

---

**Dual Transformation of Indian Historical Figures: Pathways to Civic Consciousness**

---

**<sup>1</sup>Dr Richa Verma**

Assistant Professor, Department of English and Modern European and Other Foreign Languages, Chhatrapati Shahu Ji Maharaj University, Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh

**<sup>2</sup>Nawal Kishor Lodhi**

Research Scholar, Department of English and Modern European and Other Foreign Languages, Chhatrapati Shahu Ji Maharaj University, Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh

---

**Article Received:** 26/01/2026**Article Accepted:** 27/02/2026**Published Online:** 28/02/2026**DOI:**10.47311/IJOES.2026.8.01.485

---

**Abstract**

In India, historical figures like Alha and Udal, Dinman Hardoul Singh, Mandula Devi, and Rani Laxmi Bai are interpreted as symbols, catalysts, and mediators of cultural memory that constantly shape and redefine its civilizational trajectory, sociopolitical imagination, ethical standards and civic sense. Such interpretations evolve into social realities when they are stated directly by authoritative figures like religious heads, political leaders or other such prominent personalities from the public sphere or when cascaded from one generation to another through various forms of folk literature, mythological narratives, and other cultural practices. Historical figures like Rani Lakshmi Bai and Udal are regarded for their patriotism and bravery; in contrast, Alha, Dinman Hardoul Singh, and Mandula Devi, are elevated to quasi-divine status, transcending human capabilities. These figures from the past also serve as interconnecting links which can bridge the gap between tradition and modernity and between memory and future aspirations. This paper analyses the dual transformation of Indian historical figures: deification of historical figures at first and then transformation of deified figures into cultural archetypes. It also reflects on the importance of using cultural archetypes in developing civic consciousness, even among children and illiterate masses.

**Keywords:** Archetypal Studies, Folk Literature, Civic Literature, Mythological Narratives, Indian History.

**Introduction**

---

Spanning over thousands of years, Indian historical figures like Rani Lakshmi Bai and Alha and Udal shape India's socio-political, cultural and philosophical identity. Being associated with values like bravery, inclusivity, justice, courage, compassion, and wisdom, these figures often serve as cultural archetypes; and usage of such archetypes yields in inspiring socio-political movements, civic education and literature. Mughal emperors like Akbar and Aurangzeb, who are considered as the zenith and nadir of Mughal sovereignty, are often associated with the skills of statecraft and good governance (Denault, 2020). Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi has transformed into a symbol championing civil rights for minorities and marginalized people (Vasudevan, 2015). In her work *Global Icons: Apertures to the Popular* (2011), Bishnupriya Ghosh examines three historical figures, namely Phoolan Devi, Mother Teresa and Arundhati Roy, as "global icons", transforming them into archetypes which further shape collective imagination and civic values. The work also explores how emotional engagement, information and communication technologies, and popular culture further transform these archetypes by mobilizing democratic participation. Informative and transmissive rituals lay a framework which analyzes how knowledge dissemination and emotional engagement leads to collective resistance and dynamic social change, wherein informative rituals shape social perceptions and civic norms by developing awareness of historical events and transmissive rituals bring about direct action through emotional engagement by using "behaviour-focused narratives" (Baris Cayli Messina, 2024).

The presentation of archetypes through media channels can exert significant influence on public perception of socio-political issues like youth participation and identity formation.

Guy Debord, in the chapter 1 titled "Separation Perfected" of the work *Society of the Spectacle*<sup>1</sup>, argues that symbols and representations are gradually replacing lived experiences which are authentic in nature. According to the author, people are not experiencing life directly, but representations of realities. He remarks:

"All that was once directly lived has become mere representation."

- (Guy Debord, 2012, p. 12)

### **Dual Transformation of Historical Figures**

Dual transformation of historical figures implies the process of transformation of such historical figures into deities or epic heroes, often narrated as possessing divine virtues and superhuman powers. Retelling of such figures through regional folklore, like ballad renditions of Alha<sup>2</sup> and rendition of Mandula Devi or Ratangarh Wali Mata<sup>3</sup>, is often done

---

with exaggeration and embellishment transforming these figures into symbols; and with passage of time, such symbols transform into cultural archetypes. Classroom communications and informal discussions make use of such archetypes as moral exemplars, which play a vital role in developing civic consciousness and in imparting education. An archetypal reading reflects upon the order of events in the narrative, a broad feeling of purposefulness, and an overarching moral consciousness embedded within belief system (Sharma, 2020).

### **Chandragupta-II (375-415 CE)**

Chandragupta II is popularly known as the “King Vikramaditya” who reigned over the Malwa region of Madhya Pradesh. He was an emperor of the Gupta Empire and his reign resulted in political expansion and cultural flourishing. The legend found greater place in the oral traditions of Central India. He used titles like *Vikramaditya* and *Mahārājādhirāja*; and coins used in the same period depicted him as lion-slayer, horseman, and holding bow and arrows etc. (*The COININDIA Coin Galleries: Gupta: Chandragupta II*, 2026). He is recorded as *Deva-rajā* in the Sanchi inscription (*Siddham. The Asian Inscription Database / IN00012 Sanchi Rail Inscription of the Time of Candragupta II*, 2018) and his daughter Prabhavati Gupta records him as *Deva-gupta* (Majumdar, 1981, p. 63). These titles and attributions further reinforce his semi-divine aura. The archetype of King Vikramaditya is exemplified as an epitome of valor and justice and the narrative is known to be packed with traditional wisdom, inspiring citizens when used as an archetype. (Sharma, 2023)

### **Alha and Udal (12<sup>th</sup> Century CE)**

Alha and Udal were born to the Dasraj who served as a commander in the army of Chandel King Paramardideva<sup>4</sup>. Alha and Udal belong to Mahoba, a district of Uttar Pradesh state popularly known as Alha-Udal nagari (*Culture & Heritage | District Mahoba, Government of Uttar Pradesh | India*, 2018).

The story of Banaphar clan<sup>5</sup> warriors was transformed into a mythical rendition over a period of eight hundred years and this rendition was able to develop a rebellious spirit among people of a major portion of the Indian subcontinent (Pathak, 2025). The archetype of Alha develops civic consciousness and serves as a moral exemplar for values like loyalty, courage, justice and community service. It also generates a sense of accountability and ethical leadership at the root level of local governance, i.e. panchayats, when retold or cascaded through ballad singing. On the other hand, the archetype of Udal embodies community pride and serves as an enduring spirit of resistance against adversity.

### **Mandula Devi and Kuwar Ganga Ram Deo (During 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Century CE)**

The Ratangarh temple is situated at a distance of 55 km from Datia (*Places of Interest | District Datia, Government of Madhya Pradesh | India*, 2020).

According to regional folklore, Mandula Devi was the sister of Kuwar Ganga Ram Deo who lived during the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. Mandula was a devotee of the goddess; and she was renowned for her beauty, kind nature, and generosity. According to legend, both Mandula and Ganga Ram Deo performed self-sacrifice and returned to the earth in order to protect their honour against Alauddin Khilji.

Local folklore portrays these historical figures as maternal protectors (Bharat, 2021) and are linked to ecological balance (Bansal News, 2024). Association of divine virtues and worshipping them through agrarian rituals further led to the deification.

The archetypes of Mandula Devi and Kuwar Ganga Ram Deo propose the idea that civic consciousness is not an abstract concept in itself; it is developed through nurturing personal relations and performing courageous actions (Bharatvarsh, 2022). The archetype of Mandula Devi propounds that shared resources (like water, roads, grasslands and forests) must be cared for common good of the community members or humanity at large. It also develops empathy toward vulnerable sections of society. On the other hand, the archetype of Kuwar Ganga Ram Deo inspires civic engagement through volunteering and defending community interests. Folklores and narratives related to Mandula Devi and her brother can be retold to younger generations in order to instil civic values among them.

#### **Lala Hardoul (1664-1688)**

Dinman Hardoul Singh or Lala Hardaoul was the son of maharaja Vir Singh Ju Deo, the ruler of the kingdom of Orchha. Orchha is a historical town located on the banks of Betwa river, and it was founded by Rudra Pratap, a Bundela ruler in the 16<sup>th</sup> century (*Orchha / District Administration Niwari, Government of Madhya Pradesh | India*, 2025). In the Ram Raja temple of Orchha only, Lord Rama is worshiped as a sovereign king (*MPTourism*, 2025).

Lala Hardoul died young as his brother Jhujhar Singh ordered Hardoul to be poisoned on suspicion of having illicit relations with his wife. But, their sister (Kunjavati) continued to honor him and kept his presence alive in the community. As per Bundeli folklore, Hardoul appeared after death at his sister's daughter's marriage. This miracle led to his deification (Sharma, 2024); and since then, Lala Hardoul has been invited to weddings in order to seek his help and blessings at an auspicious moment.

As an archetype, Lala Hardoul exemplifies a living guarding spirit in the Bundelkhand region and is venerated for his loyalty, sibling devotion, and protective powers at marriage ceremonies. The archetype serves as a moral exemplar for loyalty and resistance to injustice; reinforces family obligations; offers social insurance at the rites of passage; and anchors shared memory in the region.

#### **Rani Lakshmi Bai (1827-1858)**

Born as Manikarnika Tambe in Kashi (now Varanasi), Rani Lakshmi is popularly known for her leading role in the Indian Rebellion of 1857. Subhash Chandra Bose formed

---

the “Rani of Jhansi Regiment”, a women’s regiment as part of his Azad Hind Fauj or Indian National Army (Britannica Editors, 2012); this attribution further established her name as a symbol of courage which later got immortalized through literature, popular culture, and adaptations in film and television. Her maternal sacrifice in the 1857 rebellion, further helped her to transform into a “Mother-Nation” archetype. Harleen Singh (2014) reflects the metaphorical change in the narrative of Rani Lakshmi Bai, from being a woman to being a goddess. The restricted focus on patriotism, political decisions and flawless character of Lakshmi Bai yielded to transform her as an archetype which symbolizes the aggressive nationalism and patriotism toward the nation (Nayek, 2020). Although the deification of Rani Lakshmi Bai is only limited to the region in and around Jhansi district of Uttar Pradesh, specifically among rural masses who are either illiterate or ardent believers. The archetype of Rani Lakshmi Bai fosters the sense of patriotism and serves as a civic model, reflecting on how communities understand concepts like gender equality, responsibility, impartial justice, moral values and collective identity etc.

Maharaja Ranjeet Singh (1780 – 1839), Swami Vivekananda (1863 – 1902), Mahatma Gandhi (1869 – 1948), B.R. Ambedkar (1891 – 1956), Mother Teresa (1910 – 1997), Phoolan Devi<sup>6</sup> (1963-2001), and Arundhati Roy<sup>7</sup> (born in 1961) etc. are other such important Indian historical figures who have also been transformed into archetypes and are considered important in disseminating values, reviving Indian culture, and developing different forms of civic sense. However, they are considered of less value when it comes to deification as their status as divine beings often receives polarized views.

Haas and Lindstam (2023) proposed that an inclusive or exclusive approach to historical representations can lead to increased or decreased perceived centrality to the nation among marginalized people and minority community members.

### **Conclusion**

The blending of religious faith with civic consciousness is the hallmark feature of India’s cultural pedagogy: divine figures and legends are invoked not only for blessings but also as models of how to lead life responsibly with a greater civic sense. Archetypes, as described by C.G. Jung in his work *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (translated by R.F.C. Hull), not only preserve the collective memory but also cascade to younger generations. They can also dismantle complex and intricate relationships between history, myths, and moral values. When historical figures are transformed into cultural archetypes, they become civic educators who are responsible for developing knowledge, skills and attitude and further developing a meaningful civil sense and strengthening democratic values among the masses. These cultural archetypes, as civic educators, help people understand the impact of their choices on society and the nation by developing awareness of how small actions can yield to measurable outcomes due to which they are also

used in socio-political campaigns as they help local members anchor values in historical figures close to them. They also emphasize the dynamic interplay between shared memory, civic sense, morality, and modernity. By drawing connections to shared historical narratives, folklore, mythical literature and visual commemorations in the form of monuments, memorials, artworks, and portraits, cultural practices not only guide public memory but also influence civic behavior, emotional engagement and strengthen democracy.

The dual transformation of Indian historical figures not only instills civic consciousness in varied forms through indigenous traditions, rituals, and other socio-cultural practices but also serves the pedagogical need to make history more relevant to the contemporary world. The dual transformation also posits the view that the awareness of civic values, which are essential for any democratic country like India, is deeply intertwined with the historical imagination as past events and historical figures always continue to shape future happenings.

### Works Cited

- Bansal News. (2024, August 11). देवी माता का चमत् कारी मंदिर, मिट्टी खाने से सांप का जहर हो जाता है बेअसर. Bansal News.
- Baris Cayli Messina. (2024). Why temporality matters in collective resistance: Shifting civic norms in a post-traumatic society. *Sociological Forum*, 39(2), 201–215.
- Bharat, E. (2021, October 9). नवरात्र स्पेशल: विंध्याचल पर्वत पर विराजमान हैं मां रतनगढ़, मुगलों को हराने छत्रपति शिवाजी ने ली थी शरण. ETV Bharat News; ETV Bharat Madhya Pradesh.
- Britannica Editors. (2012, May 29). Lakshmi Bai | Rani of Jhansi, Biography, Image, & Facts. *Encyclopedia Britannica*.
- Culture & Heritage | District Mahoba, Government of Uttar Pradesh | India. (2018). Mahoba.nic.in.
- Debord, G., & Nicholson-Smith, D. (2012). The society of the spectacle (pp. 12-13). *Zone Books*.
- Denault, L. (2020). Akbar or Aurangzeb? Ethics, Empire, and Print Publics in Colonial India. *Itinerario*, 44(2), 260–286.
- Ghosh, B. (2011). *Global Icons: Apertures to the Popular* (pp. 69-200). Duke University Press.
- Haas, N., & Lindstam, E. (2023). My History or Our History? Historical Revisionism and Entitlement to Lead. *American Political Science Review*, Cambridge University Press 118(4), 1778-1802.
- Bharatvarsh, T. (2022, September 27). बीहड़ में विराजमान है मां रतनगढ़, छत्रपति शिवाजी ने कराया था मंदिर का निर्माण. TV9 Bharatvarsh.
- Jung, C. G. (1959). *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (R. F. C. Hull, Trans.).

- 
- Princeton University Press. (Original work published 1954)
- Jung, C. G. (1975). *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung* (G. Adler & R. F. C. Hull, Eds.; Second, Vol. 8, p. 213). Princeton University Press.
- Majumdar, R. C. (1981). *A Comprehensive History of India: pt. 1. A.D. 300-985* (Vol. 3, p. 63). Indian History Congress / People's Publishing House.
- M. P. Tourism. (2025). Mptourism.com.
- Nayek, D. (2020). From Shakuntala to Sanitary Panels: Women in Indian Graphic Narratives. *Feminist Encounters: A Journal of Critical Studies in Culture and Politics*, 4(1).
- Orchha | District Administration Niwari, Government of Madhya Pradesh | India. (2025). Niwari.nic.in.
- Pathak, A. (2025). *Alha Udal Ballad Rendition of Western Uttar Pradesh* (pp. 25–26). BRILL.
- Places of Interest | District Datia, Government of Madhya Pradesh | India. (2020). Datia.nic.in.
- Sharma, Dr. S. T. (2020). The Monomyth of Vikramaditya. *SMART MOVES JOURNAL IJELLH*, 8(3), 13.
- Sharma, D. S. T. (2023). Legendary Narrative of King Vikramaditya: An Archetype for Spiritual Transformation. *International Journal of Innovations in Engineering Research and Technology*, 10(2).
- Sharma, S. (2024, August 19). Hardol Lala: बुंदेलखंड के हरदौल लाला को राजा ने दिया जहर, तब बहन के प्यार से हुआ था चमत्कार, राखी पर सुनिए अनोखी कहानी. *Navbharat Times*.
- Siddham. *The Asian Inscription Database | IN00012 Sanchi Rail Inscription of the Time of Candragupta II*. (2018). Siddham.network.
- Singh, H. (2014). *The Rani of Jhansi: Gender, history and fable in India* (p. 141). Delhi: Cambridge University Press.
- The COININDIA Coin Galleries: Gupta: Chandragupta II. (2026). Coinindia.com.
- Vasudevan, R. (2015). Freedom Movement and the Fourth Estate- Gandhian Perspectives. *Journal of Social Science Research*, 6(3), 1134–1143.