highlight the need for critical examination of historical texts and the role of literature in uncovering concealed realities. Through the characters and stories in *Aavarana*, Bhyrappa exposes atrocities from the Mughal era and challenges the dominant narratives imposed by the powerful. The article calls for a reevaluation of Indian history, focusing on diverse perspectives and the quest for truth in understanding and preserving the country's rich heritage.

**Keywords:** Indian culture, Mughals, distortion, history, colonisation, *Aavarana*

## **Introduction**

Indian culture encompasses four major religions; Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Zoroastrianism, while Islam and Christianity entered the region via alternative means. The British colonization of India led to the suppression and subjugation of the native culture as “they colonized history.”<sup>1</sup> The Aryan invasion theory, propagated during the British colonial era, sought to undermine the indigenous history of India by asserting that the ancestors of the land were Indo-European settlers. This theory was endorsed by influential figures like Jawaharlal Nehru in his *Discovery of India* (1946). Additionally, S.L. Bhyrappa asserts that “this phenomenon has had an impact on the approach of notable historians in the post-Independence era, as they have been driven by the pursuit of power and patronage.”<sup>2</sup> British colonization of India extended over two centuries,

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Anjana S. is a Research Scholar at the Department of English, Sree Ayyappa College for Women, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University. Email: anjana3693406@gmail.com.

Savitha A. R. is an Assistant Professor at the Department of English, Sree Ayyappa College for Women, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University. Email: savithaar@sreeayyappacollege.com.

<sup>1</sup> Marnie Hughes-Warrington, *History as Wonder: Beginning with Historiography* (London: Routledge, 2018), p. 160.

<sup>2</sup> S. L. Bhyrappa, “Distorting Indian History: A Marxist Monopoly,” *Bharata Bharati*, 26 May (2012). At: <https://bharatabharati.in/2012/05/26/2-distorting-indian-history-a-marxist-monopoly-s-l-bhyrappa/>.

during which the British imposed their knowledge, language, and culture on the Indian people, resulting in significant devastation for the nation and its native population. The extensive reach of British historical knowledge continued to influence the dominant narrative even after India attained independence, leaving the Indian perspective obscure and marginalised.

India's written culture dates back three thousand years. This extensive collection of texts provides a window on the history, culture, religion, and beliefs of communities from various eras. The historical writings of India encompass a vast array of texts, from early myths, through medieval manuscripts, to contemporary literature. These texts offer a view into the social, political, and economic systems of the past, documenting everything from everyday life to heroic and adventurous tales. In addition to providing a deeper comprehension of the past, India's historical writings facilitate a kind of communication with our progenitors, to receive insights into how they viewed the world. These writings can also be admired for their artistic value. British administrators declared that "Indian society was pre-rational,"<sup>3</sup> and it lacked historical sense and order. Vijoy S. Sahay has opined that the writers of the "Vedas are not known because they did not want recognition, hence did not disclose their names in the hymns of the Vedas. Moreover, the knowledge was transferred from teacher to the pupil alone, and all such things were done secretly, not publicly."<sup>4</sup> This is the model of initiatory teaching that is familiar from religions and esoteric systems. Contemporary Indian historians have refuted the Western criticism that India's historical texts lack a proper sense of history and order, arguing that the conventions of the two traditions, that of European and Indian history writing, are different.

Crises in Indian society impact its culture negatively, exerting influence on various dimensions of its collective identity. They become "targets of violent and oppressive action that seeks to destroy the symbols valued by enemies or the iconography associated with alternative faiths and traditions."<sup>5</sup> Arguably British authors manipulated the historical accounts they produced, employing them as a tool to "demoralize the natives"; for example, Friedrich Max Müller, a renowned Indologist, wrote that "India has been conquered once, but India must be conquered again, and that second conquest should be a conquest by education."<sup>6</sup> Burton Stein says:

Thus, a book of history is something like a building where the historian and reader stand outside and peer into the windows, one after another, and find each sometimes murky, curtained, sometimes giving on to dramatic scenes, and sometimes on to settings of the most humdrum sort. We can only make a few inferences about what lies within the walls between, and the historian chooses which windows to linger over. This, then, is a personal 'take.'<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Subhash Kak, "The Colonial Idea of India," *Medium*, 21 August (2019). At: <https://subhashkak.medium.com/the-idea-of-india-180dfd5f8ca1>.

<sup>4</sup> Vijoy S. Sahay, "An Anthropologist Looks at History: An Enquiry into the Anomalies of Ancient Indian History and Culture," *The Oriental Anthropologist*, vol. 15, no. 1 (2015), p. 12.

<sup>5</sup> Stephen Stenning, "Destroying Cultural Heritage: More than Just Material Damage," *British Council*, 21 August (2015). At: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/voices-magazine/destroying-cultural-heritage-more-just-material-damage>.

<sup>6</sup> Friedrich Max Müller, *The Life and Letters of the Right Honourable Friedrich Max Müller, Volume 1* (London: Forgotten Books, 2016 [1902]), p. 395.

<sup>7</sup> Burton Stein, *A History of India* (Hoboken: Wiley, 2010), p. 7.

Contemporary Indian writers address this problem in creative as well as academic ways. Literature, as a form of aesthetic expression and narrative, can also play a significant role in uncovering falsified historical events. Frequently, authors use fiction to investigate unrecorded or neglected tales, to challenge established narratives, and to present alternative perspectives.

### **Text and Truth: *Aavarana***

Literature can explore the emotional, psychological, and cultural dimensions of historical events by venturing into the domain of imagination. The connection between text and reality has always been a complex and multifaceted topic. Through various narrative techniques and storytelling devices, this connection is frequently explored in literary works. For example, S. L. Byrappa's *Aavarana* delves into the complex interplay between text, truth, and historical revisionism.<sup>8</sup> The focus of the novel is the experiences of Lakshmi, the daughter of a social worker, who enters into a marriage with Aamir in an attempt to demonstrate her progressive mindset. As a result, she undergoes a conversion to Islam and adopts the name Razia. She soon realises, however, that the relationship has drawbacks and that sometimes one's religious beliefs can have an impact on one's ability to love. Her father exhibits opposition towards the union and severs all forms of communication with his daughter, afterwards withdrawing into seclusion.

However, the most intriguing aspect is the book's use of this narrative to explore the historical context of India. The author uses characters to expose the distortion of India's historical narrative.<sup>9</sup> Lakshmi's (now Razia) narrative highlights how historical injustices under Islamic rule were concealed and manipulated. In the narrative of Lakshmi's experiences, the author highlights the manipulation of India's political discourse by Marxists, Leftists, Liberals, and intellectuals, who use persuasive tactics to instill a belief in a historical narrative that lacks veracity, both in the past and now. Razia/Lakshmi develops a deeper understanding of the distorted nature of historical narratives after the death of her father, a well-respected scholar who devoted his life to the study and preservation of the genuine history of Bharat (India).<sup>10</sup> This realisation takes place when she gets access to her father's workspace, and gains knowledge of his rigorous analysis of primary sources, encompassing ancient texts, archaeological discoveries, and first-hand testimonies. The author's investigation and record-keeping endeavors are directed towards uncovering the genuine historical account of Bharat, underscoring the significance of precise historical evidence and the need to question dominant narratives. Bhyrappa garners a larger audience by writing a fictitious story that is supported by thoroughly researched and confirmed material. Lakshmi's journey illuminates the significance of engaging in a critical examination of historical narratives and interrogating the intentions of people who construct them. The novel raises questions about the

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<sup>8</sup> S. L. Bhyrappa, *Aavarana: The Veil*, trans. Sandeep Balakrishnan (New Delhi: Rupa Publications Ltd, 2014).

<sup>9</sup> Devendragouda Patil and Vijay F. Nagannavar, "Study of *Aavarana (The Veil)*: As a Historical Novel," *International Journal for Innovative Research in Multidisciplinary Fields*, vol. 7, issue 3 (2021), pp. 25-28.

<sup>10</sup> Jaspal Singh, Parveen Kaur Khanna, and Arvind Khanna, "Sandwiched Between two Faiths: The Critical Analysis of S. L. Bhyrappa's Novel *Aavarana: The Veil*," *International Journal of Scientific Research*, vol. 4, issue 3 (2015), pp. 120-121.

nature of truth, the subjective interpretation of historical events, and the function of literature in illuminating concealed realities, through its compelling story and profound exploration of history.

Historical events and people can be shown in a way that emphasises certain parts and downplays or excises others that do not fit the story being told. This manipulation of history can be used to justify the actions of those in power, keep nationalist or imperialist ideas alive, or explain why there are differences in social and economic status. Rewriting history, whether by omitting, exaggerating, or making things up, reinforces a distorted view of the past, which in turn affects how people think and act today. Textbooks focusing on Indian culture often adopt a conventional pedagogical approach, wherein they provide an overview of the nation's multifaceted population, past historical events, and geographical features. Texts can be a source of knowledge and a way to keep historical records, but they do not always tell the truth. Texts are subjective, biased, and skewed, and their meaning is affected by personal viewpoints, cultural contexts, and ideological agendas. So, it can be hard to interpret and understand the truth from written sources.<sup>11</sup>

Throughout history, those in positions of authority have acknowledged the impact texts have on the dissemination of information and the formulation of public opinion. They have strategically used power dynamics and ideology to obfuscate the truth, manipulate narratives, and exert control over the perception of reality. Bias and the manipulation of historical accounts can also distort the truth in texts. Post-Independence authors in India were not prepared to shake off the colonial shackles, and post-colonial theories were yet to be developed. Consequently, “the Indian view of the west has remained fraught with idealisation, arbitrary fragmentation, and unhistorical reductions.”<sup>12</sup> The acceptance of certain practices resulted in a change in conventional Indian values, leading to claims that the cultural identity of the nation has been undermined. G. N. Devy claims it created a dichotomy between superior (Western) and inferior (Indian) categories:

The standard textbook story—which has schooled multiple generations, including mine—goes as follows: the caste system has dominated India; women have been discriminated against; the practice of widow burning still exists; corruption is rampant; most people believe in astrology, karma, and reincarnation.<sup>13</sup>

This method is not very helpful for students who want to learn about the culture of their country. Bhyrappa states that the way schools teach history is ridiculous; “Plenty of truths are there. Using these truths judiciously is the wise way to teach history.”<sup>14</sup>

As J. Nandakumar points out, “Our philosophers and acharyas have contributed immensely to the world of human knowledge.”<sup>15</sup> Still, less attention is given to these schools,

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<sup>11</sup> Donald R. Davis, “Toward a History of Documents in Medieval India: The Encounter of Scholasticism and Regional Law in the *Smṛticandrikā*,” *The Medieval Globe*, vol. 2, no. 2 (2016).

<sup>12</sup> G. N. Devy, *After Amnesia: Tradition and Change in Indian Literary Criticism* (Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan, 2017), p. 2.

<sup>13</sup> S. N. Balagangadhara, *Reconceptualizing India Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 2.

<sup>14</sup> S. L. Bhyrappa, “Dr. S L Bhyrappa on Distorting Indian History,” *Prekshaa*, 6 February (2017). At: <https://www.prekshaa.in/dr-s-l-bhyrappa-distorting-indian-history>.

<sup>15</sup> J. Nandakumar, *Hindutva for the Changing Times* (Delhi: Indus Scrolls Press, 2019), p. 139.

including Shaiva, Vaishnava, Buddhist, and Jain traditions, while curricula are dominated by Western philosophers like Plato and Aristotle.<sup>16</sup> Bhyrappa was previously removed from a committee established to enact educational reforms. The committee members were instructed to omit certain historical details, for example, that “Aurangzeb destroyed the holiest of Hindu temples, Khalji burnt the most ancient of universities, or that large communities of Hindus were forcefully converted to Islam by barbaric rulers in different parts of India.”<sup>17</sup> Bhyrappa argued that facts are “sacrosanct to education, especially history, and if texts narrate Aurangzeb’s atrocities, they would also have the balancing narratives of Akbar’s positive outreach towards Hindus and endeavors to take along all communities.”<sup>18</sup> This instance serves as a conspicuous illustration of the functioning of power hierarchies and their manipulation of historical narratives.

The goal of history remains elusive as it is hindered by the unpredictability of future events, which are subject to scientific advancements. Bhyrappa argues that:

Some western thinkers might call it the philosophy of history. But such thoughts are futile. Our discussion here should be — what is the purpose of teaching history? History is seeking out the truths about our past events, learning about ancient human lives by studying the inscriptions, records, literary works, relics, artifacts, etc. We should also learn not to commit the same blunders that our predecessors committed. We have to imbibe the noble qualities that they adopted; historical truths help us to learn all these things.<sup>19</sup>

*Aavarana* challenges the dominant narrative imposed by those in power and emphasises the need for a critical examination of historical texts by examining the subjective nature of truth and how historical events can be interpreted differently depending on one's perspective. The novel elucidates this historical context by employing a metafictional aspect, specifically a historical fiction narrative set in the Mughal realm of Aurangzeb. In addition to this, *Aavarana* narrates the story of a daughter's process of reconciling with her father, who had been alienated from her for a period of twenty-eight years prior to his demise. Through the character of Lakshmi, who embarks on a journey of self-discovery and intellectual awakening, the novel invites readers to question their assumptions and confront uncomfortable truths. In the novel Bhyrappa portrays the historical background, which covers India's sixteenth to nineteenth centuries. Bhyrappa aims to unravel the real history of India under Mughals through fiction in *Aavarana*. The novel reveals the Mughal slave system in gruesome detail and describes how Islamic rule wounded and destroyed the centuries-old Indian civilization. Razia selects a Sadhu in Varanasi to voice the wisdom of Sanatana Dharma to enlighten the prince, “We create our gods based on which stage of

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<sup>16</sup> Bhyrappa, quoted in Anjana, S. and Savitha, A. R., “Centuries and Miles Apart: A Reading of S. L. Bhyrappa's *Sartha: The Caravan*,” *Literary Voice: A Peer Reviewed Journal of English Studies*, vol. 15 (2021), pp. 190-195.

<sup>17</sup> Neera Misra, “The Tale of Two Committees,” *Chintan*, 11 August (2020). At: <https://chintan.indiafoundation.in/articles/the-tale-of-two-committees/>.

<sup>18</sup> Misra, “The Tale of Two Committees”.

<sup>19</sup> Bhyrappa, “Dr. S L Bhyrappa on Distorting Indian History.”

development we are concerning ethics, morals and spirituality, worshiping only one god also means that you worship the god I ask you to worship .... true spirituality doesn't need God.”<sup>20</sup>

The governance of the Hindu population under the authority of the Delhi Sultanate administration resulted in a significant hostility between the two groups. The suppression of Hindu rituals and values occurred as a consequence of the Muslim invasion and subsequent cultural imposition, resulting in the development of animosity against Muslim culture. The incorporation of Muslim customs, including the public use of burqas, exacerbated the challenges experienced by the Hindu community during this specific historical era. The contrasting viewpoints and behaviors shown by Akbar and Aurangzeb in relation to the treatment of Hindus illustrate their diverse ideologies and preferences. Aurangzeb's strong religious faith in Islam motivated him to issue directives for the demolition of Hindu temples and to prevent the establishment of new ones. In contrast, Akbar advocated for equality and implemented a policy of promoting a national religion. The demolition of temples, including Keshava Rai, Viswanath, and Somnath, testifies to Aurangzeb's religious convictions. In an interview, Sourodipto asked Bhyrappa “Today when historians are accused of presenting fiction as history to suit their narrative, *Aavarana* stands out as a tribute to history – the history of India under the Mughals?”<sup>21</sup> Bhyrappa responded firmly:

Destruction of temples in India was not confined to the medieval time only. Destroying the temples of other religions was a compulsory injunction to the followers, given by the Prophet Muhammed himself. He himself destroyed many temples which existed in Saudi Arabia and other places and his followers destroyed many great temples in Egypt, Jordan and other places. The Muslim invaders followed the examples set by the Prophet and destroyed temples in India ever since they entered into this country. The modern Marxist historians have invented the argument that the Muslims destroyed the temples for economic reasons and not due to religious injunctions. It is a lie.<sup>22</sup>

Bhyrappa's narration switches between characters in the book narrating their own stories through dialogues to explain how invaders had ruthlessly destroyed cultures, plundered wealth, forcefully converted millions and created power structures enslaving all other kingdoms. The characters are fictitious, yet the stories they reveal are factual and can be verified by historical sources.

Not just that: during the Mughal rule, every Rajput king had to station at least one son in the Badshah's court as a sign of respect. The undertone of this arrangement was clear to both parties-the son was a glorified hostage, ensuring obedience from the Rajput kings. It might surprise you but this custom was inaugurated by Akbar. This took on other forms - a Rajput ruler defeated in war had to marry his daughter off to the Mughal king - a wife, but nevertheless a permanent hostage, really. Most Rajput kings agreed to this, given their

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<sup>20</sup> Bhyrappa, *Aavarana: The Veil*, p. 285.

<sup>21</sup> Sourodipto Sanyal, “‘The Indian Secularists Are By And Large Hypocritical’: Kannada Author S.L. Bhyrappa,” *Youth Ki Awaaz*, 19 January (2017).

<sup>22</sup> Sanyal, “‘The Indian Secularists Are By And Large Hypocritical’.”

vanquished status. Maharana Pratap was the exception. He refused to send his son to Akbar's court. It is also a fact that every such prisoner was compulsorily converted.<sup>23</sup>

The development of historical writing in India has predominantly centered around the state. Frequently, the Mughal court and many kingdoms provided patronage for the production of historical accounts, chronicles, and genealogical works. As the influence of the British Empire expanded, so too did the prominence of the official scholar tradition. The researchers employed the framework of colonial knowledge in their scholarly investigations, and their findings subsequently prompted a revision of this paradigm. Arun Shourie et al. argue that "the main interest of the British was to write a history which justified their presence.... They held India by the right of conquest; therefore, they had to recognise the legitimacy of this right in the case of Moghuls, the Afghans and the Arabs too."<sup>24</sup> In recent years a trend toward the decolonization of knowledge creation and the restoration of Indigenous voices has emerged. Scholars are increasingly incorporating many perspectives, and critically examining prevailing narratives, to gain precise and comprehensive knowledge of historical events.

Bhyrappa uses fictitious characters as part of this decolonizing perspective. He attacks the so-called progressive intellectuals using his non-fiction and historical research. Bhyrappa's strategy to construct situations through which he exposes the hollowness of such progressive intellectuals is commendable:

If our progressive historians and writers paint Tipu Sultan in heroic hues for the sole reason that he fought the British, why do they remain mute about the Marathas, who fought the same British? The British by their own admission had identified the Marathas as a bigger threat to their imperial ambitions. And then there's this other mass of very vocal Kannada-language champions who hail Tipu as the 'son of Karnataka' and the 'true son of Kannada'. Kannada was the official language of the state when the Wodeyar dynasty ruled over the Mysore kingdom. I'm talking about the time before Tipu's father, Hyder Ali, a trusted general of the Wodeyars, usurped the throne of Mysore. But when Tipu took over, he changed the administrative language from Kannada to Farsi. You can see this even today.<sup>25</sup>

In *Aavarana*, the plight of Lakshmi alias Razia is clear. She faces opposition from her in-laws, the staunch followers of Islamic customs, for instance, the hijab. They impose their customs on Lakshmi/ Razia, and when she does not want to follow them her in-laws raise her son Nazir. He had a complete Islamic upbringing, and the "several parts of the novel that describe Islamic customs in detail and in that aspect, this book is more of a documentary than a novel."<sup>26</sup> Tipu Sultan is considered one of the most fabulous kings in the Muslim kingdom. However, in *Aavarana*, Bhyrappa has given another description of Tipu Sultan. In order to showcase the truth

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<sup>23</sup> Bhyrappa, *Aavarana: The Veil*, p. 7.

<sup>24</sup> Arun Shourie, Harsh Narain, Jay Dubashi, Ram Swarup, and Sita Ram Goel, *Hindu Temples, What Happened to Them* (New Delhi: Voices of India, 1998), p. 52.

<sup>25</sup> Bhyrappa, *Aavarana: The Veil*, p. 78.

<sup>26</sup> Nilagriva, "Aavarana by S.L. Bhyrappa: An Eye-Opener?," *Random Ramblings*, 23 February (2007).

of Muslim invaders to everyone, Lakshmi uses her artistic freedom by writing a novel about real history. She asserts that “I think truth is greater than art, and an artist’s creation must be an expression of truth.”<sup>27</sup> Lakshmi writes a script titled *Tipu Sultan: A National Hero*. She says, “my scripts need to show Tipu as a spotless ruler, tolerant of diverse faiths.... It’s more impossible to ignore the sordid record of his incredible cruelty and religious fanaticism.... from to the complete with his cruelty, his fanaticism and its hatred of other religions.”<sup>28</sup>

Recorded history has painted Tipu as a national hero and a freedom fighter against the British. During the freedom struggle, people have sung in praise of Tipu. Finally, he has become a legendary freedom fighter in the popular imagination. Because “myths are hard to create but far harder to destroy.”<sup>29</sup> ‘Tipu Sultan’s Dreams’ is a secret document which is the most robust and most satisfactory evidence of Tipu’s fanaticism. He always refers to Hindus as kaffirs and the British as Christians; this book is filled with Islamic conversions such as “a long bearded maulvi frequently appears in his dreams; Tipu goes to Mecca on a pilgrimage; Prophet Mohammad tells a long-bearded Arab, ‘Tell Tipu that I shall not enter Heaven without him; Tipu is then on a mission to convert all non-Muslims to Islam and Islamism all non-Islamic nations.’”<sup>30</sup> Following Amir’s instructions, Lakshmi conducts research in order to obtain specific information about Tipu. Amir’s expectation was that she would portray Tipu as a figure of national heroism.

To her chagrin, she discovers that Tipu embodies a “character complete with his cruelty, his fanaticism and his hatred of other religions.”<sup>31</sup> Lakshmi’s historical writing about the Islamic invasion makes Amir angry: “Why have you begun to hate Islam late?... You’ve joined the anti-Muslim brigade and you’ve been brainwashed. Just say you don’t want to get out of their clutches.”<sup>32</sup> Lakshmi retorts that, “I hate Islam? Any honest quest for truth is meaningless if it’s coloured with personal dislikes and attachments. I swear on you, I’ve no hatred for Islam”<sup>33</sup> The discipline of history encompasses the documentation and analysis of human achievements, conflicts, and the evolution of social structures. The literature provides valuable background, profound understanding, and instructive principles that can assist individuals in making well-informed choices and contributing to the advancement of society. The possession of precise historical knowledge allows people to gain a comprehensive understanding of the factors contributing to society's issues, grasp the repercussions of previous actions, and foster empathy and tolerance via the acquisition of insights from a wide range of cultures and societies. Historical distortion presents a significant peril to our understanding of both ourselves and the global environment we inhabit. The study of history is crucial for our understanding of the world since it plays a significant role in shaping our shared sense of identity and offers useful insights from

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<sup>27</sup> Bhyrappa, *Aavarana: The Veil*, p. 83.

<sup>28</sup> Bhyrappa, *Aavarana: The Veil*, p. 74.

<sup>29</sup> Bhyrappa, *Aavarana: The Veil*, p. 76.

<sup>30</sup> Bhyrappa, *Aavarana: The Veil*, p. 80.

<sup>31</sup> Bhyrappa, *Aavarana: The Veil*, p. 74.

<sup>32</sup> Bhyrappa, *Aavarana: The Veil*, p. 149.

<sup>33</sup> Bhyrappa, *Aavarana: The Veil*, p. 149.



previous experiences. Throughout the course of human history, the discipline of history has frequently been subject to distortion and manipulation, serving numerous ulterior motives.

Bhyrappa introduced the character of Professor Shastri in order to depict historians who are politically corrupt who “benefit the taste of socialist in India.”<sup>34</sup> He is able to provide alternative interpretations of historical events and has also shown support for Tipu Sultan. The author provides a historical illustration where the British military successfully apprehended the offspring of Tipu. According to his account, the Shiva faction, aided by Muslim monarchs, were responsible for the destruction of several Vishnu temples and icons. Later, the narrative historians ascribed full responsibility to the Muslim kings. In the pursuit of knowledge, historians have developed novel interpretations of Indian history that bear striking resemblance to the ideas put forth by the Professor. *Aavarana* depicts a realm where individuals who endeavor to liberate themselves from the constraints of religion and societal norms encounter concealed and truths. The greater the effort exerted to achieve liberation, the more constricting the situation becomes. Nevertheless, individuals such as Professor Sastri and Lakshmi, who have opted for a less conventional route, instill optimism in the global population. Micro stories have gained significant popularity in contemporary times, and from this perspective, it is plausible to accept Lakshmi's historical account of Tipu and the Mughal monarchs. Despite its departure from conventional historical paradigms, this perspective aligns with a novel historiographical approach that endeavors to discern the veracity of historical accounts and identify instances of distortion. Throughout history, it has been observed that individuals in positions of power have consistently exerted their influence over the recording and shaping of historical narratives. Consequently, this tendency has resulted in the marginalisation and relegation of those individuals with little societal influence to the periphery. As a result, literary works such as *Aavarana: The Veil* can serve as effective tools for depicting the historical experiences of marginalised individuals.

## **Conclusion**

The research presents several conclusions that are worthy of consideration. We examined the manner in which the historical narrative shaped by the dominant power structure influences the political framework of India, and investigated the phenomenon of skewed historical narratives, which undergo transformation and subsequent re-presentation by historians. The distortion of Indian history was perpetrated by British authors, who presented a biased and favorable account of British rule. Furthermore, subsequent individuals in positions of authority perpetuated the colonial interpretation of Indian history, which has been widely disseminated within the academic realm. The scholars and students digested the historical information provided to them without engaging in critical analysis or inquiry. This phenomenon exerted a significant adverse influence on both previous and contemporary cohorts. The analysis of history should aim to find the truth.

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<sup>34</sup> Nilagriva, “Aavarana by S.L. Bhyrappa: An Eye-Opener?”.

The distortion of historical narratives through revisionism can have profound effects on society and individuals. When the actions of those in power are justified or glorified through historical manipulation, it can perpetuate nationalist or imperialist ideas and aggravate social and economic disparities. Individuals may also internalise these distorted narratives and develop biased or prejudiced perspectives. By revising history to omit, exaggerate, or fabricate facts, a distorted view of the past is reinforced, which influences how people think and act in the present. *Aavarana* challenges these distortions and encourages readers to query their presumptions and confront unsettling realities. Nitthin argues that individuals who identify as “self-proclaimed ‘progressives’ and ‘intellectuals’ are building an *Aavarana* around the *Satya* (Truth) of History and Religion and how they are misguiding the familiar Indians; under the guise of ‘National Integration’ and ‘Communal Harmony’.”<sup>35</sup> We contend that the historical and cultural background of a location plays a crucial role in shaping its growth and ensuring its longevity.

Reconstruction and restoration endeavors pertaining to cultural heritage are carried out in accordance with established protocols for preserving historical and cultural narratives. Historical narratives are typically authored by individuals occupying positions of authority, so relegating those lacking power to the periphery of societal discourse. Fictional literary pieces such as *Aavarana: The Veil* possess the potential to serve as effective instruments in revealing the historical narratives of marginalised individuals. Bhyrappa has made a commendable endeavor to give a novel rendition of historical events. Throughout history, Indian society has consistently demonstrated a willingness to embrace and accommodate change and diversity. The success of Bhyrappa's writings, despite the book's tepid reception inside academic circles, means it influenced the general reading population. *Aavarana: The Veil* provides a compelling perspective for history enthusiasts seeking alternative interpretations of historical events. This literary work serves as an exemplary illustration of the intertwining narratives of political and cultural history. By employing this methodology, it is possible to construct a coherent historical narrative.

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<sup>35</sup> Nitthin S., “Secularists, Marxists and the ‘*Aavarana*’ of Truth,” *Erudition*, 27 June (2007).