

Glossary

Acharya – highly respected teacher and guide.

Dashnami Sanyasi – Ten classical order of monks; three holding *danda* or ritual staff, Tirtha, Ashram and Saraswati drawn from Brahmins, with Saraswati title-holder monk being the highest; the other seven are Bharati, Puri, Ban, Aranya, Giri, Parbat and Sagar who cannot hold the danda, and can be drawn from any of the varnas.

Sabhas/Mahasabhas – community associations/assembly/organizations.

Kisan Sabha – peasants' assembly; first organized peasants' assembly was West Patna Kisan Sabha in 1927, then Bihar Provincial Kisan Sabha in 1929 and then the All India Kisan Sabha in 1936 with Swami Sahajanand Saraswati as the progenitor and the most important leader of all the three assemblies.

Kulin – literally meaning cultured, cultivated and born of a distinguished ancestry; in Bengal it got associated with migrated Kanyakubja Brahmins who were learned and landed.

Mahamahopadhyay/a – a Sanskrit honorific prefixed to the name of a profound and outstanding scholar, literally meaning great, great knowledgeable.

Mool/Dih – root ancestor or root place/village.

Pandit – learned; when prefixed to a name, it is a mark of respect for a Brahmin scholar; among Kashmiri Brahmins it is also used as a surname/title/last name.

Panji-Prabandha – detailed genealogical records kept by Brahmins of North Bihar from the 14th-15th century in the region of Mithila who overtime got geographically and culturally-linguistically identified as Maithil Brahmins. The system was supported by Brahmin rulers of Darbhanga Raj.

Ramlila at Ramnagar – the operatic performance of the epic Ramayana, in its rendition by Goswami Tulsidas' *Ramcharitmanas*, for a month started and supported by the Brahmin Maharaja of Benares for close to two-and-a-half centuries in Ramnagar, Benares. Ramlila is now part of the oral and intangible heritage of mankind as designated by UNESCO.

Puruṣasūkta myth – It is the verse in the Rig Veda which gives the origin of the four-fold Varna from the cosmic being- Brahma – into Brahmin, originating from Brahma's head, Kshatriya originating from Brahma's shoulders, Vaishya originating from Brahma's thighs and the Shudra from Brahma's feet respectively.

Sharma – a blissful existence with a relentless pursuit of knowledge/spiritual perfection. It is a common Brahmin surname.

Singh – literally means lion; it is a secular title adopted by kings, rulers, zamindars/feudal lords to showcase their social and political prominence. Its Anglicized version from late-19th century is **Sinha**. It is also spelled as **Sinh**.

Srotriyas – the word comes from *sruti* or the Vedas, and, therefore, the term is employed to refer to Brahmins who have mastered the Vedas; from medieval times, in Mithila, it was used by specifically observant ritualistic and scholarly Maithil Brahmins headed by the Maharaja of Darbhanga as the highest of Brahmins in the Mithila region of Bihar. In Bengal, however, the Srotriyas are third in the hierarchy, the highest being the Kulin Brahmins/Rarhi Brahmins, who were both landed as well as learned.

Upadhyay – knowledgeable, teacher, also a Brahmin surname today.