Historically, in the US academic institutions, the History of Mathematics (HOM) is like a no-man land, particularly, when it comes to its development as an area of instruction and its academic specialization. After my years of engagement in HOM, a ‘theorem’ in HOM is equivalent to finding the necessary and sufficient conditions for the mathematical development of an individual, institution, society, or a nation. Thus, this paper focuses on Aryabhata (476-550 AD), as the first ‘theorem’ in HOM!

The name of Aryabhatta would make to the top four of every list of great mathematical minds of ancient India. Yet, little is known of his life beyond mathematics and astronomy. The paper has two broad parts. The first part, apart from providing a summary of his achievements, attempts to align the mathematical problems he tackled with social challenges of his period. After all, mathematics is neither pursued nor supported in an intellectual vacuum.

The second part sheds light on the social and political conditions of golden India (c 300-600 AD) under the dynasty of the Gupta kings, which encouraged the development of mathematical and scientific culture. However, its influence gradually spread for beyond the borders of India. (Received February 24, 2015)