



Unit 2:

COURSE OBJECTIVES: To enable the students to understand the importance of our surroundings and encourage the students to contribute towards sustainable development.

Module 2- Indian Literature, Culture, Tradition, and Practices

Evolution of script and languages in India: Harappan Script and Brahmi Script. The Vedas, the Upanishads, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, Puranas, Buddhist and Jain Literature in Pali, Prakrit And Sanskrit, Kautilya's Arthashastra, Famous Sanskrit Authors, Telugu Literature, Kannada Literature, Malayalam Literature, Sangama Literature Northern Indian Languages & Literature, Persian and Urdu, Hindi Literature



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EVOLUTION OF SCRIPT AND LANGUAGES IN INDIA

Language - A language usually refers to the spoken language, a method of communication.

Script - A script refers to a collection of characters used to write one or more languages. Scripts are writing systems that allow the transcription of a language, via alphabet sets.

Indus script (Harappa script)

After the pictographic representations of early man, the first evidence of a writing system can be seen in the Indus valley civilization. The earliest evidence of which is found on the pottery and pot shreds of Rahman Dheri and these potter's marks, engraved or painted, are similar to those appearing in the Mature Indus symbol system.

Later the writing system can be seen on the seals and sealing's of Harappan period. Most inscriptions containing symbols are extremely short (5 symbols), making it difficult to judge whether or not these symbols constituted a script used to record a language, or even symbolize a writing system.

The long inscriptions are found in Gujarat particularly Dholavira where slabs of stone are inscribed with inscriptions which might represent name plates of the houses with 24 to 34 symbols. The characters are largely pictorial. The inscriptions are written mostly from right-to-left because there are several instances of the symbols being compressed on the left side, as if the writer is running out of space at the end of the row there. The number of principal signs is about 400.

There were arguments that the Indus script is non-linguistic, which symbolise families, clans, gods, and religious concepts. But others have argued that it is a linguistic system and the debate shifted to whether it is the predecessor of Dravidian script or the Brahmi script.

Brahmi script

Brahmi is the originator of most of the present Indian scripts. It developed into two broad types in Northern and Southern India. In the Northern one being more angular and the Southern one being more circular. It was deciphered in 1838 by James Prinsep. The best-known Brahmi inscriptions are the rock-cut edicts of Ashoka in north-central India, dated to 250-232 BC.

Brahmi is usually written from left to right. Brahmi is an abugida meaning that each letter represents a consonant, while vowels are written with obligatory diacritics called matras in Sanskrit. In the early Brahmi period, the existence of punctuation marks is not very well shown. The use of a dash and a curved horizontal line is found. A flower mark seems to mark the end and a circular mark appears to indicate the full stop. It was used for writing Prakrit and later Sanskrit language. According to the epigraphers, all Indian scripts are derived from Brahmi. There are two main families of scripts:

1) **Devanagari**, which is the basis of the languages of northern and western India: Hindi, Gujarati, Bengali, Marathi, Dogri, Panjabi, etc.

2) **Dravidian**, which shows the formats of Grantha and Vatteluttu.



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THE VEDAS

The Vedas are the earliest literary records of Sanskrit Literature in India. Vedas existed since time immemorial. Many believe that Sage Veda Vyasa wrote them, but the fact is that he just divided the complete Vedas into four parts. Earlier to him, all 4 of them existed together. The Vedas are believed to be the oldest holy books in Hinduism (Sanatana Dharma). The Vedas are the large body of vast knowledge and text; the religious and spiritual teachings of which encompasses all aspects of life.

Definition - Veda simply means - Knowledge. It is a Sanskrit word from the root - Vid, which means finding, knowing, acquiring, or understanding.

The 4 Vedas - There are four Vedas: Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda, and Atharva Veda, and all of them together are attributed to as Chaturveda. Each Veda consists of the Brahmanas, the Upanishads and the Aranyakas. Each Veda has been sub classified into four major text types - The Samhitas, the most ancient layer of text in the Vedas, consisting of mantras, hymns, prayers, and benedictions.

The Rig Veda

Rig Veda is one of the oldest texts of the Indo-Aryan Civilization. It consists of two Sanskrit words

Rig and Veda. Rig means to praise or shine and Veda means knowledge. Rig Veda is a collection of 1,028 hymns and 10,600 verses, organized into ten different Mandalas. Each Mandala is associated with a certain deity. There are hymns praising gods and asking for benefits such as health, long life, wealth, protection, and victory in battle. It is the principal and oldest of the four Vedas. Rig Veda was composed in an ancient form of Sanskrit about 1500 BC, though a wider approximation of 1700-1100 BC has also been given by experts.

Rig Veda has hymns that sing the praises of the Rig Vedic deities like Indra, Agni, Soma, Varuna, Surya and other Gods. Rigveda provides almost complete information about the old Vedic civilization. It shows the picture of oldest Aryan civilization and their religion, way of life, thought and modes of behaviour. Rigveda has been a reminder of the ancient cultural heritage and point of pride for Hindus, with some hymns still in use in major rites of passage ceremonies.

The Sama Veda

Sama Veda, known as the Veda of Melodies and Chants, is the second in the series of the four Vedas. Sama Veda is referred as the Book of Songs. It is derived from two words - Saman of Sanskrit meaning Song and Veda meaning Knowledge. In Sama Veda, the words of Rig Veda put to music, and are to be sung rather than to be read or recited. The Sama Veda is divided into two major parts. First is the melody collection or the Saman - the songs. The second part is the Arcika or the verse books - a collection (Samhita) of hymns. The total number of verses in the Samaveda is 1875. Amongst these, 1771 Verses are from the Rigveda and 99 verses of this Samhita are not found in the Rigveda. When the Yajya was organised, the singer Priest called out the deity by singing the mantras in a loud and sweet voice.



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The Sama Veda has served as the principal roots of the Indian classical music and dance tradition. The Samaveda, in addition to singing and chanting, mentions instruments and the specific rules and regulations of playing them, so as to preserve the sanctity of ancient instruments.

The Yajur Veda

Yajur Veda is composed of Yajus and Veda. Yajus means mantras dedicated to Yagya and Veda means knowledge. Yajur Veda is also called the book of rituals. It is a compilation of ritual offering formulas or the prose mantras to be chanted repeatedly by a priest while an individual performs the ascertained ritual actions before the sacrificial fire or the Yajna. Yajur Veda has served as a practical guidebook for the priest, or the Purohitis who execute the acts of ceremonial religion. Yajur Veda believed to have been composed between 1200 to 800 BC.

The Yajurveda is broadly grouped into Krishna Yajurveda (Black Yajurveda) and Shukla Yajurveda (White Yajurveda). The verses of the Krishna Yajurveda being un-arranged, unclear, and disparate or dissimilar, the collection are referred as Black Yajurveda. In contrast, the well- arranged and imparting a particular meaning, the Shukla Yajurveda is known as the White Yajurveda. The text is a useful source of information about agriculture, economic, and social life during the Vedic era.

The Atharva Veda

The fourth and final of the Vedas is the Atharva Veda. It is depicted as knowledge storehouse of Atharvanas. Atharvanas means formulas and spells intended to counteract diseases and calamities, or the procedures for everyday life. It is also called as the Veda of Magic formulas. Atharva Veda is a mixture of hymns, chants and prayers; and involves issues such as healing of illnesses, prolonging life, the black magic and rituals for removing maladies and anxieties.

It is a collection of 730 hymns with about 6,000 mantras, divided into 20 books, with three Upanishads embedded to it; Mundaka Upanishad, Mandukya Upanishad, and Prashna Upanishad.

The Samhitas in the Atharva Veda have written accounts of Surgical and medical speculations. It includes mantras and verses for treating a variety of ailments. For instance, it discusses how to deal with an open fracture and how to wrap the wound with Rohini plant (*Ficus infectoria*, native to India). It has speculations about remedy from herbal medicines.



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THE UPANISHADS

The concluding parts of the Veda are called the Upanishads. The word Upanishad has been derived from the root Sad (to sit), to which are added two prefixes: Upa and Ni. The prefix Upa denotes nearness and Ni totality. Thus, this word means sitting nearby devotedly. This no doubt refers to the students sitting down near his teacher at the time of instruction. The word in course of time gathered round it the sense of secret teaching or secret doctrine (Rahasya) which was imparted at such sittings. Due to secrecy and mystery of the teachings, a teacher refuses to impart instruction to a student who has not proved his worthiness to receive the instruction.

The Upanishads are also called Vedanta. Literally, Vedanta means the end of Veda, Vedasya antah, the conclusion (Anta) as well as the goal (Anta) of the Vedas. Upanishads are called the end of the Veda because they represent the central aim and contain the ultimate goal of the Veda as they deal with Moksha or Supreme Bliss. As Upanishads contain difficult discussions of ultimate philosophical problems, they were taught to the students at the end of their course. The Upanishads were written over a time period ranging from 700 to 400 BC.

Number of the Upanishads

Different scholars have been estimated that numbers of Upanishads are approximately 200. 108 Upanishads are enumerated in the Muktikopanishad. Among these Upanishads, ten Upanishads are considered the most important Upanishads from the point of view of Vedantic Philosophy. Ten Principal Upanishads known as Dashopanishad are: Isha, Kena, Katha, Prashna, Munda, Mandukya, Taittiriya, Aitareya, Chandogya and Brihadaranyaka

Division of the Upanishads

According to the Muktikopanishad, 108 Upanishads are divided according to four Vedas are as follows:

- 10 Upanishads from the Rigveda,
- 19 Upanishads from the Shukla-Yajurveda,
- 32 Upanishads from the Krishna-Yajurveda,
- 16 Upanishads from the Samaveda and
- 31 Upanishads from the Atharvaveda.

The Principal thirteen Upanishads, related to the Vedas are:

A) Upanishads of the Rigveda:

- (1) Aitareya Upanishad,
- (2) Kaushitaki Upanishad

(B) Upanishads of the Shukla-Yajurveda:

- (3) Brihadaranyaka Upanishad,
- (4) Isha Upanishad



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(C) Upanishads of the Krishna-Yajurveda:

- (5) Taittiriya Upanishad
- (6) Katha Upanishad,
- (7) Shvetashvatara Upanishad
- (8) Maitrayaniya Upanishad

(D) Upanishads of the Samaveda:

- (9) Chandogya Upanishad,
- (10) Kena Upanishad

(E) Upanishads of the Atharvaveda:

- (11) Mundaka Upanishad,
- (12) Mandukya Upanishad,
- (13) Prashna Upanishad.

Major Theme of the Upanishads

The Upanishads are religious and philosophical treatises. They constitute the last phase of the Vedic revelation. They represent the knowledge of Brahman (Brahma-Vidva). What is this world? Who am I? What becomes of me after death? Such questions are asked and answered in these Upanishads. The essential theme of the Upanishads is the nature of the world and God. The doctrine of true knowledge and salvation are major subjects of the Upanishadic philosophy. The spirit of their contents is anti- ritualistic.

Importance of the Upanishads

- 1) The Upanishads occupy a unique place in the development of Indian philosophical thought. They contain the highest authority on which the various systems of philosophy in India rest.
- 2) The Upanishads are associated with the Vedas and make the entire range of Vedic knowledge as complete. The Upanishads generally mention the Vedas and their study with respect.
- 3) Brahavidya or the knowledge of Brahman, the Supreme Reality is the great kingdom of the principal Upanishads. They give importance to Knowledge alone. Anyone having knowledge may be Guru or Acharya. Even kings approached to them for the attainment of knowledge. In the Chandogya Upanishad (4.1-3) Raikva a Brahmana not by caste but by his knowledge, instructed king Janashruti. This shows that for Upanishads knowledgeable person is the most important and not the Brahmana, Kshatriya or anyone else.
- 4) The idea that the Atman is eternal, and becomes reborn over and over again is central to the concept of reincarnation that is taught in the Upanishads.



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- 5) Without understanding the Upanishads, it is impossible to get an insight into Indian history and culture. Every subsequent development of philosophy and religion in India has drawn heavily on the Upanishads.
- 6) They are concerned with the contemplative- realizational rather than with the ritualistic-ceremonial aspect of the spiritual life of the people.
- 7) The Upanishads gave the people a philosophy but not a religion.

THE PURANAS

The Puranas are ancient Hindu texts that tell stories of the creation of the world, legends of the gods, and explanations of how to perform religious rituals. Purana is Sanskrit word that means ancient or old. Puranas are encyclopaedic texts that cover various topics such as cosmogony, cosmology, folk tales, pilgrimages, temples, medicine, astronomy, grammar, mineralogy, theology and philosophy as well as the genealogies of gods, goddesses, kings and sages.

The Puranas were written with the object of popularizing the truths taught in the Vedas by presenting them in relation to specific personages and to the events of their lives. The main value of the Puranas consists in amplifying, enforcing and illustrating the spiritual truths stated in the Vedas in the form of injunctions and commands.

Puranas are traditionally defined as comprising five main topics –

1. Sarga (Creation)
2. Pratisarga (Dissolution and recreation)
3. Vamsa (Divine genealogies)
4. Manvantara (Ages of Manus)
5. Vasmanuchari (Genealogies of Kings).

The purpose of the puranas was to bring people closer to the gods. All of the purana texts are sectarian, dedicated to certain deities – some to gods, some to goddesses. Puranas also served to give the common people access to and understanding of the essential teachings and complex yogic philosophies of the ancient Vedic texts.

Traditionally, there are 18 main puranas (Mahapuranas) and 18 minor puranas

(Upapuranas), which contain over 400,000 verses.

The Mahapuranas – Of the many texts designated Puranas the most important are the Mahapuranas. These are eighteen in number.

- Agni Purana (15,400 verses)
- Bhagavata Purana (18,000 verses). One of the most celebrated and popular of the Puranas.
- Bhavishya Purana (14,500 verses)
- Brahma Purana (24,000 verses)



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- Brahmanda Purana (12,000 verses)
- Brahma Vaivarta Purana (18,000 verses)
- Garuda Purana (19,000 verses)
- Kurma Purana (17,000 verses)
- Linga Purana (11,000 verses)
- Markandeya Purana (9,000 verses; includes Devi Mahatmyam, an important text for Shaktas)

Vishnu Puranas – Vishnu Purana, Bhagavata Purana, Naradeya Purana, Garuda Purana, Padma Purana, Varaha Purana, Vamana Purana, Kurma Purana, Matsya Purana. The Vishnu Purana is one of the eighteen Mahapuranas, a genre of ancient and medieval texts of Hinduism.

Shiva Puranas – Shiva Purana, Linga Purana, Skanda Purana, Agni Purana, Vayu Purana. Shiva Purana is one of the eighteen major Puranas. It is concerned with the Hindu god Shiva and the goddess Parvati.

According to the Padma Purana, the Puranas may be classified in accordance with the three gunas or

Qualities; truth, passion, and ignorance:

1) Sattva (Truth; Purity): Vishnu Purana, Bhagavata Purana, Naradeya Purana, Garuda Purana, Padma Purana, Varaha Purana.

2) Rajas (Dimness; Passion): Brahmanda Purana, Brahma Vaivarta Purana, Markandeya Purana, Bhavishya Purana, Vamana Purana, Brahma Purana.

3) Tamas (Darkness; Ignorance): Matsya Purana, Kurma Purana, Linga Purana, Shiva Purana, Skanda Purana, Agni Purana.

The Upapuranas

The Upapuranas are lesser or supplementary texts. These are also said to be eighteen in number They Include: Sanat-kumara, Narasimha, Brihan-naradiya, Siva-rahasya, Durvasa, Kapilla, Vamana,

Bhargava, Varuna, Kalika, Samba, Nandi, Surya, Parasara, Vasishtha, Deyi-Bhagavata, Ganesha, Mudgala, and Hamsa, The Ganesha and Mudgala Puranas are devoted to Ganesha. The Devi

Bhagavata Purana, which extols the goddess Durga, has become (along with the Devi Mahatmya of the Markandeya Purana) a basic text for Devi worshipers.

Sthala Puranas – This corpus of texts tells of the origins and traditions of particular temples or shrines.

The word Sthala means spot in Sanskrit. There are numerous Sthala Puranas, most written in vernaculars, some with Sanskrit versions as well.



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Kula Puranas – The word kula means family or tribe in Sanskrit. These Puranas deal with a caste's origin myth, stories, and legends. They are important sources for caste identity. This subgenre is usually in the vernacular and may at times remain oral.

THE RAMAYANA

Ramayana is one of the great epics of the Sanskrit language. There are many versions of Ramayana in Indian language beside Buddhist, Sikh, and Jain adaptation. There are also Cambodian, Indonesian, Filipino, Thai, Lao, Burmese and Malaysian version of tale. Ramayan narrates the life of Rama, Prince of legendary kingdom of Kosala. It consists of 24000 verses

Origin

The original Ramayana written by the Sage Valmiki comprised of seven - Kandas or books.

- 1. Bala Kanda** - The Book of the Youth, the boyhood and adolescence of Rama.
- 2. Ayodhya Kanda** - The Book of Ayodhya, the court of Dasharatha, conversation between Dasharatha and Kaikeyi and the exile of Rama.
- 3. Aranya Kanda** - The Book of the Forest, life in the forest during the fourteen-year exile and the abduction of Sita by Ravana.
- 4. Kishkindhya Kanda** - The Book of the Empire of Holy Monkeys, Rama's residence in Kishkindhya, the quest for Sita, and the slaying of Bali.
- 5. Sundara Kanda** - The Book of the Beautiful (Hanuman), sundara means beautiful, and this portion of the book has passages of lyrical beauty; description of the landscapes over which Rama roams, and the arrival of Rama and his allies in Lanka.
- 6. Yuddha Kanda** - The Book of War, the defeat of Ravana, the recovery of Sita, the return to Ayodhya, and the coronation of Rama and
- 7. Uttara Kanda** - The Book Beyond, the later section, detailing Rama's life in Ayodhya, the banishment of Sita, the birth of Lava and Kusa, the reconciliation of Rama and Sita, her death or return to the earth, and Rama's ascent into heaven.

Ramayana: Lessons the epic taught us

This Hindu epic has given us number of lessons that we must not forget. These lessons help us better ourselves and emerge as refined and reformed human beings with each passing day. The basic teaching of Ramayana is that no matter how powerful evil is, it will always be defeated by Good. Truth always wins. The win of good over evil is a universal fate. A person should always have a noble heart and good values. That is how Lord Rama defeated the most knowledgeable person Ravana



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Main Teachings are -

Respect elders and be duty bound towards parents - Ram left for vanvas after his step-mother expressed her desire to see biological son Bharat as the future king of Ayodhya.

Remain united with siblings even during the toughest of times - Bharat refused to accept the throne and waited for Ram to return from his vanvas. Lakshman accompanied his brother Ram for the 14-year-long vanvas.

Be deeply committed to your duty - The duty of the King is to keep his subjects happy. Lord Ram had to abandon his wife for the sake of the masses after they questioned her chastity. As a King, he had to think of his subjects wishes ahead of his personal ones.

Choose the path of righteousness - Vibhishana, younger brother of Ravana chose to not support his sibling in the war against Ram. He knew his brother had committed a sin by abducted a married lady. Remain humble no matter how powerful you become - Hanuman could have easily rescued Sita from Ravana's Ashoka Vatika. He had the power to single-handed fight against Ravana's army. But he chose to surrender to Lord Ram's divinity and let him do the needful.

Never consider anyone inferior - Mighty prince Ram took the help of Vanar sena (monkey army) to build a bridge (Ram Setu) so that he could reach Lanka to free Sita. The little monkeys not just helped him build the setu but also took part in the war against Ravana.

All that glitters is not gold - Sita got attracted to a spotted deer that looked incredibly beautiful. She wanted Ram to get the deer for her from the jungle. Actually, it wasn't a deer, but Mareech, Ravana's accomplice in disguise of the animal.

Embrace all irrespective of caste, creed or colour - Prince Ram ate fruits that were already tasted by Shabri, a poor old woman who had nothing much to offer but pure love.

Be loyal to your spouse - Ravana tried to lure Sita after abducting her. But Sita never let him succeed in his attempts. Ram didn't remarry after Sita was forcefully abandoned by him even after conducting the Agni Pariksha. Being a King, he enjoyed the privilege of having many queens, but he chose to remain loyal to his beloved wife - Sita.

Abandon the following - Kama (lust), Krodha (anger), Moha (desire), Lobha (greed), Mada (pride), Ahankar (ego), Irshya (jealousy), Jaddata (insensitivity), Ghrina (hatred), Bhaya (fear).



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THE MAHABHARATA

Mahabharata is one of the two Sanskrit epic of ancient India (the other being the Ramayana). The Mahabharata is regarded by Hindus as both a text about dharma (Hindu moral law) and a history. Appearing in its present form about 400 BC, the Mahabharata talks about the struggle for sovereignty between two groups of cousins, the Kauravas (sons of Dhritarashtra, the descendant of Kuru) and the Pandavas (sons of Pandu). It is written by Sage Ved Vyasa. The poem is made up of almost 100,000 couplets divided into 18 sections.

Important Life Lessons from the Mahabharata are -

The epic tale Mahabharata is something everyone should read at least once in their life. There are plenty of life lessons one can learn from the Mahabharata.

Being kind, humble and generous is not enough to live life - The way Karna's life moved, we

Realized, more often than not, that the world is an evil place to survive in. And to face it, we must understand how it really works.

Bad company can ruin your life beyond imagination - We all hate Shakuni mama, don't we? He literally destroyed everything that the Kauravas owned, and he influenced them to be negative. If it wasn't for him, the war wouldn't have happened at all.

Sometimes, enemies come in the form of friends - Although the Kauravas were more in number, their supporters were not really in favour of them. Bheeshma, Vidura and Drona secretly admired the Pandavas. Especially Vidura, who was the ultimate guide in everything the Kauravas did.

Respect Woman - Draupadi had five husbands. They were strong and wealthy, but they all became helpless when she was disgraced by multiple other men. They had everything, but failed to show courage. Draupadi's anger and desire for revenge led to the war and downfall of the Kuru clan.

Half knowledge can be more dangerous than no knowledge - Abhimanyu wouldn't have died. Although we remember him for his bravery and undying courage, he ultimately lost his life.

You cannot be stopped if you are passionate about what you do - Most of us know that Arjun was the greatest archer in the world. But Eklavya was even better than him. He hid himself behind the trees and grasped everything that Drona taught Arjun. His passion for archery and hunger for knowledge made him even better than Arjun at archery.

A good strategy is what you need to sail your boat - If Pandavas didn't have Krishna and his master plan, they wouldn't have witnessed the victory they did. Always have a plan.

Unconditional support and loyal friends can take you places - The Pandavas had Lord Krishna, and the Kauravas had Karna. Both of them always backed the two parties, no matter what. In fact, Duryodhan was really weak without Karna.



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You need to fight for what you think belongs to you - The Pandavas never stopped fighting for what rightfully belonged to them. Their courage and determination are definitely something to admire and learn from.

Being too emotional can be a bad idea - Dhritrashtra's love for his son was blind. Throughout the epic, he remained torn between his principles and keeping his son happy. Somehow this made Duryodhan even more evil than what he already was, leading to awful consequences and the war.

Learning throughout life is the best gift you can give yourself - Arjun grasped whatever came his way. Not only did he learn the best of military science from Drona, but he was also interested in learning about divine weapons from Indra. He learnt about Pashupatastra from Mahadev as well. Additionally, he treated Yudhishter and Krishna as his mentors too, and continued learning whatever they had to offer.



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Sanskrit Literature and Famous Authors

There are large numbers of books in Sanskrit dealing with various subjects like Mathematics, Science, Astronomy, Astrology, Agriculture, Geography, Law, Medicine and grammar. The law books were called as the Dharmasutras and smritis, together known as Dharmashastras. The Dharmasutras were compiled between 500 and 200 BC. These lay down duties for different varmas as well as for the kings and their officials. They prescribed the rules according to which property had to be held, sold and inherited. They also prescribe punishments for persons guilty of assault, murder and adultery. The Manusmriti tells us about the role of man and woman in society, their code of conduct and relationship with each other. The works of Ashwaghosha, Bhasa, Shudraka, Kalidasa and Banabhatta provided us with glimpses of the social and cultural life of northern and central India in times of the Guptas and Harsha. The Gupta period also saw the development of Sanskrit grammar based on the works of Panini and Patanjali, The Kushana kings patronised Sanskrit scholars. Ashwaghosha wrote the Buddhacharitra which is the biography of the Buddha. He also wrote Saundarananda, which is a fine example of Sanskrit poetry.

Books on medicine were written by Charak and on surgery by Sushruta. Madhava wrote a book on pathology. Books written on astronomy by Varahamihira (Bhrihatsamhita), Aryabhata (Aryabhatia) and on astrology by Lagdhacharya (Vedanga Jyotisha) had all achieved prominence.

The post-medieval period in northern India saw the rise of Sanskrit literature in Kashmir. Somadeva's Katha-sarit-sagar and Kalhan's Rajotarangini are of historical importance. It gives a vivid account of the Kings of Kashmir. The Geet Govinda of Jaidev is the finest poem of Sanskrit literature of this period, besides numerous works on different aspects of art and architecture, sculpture, iconography and related fields.

Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam and Tamil Literature

There are four South-Indian languages i.e. Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam developed their own literature. Tamil being the oldest of these languages and produced the Sangam literature the oldest literature in Tamil.

Telugu Literature

Telugu is one of the classical languages of India. It is the language of the Dravidian family. Telugu literature consists of poems, short stories, novels, plays and song lyrics. Early Telugu literature is religious in subject matter. Poets and scholars drew most of their material from epics such as the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Puranas. The Vijayanagar period was the golden age of Telugu literature. Nachana Somanatha, a court poet, produced a poetical work titled Uttaraharivansam (about Lord Krishna). Krishna Dev Raya, the greatest of the Vijayanagar, was a poet of great merit. His work Amuktamalyada is regarded as an excellent literature in Telegu. In this poem, Krishnav Deva Raya expressed his innumerable ideas, personal thoughts and observations through the description of cities, towns, villages, men, women etc. Eight Telugu literary luminaries, popularly known as Ashtadiggojas adorned his court. Among them, Allasani Peddana, the author of Mamacharithram, was the greatest. The other seven poets of the group were Nandi Timmans, the author of Purijathopahorumam,



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Madayagari Mallana, Dhurjati, Ayyalaraju Ramabhadra Kavi, Pingali Surana, Ramaraja Bhushana and Tenali Ramakrishna

Kannada Literature

Apart from Telugu, Vijayanagar rulers extended their patronage to Kannada literature, Kannada language developed fully after the 10 century AD. The earliest known literary work in Kannada is Kaviraj written by the Rashtrakuta king. Nripatunga Amoghavarsha. Pampa, known as the father of Kannada, wrote his great poetic works Adi Purana and Vikramarijiva. In the thirteenth century new feats were achieved in Kannada literature. Harishvara wrote Harishchandra kavya and Somanatha charita whereas Bandhuvarma wrote Harivanshabhyudaya and Jiva Sambodhana.

Kannada literature flourished considerably between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries under the patronage of the Vijayanagara kings. Poets of all religious groups made important contribution to it. Kunura Vyasa wrote Bharata and Narahari wrote Tarave Ramayana. This is the first Rama Katha in Kannada composed on the basis of Valmiki's Ramayana. Lakshamisha who lived in the seventeenth Century wrote Jaimini Bharata

Malayalam Literature

Malayalam is spoken in Kerala and the adjoining areas. The language of Malayalam emerged around the 11th century AD. The earliest known literary work in Malayalam is Ramacharitam, an epic poem written by Cheeraman in 1198 AD. By 15th century, Malayalam was recognised as an independent language. Bhasa Kautilya, a commentary on Arthashashtra and Kokasandisan are two great works. Rama Panikkar and Ramanujam Ezhuthachan (Father of modern Malayalam) are well known authors of Malayalam literature.

Though it developed much later compared to other South Indian languages, Malayalam has made a mark as a powerful medium of expression. Now a large number of journals, newspapers and magazines are published in Malayalam.

Tamil or Sangam Literature

Sangam literature is the name given to the earliest available Tamil literature. The word 'Sangam' literally means association. In ancient times the association or academy of the most learned men of the Tamil land was called Sangam whose chief function was promotion of literature. Poets in assemblies produced the Sangam literature over a period of three to four centuries. The literature produced in these assemblies was called Sangama literature. Later Tamil writers mention the existence of three literary academies (Sangams) at different periods. Tamil legends talk about three Sangams: Madurai, Kapadapuram and Thenmadurai. Naturalism and Romanticism were the salient features of the poems of the Sangam.

Tolkappiyum, was written by Tolkappiyanar and is the oldest extant Tamil grammar dating back to 500 BC. It lays down rules for different kinds of poetical compositions drawn from the examples furnished by the best works then extant. Containing about 1,612 sutras, Tolkappiyam is in three parts. The first two parts are interesting from both linguistic and philological points of view; the third part is most valuable as it gives a glimpse of the



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political, social, and religious life of the people during the period when the author of this treatise lived.

NORTHERN INDIAN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE

We have already seen how languages evolved in India right up to the early medieval period. The old Apabhramsha had taken new forms in some areas or was in the process of evolving into other forms. Languages were evolving at two levels – Spoken language & Written language.

The old Brahmi script of the Ashoka days had undergone a great change. The alphabets during Ashoka's period were uneven in size but by the time of Harsha, the letters had become of the same size and were regular, presenting the picture of a cultivated hand. The studies have indicated that all the scripts of present northern Indian languages, except that of Urdu, have had their origin in old Brahmi. There are over 200 languages or dialects spoken in India at present. Some are widely used while others are limited to a particular area. A large number of people speak Hindi in its different forms that include Braj Bhasha, Avadhi, Bhojpuri, Magadhi, Maithili, Rajasthani and Khadi Boli. The language used by Surdas and Bihari has been given the name of Braj Bhasha; that used by Tulsidas in the Ramacharitamanasa is called Avadhi and the one used by Vidyapati (Maithili songs of the love of Radha and Krishna) has been termed as Maithili.

Persian and Urdu

Urdu emerged as an independent language towards the end of the 4th century AD.

Arabic and Persian were introduced in India with the coming of the Turks and the Mongols.

Persian remained the court language for many centuries.

Urdu as a language was born out of the interaction between Hindi and Persian. Originally it was a dialect but slowly it acquired all the features of a formal language when the authors started using Persian script.

✓ Urdu became more popular in the early eighteenth century. People even wrote accounts of later Mughals in Urdu.

✓ Urdu was patronised by the Nawabs of Lucknow, who held symposiums in this language. Slowly it became quite popular as Persian was the language of the court.

✓ Much of the literature produced in this period was written in Persian. Amir Khosrow and Amir Hasan Dehelvi wrote superb poetry in Persian. Historians like Minhas-us-Siraj, Zia Barani and Ibn Batuta who came to India during those days wrote accounts of rulers, important political events and incidents in this language.

Hindi Literature

The emergence of other languages resulted in the decline of Sanskrit. Prithviraj Raso is supposed to be the first book in Hindi language. It is an account of exploits of Prithvi Raj Chauhan. Hindi evolved during the Apabhramsha stage between the 7th AD and the 14th AD. There was a tremendous growth of regional languages like Hindi, Bengali, Assamese, Oriya, Marathi and Gujarati. Hindi was patronised by the Rajput rulers as it glorified chivalry and poetry. The most famous figures from this period were Kabir and Tulsidas.



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During the last 200 years, many writers have contributed to the development of modern India literature, written in a number of regional languages. Swami Dayanand Saraswathi's contribution to Hindi cannot be ignored. Originally a Gujarati and a scholar of Sanskrit, he advocated Hindi as a common language for the whole of India. He started writing in Hindi and contributed articles to journals essentially engaged in religious and social reforms. Satyarth Prakash was his most important work in Hindi.

Rabindranath Tagore became the first Indian to win the Nobel Prize for literature Geetanjali in 1913. Bharatendu Harishchandra was one of the earliest to produce dramas in Hindi which were basically translations of texts written in Sanskrit and other languages. Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi was another author who wrote translations or made adaptations from Sanskrit. Bankim Chandra Chatterji (1838-94) wrote novels originally in Bangla. They came to be translated into Hindi and became very popular. Vande Mataram, our national song, is an excerpt from his novel, Anand Math.

Among other names that have enriched Hindi literature, is that of Munshi Prem Chand, Surya Kant Tripathi Nirala, Sumitranandan Pant, Ramdhari Singh Dinkar and Haribans Rai Bacchan. Mahadevi Verma is the first woman writer in Hindi to highlight issues related to women. Maithili Sharan Gupt is another important name. Jaishankar Prasad wrote beautiful dramas.

If we look at the above writers, we find that they all wrote with a purpose. Swami Dayanand wrote in order to reform the Hindu society and rid it of false beliefs and social evils. Munshi Prem Chand tried to draw the attention of the society to the miserable existence of the poor and Mahadevi Verma recipient of Padma Vibhushan, highlighted the conditions of women in the society. Nirala became the pioneer of awakening of Modern India.

Pali

He earliest Buddhist works were written in Pali which was spoken in Magadha and South Bihar.

Prakrit

The Ardhamagadhi prakrit was used extensively to write scriptures of Jainism the law books called the dharmasutras and smritis are together known as dharmashastra and were compiled between 500 BC to 200 BC.

The Manusmriti tells us about the role of man and woman in society their code of conduct and relationship with each other. Arthashastra is an important treatise of Mauryan times.