

For CMAT Exam

INDIAN LITERATURE

Introduction

- Literature means any form of writing that has some literary merit
- Classifications:
 - Fiction & non-fiction
 - Poetry & prose
- Difference between didactic and narrative texts:

Points of difference	Didactic	Narrative
Type of text	Directive texts- try to influence reasoning, thinking & conduct of reader	Gives all essential information to the reader
objectives	Writer intends to persuade or compel	Writer means to enhance and sustain the interest of the
		reader
Commonly used for	Political and moral issues are written about	Used in story writing and novels

- In India, four speeches are followed: Austric, Dravidian, Sino-Tibetan, Indo-European
- The Indo-European language includes Sanskrit too

Hindu literature in ancient India

- There is a lot of literature in Prakrit, which is full of realism and moral values without religious connotations attached to it
- Most popular work- Vedas; sacred texts used in religious rituals as well as daily situations

Vedas

- The word signifies knowledge
- Written in highly stylized poetic form; full of symbols & myths
- Initially, they were handed down orally, compiled around 1500-1000 BC
- The vedas preach Vasudaiva Kutumbakam
- Four major vedas: Rig veda, Yajur veda, Atharva veda, Sama veda
- All vedas give prominence to yajna (sacrifice)
- The Brahmanas, Aranyakas, Upanishads accompany each veda
- **Rig veda**
 - Oldest existing veda
 - Focus is on worldly prosperity and natural beauty
 - Organized in 10 books, called Mandalas
 - Each mandala comprises of various sukta or hymns, meant for sacrifices
 - Themes: life, death, creation, sacrifice
 - Dedicated to several deities, chiefly Lord Indra
- **Yajur veda**
 - Yajus signifies sacrifice
 - Concentrates on rites & mantras of different types of sacrifices prevalent then
 - Two major recensions/ Samhitas:
 - Shukla- white/pure; also called Vajasaneyi samhita
 - Krishna- black/dark; also called Taittiriya samhita
 - Predominantly a ritual veda; acts like a guide book to rishis/ munis who conduct sacrificial rituals
- **Sama veda**
 - Named after Saman/ melody
 - Concentrates on melody or songs
 - Consists of hymns, detached verses, ragas & raginis
 - Also known as the book of chants
 - Shows us how Indian music developed in the Vedic period
- **Atharva veda**
 - Also known as Brahma veda
 - Attributed to two rishis: Atharvan, Angiras; therefore, known as, Atharvangirasa
 - Concerned with peace & prosperity of the human society
 - Specifically focuses on treatment of several ailments
 - Two major Sakhas:
 - Pippalada
 - Saunakiya
 - Most of the text deals with black and white magic, speculation on the changes in the universe

Vedangas: branches/ limbs of the vedas. They are a supplement to the original vedas. One of the most striking examples is Panini's Ashtadhyayi which is a text to define the rules of Sanskrit grammar.

Brahamanas

- Part of the Hindu sruti literature
- Each veda has a Brahamana attached to it, a collection of commentaries on the particular veda
- Contain instructions on how to properly conduct rituals and enunciate the science of sacrifice
- Also explain the symbolic significance of the sacred words used in the rituals
- Each veda has an accompanying Brahamana

Rig veda	Aitareya Brahamana	Kaushitaki Brahamana
Yajur veda	Tandya Brahamana	Sadvimsha Brahamana
Sama veda	Taittiriya Brahamana	Shatapatha Brahamana
Atharva veda	Gopatha Brahamana	

Aranyakas

- Describe the philosophy behind the rituals and sacrifices involved
- Said to be compilations of ritualistic information on the cycle of rebirth and complexity of soul
- Munis, who preferred to dwell in the forests taught them

Upanishads

- It means- to sit down near

- The oral handing over of the knowledge was a part of the guru-shishya parampara
- These treaties are written in Sanskrit
- Generally the last part of the veda- also known as Vedanta
- Said to contain the truth of life and show the way towards moksha/ salvation
- Out of 200 upanishads, 108 have been called the Mukhya canon
- Upanishads vs Aranyakas:

Upanishads	Aranyakas
Jnana-kanda	Karma-kanda
Knowledge/ spirituality section	Ritualistic actions/ sacrifice section

The Mahabharata & Ramayana

These two great epics are also known as Mahakavya. Added and compiled through the ages, today it is an amalgamation of several transmissions.

• Ramayana

- The most revered recension is by sage Valmiki, also called Adikavi
- Therefore, Ramayana is also called Adikavya
- In the story, Rama is projected as an ideal man, and through him, Purushartha or mankind is given:

Dharma	Religion or righteousness
Artha	Monetary achievements in the worldly sphere
Kama	Fulfilling worldly desires
Moksha	Liberation from these desires

- Divided into seven books, called Khandas
- The success of Rama over Ravana over the latter kidnapping his wife, Sita; is considered to be the victory of good over evil

Mahabharata

- Most popular version, by Ved Vyas
- The first version in Sanskrit was called Jaya/ victory
- When number of verses increased, it was renamed Bharata, after the earliest vedic tribes
- Current form has furthermore verses and is divided into 10 parvas/ chapters
- Story: conflict between Kauravas & Pandavas over the right to claim Hastinapur

- It also consists of an important didactical text- Bhagvad Gita
- Most of the text is a dialogue between Lord Krishna and Pandava Prince Arjuna about the duties of a man, warrior & prince
- It also talks of violence and non-violence, action versus non-action
- Talks about dharma and nishkama karma- perform one's duty to the family and the world in a selfless manner

The Puranas

- These texts talk about that which renews the old
- Ancient Indian mythological texts, which consists of the narrative stories about the creation of the universe, and illustrates its history till destruction
- Focuses on the divine hindu trimurti: Brahma, Vishnum& Mahesh
- There are 18 major Mahapuranas, each one giving prominence to a particular deity
- Some well known Puranas include: Bhagvata, Brahma, Vayu, Agni, Garuda, Padma, Vishnu, Matsya
- Written in the form of stories, which combine myths, legends and sermons about the deities
- For the masses who did not understand the complex Veds, Puranas were translated and distributed in vernacular languages
- Puranas use parables & fables:

Parables	Short stories illustrating a spiritual/ moral lesson, usually containing a human character
Fables	Short stories illustrating a moral through a pithy maxim or clever story; features animals & inanimate objects

The Upa-Puranas

- Due to the extent of reach of Puranas, a new sub-genre called Upa-Puranas or minor Puranas came into being
- There are about 19 minor puranas and are based on 5 major subjects by Amarasimha (Sanskrit lexicographer of the Gupta period)

Sarga	Creation of the universe
Pratisarga	Periodic cycle of creation and destruction
Manvantra	Periods of Manu's lifetime

Vansa (Chandra & Surya)	Genealogies of solar & lunar dynasties
Vanshanucharita	Dynastic histories of kings

Classical Sanskrit Literature

- Most of the work has been divided into- Vedic and Classical categories
- The two epics: Mahabharata & Ramayana are part of the Classical category
- Irrespective of their centrality to the Hindu religion, these epics can also be considered to be the precursors of Sanskrit kavya (poetry), nataka (drama), etc.
- Most of the Sanskrit literature was bound by the rules of grammar that have been explained brilliantly in Panini's Ashtadhyayi

Sanskrit drama

- Includes romantic tales whose sole purpose was to entertain the public
- Usually written in the form of stories
- The rules regarding the performance, direction, acting etc. have been illustrated in the Natyashastra by Bharata
- Major dramas of the ancient period:

Kalidasa	Malvikagnimitra- love story of the Queens' maiden, Malvika & Pushyamitra's son, Agnimitra
	Vikramorvasiya- love story of Vikram & Urvashi
	Abhigyan Sakuntalam- Recognition of Sakuntala
Sudraka	Mricchakatika- love affair of young Brahmin Charudatta with a wealthy courtesan
Visakhadutta	Mudrarakshasa- political drama, narrates the ascent of king Chandragupta Maurya to power
	Devi Chandraguptam
Bhavabhuti	Uttara Ramacharitam- later life of Rama
Bhasa	Swapnavasavadatta, Panchatantra, Urubhanga
Harshavardhana (wrote 3 Sanskrit plays)	Ratnavali- love story of Ratnavali & King Udayana
	Nagananda- in this drama, there is an invocation to Lord Buddha in the Nandi verse
	Priyadarsika- union of Udayana & Priyadarsika,

	daughter of King Dridhavarman
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Sanskrit poetry

- Also called kavya, here the main focus of the text is form, style, figure of speech
- Kalidasa wrote Kumarasambhava, Raghuvamsa, Meghaduta, Ritusamhara
- Harisena wrote during the Gupta period
- He wrote several poems in praise of valor of Samudragupta and it was so well appreciated that it was inscribed on the Allahabad pillar
- Jayadeva wrote Gita Govinda- concentrates on the life and escapades of Lord Krishna
- Other major poets:
 - Bharavi- Kirartajuniya (kirat, the hunter & arjun)
 - Magha- Sishupalavadha (killing of Sishupal)

Other major Sanskrit texts

- Dharmasutras- books on law compiled alongside smritis known as Dharmashastras
- These are the basis of laws governing the subjects of most Hindu kingdoms
- Manusmriti- defines the role of man and woman in a society, their interaction and code of conduct
- Kautilya's Arthashastra- concentrates on the economic and social conditions, including the military strength, of the Mauryan empire
- While Sanskrit was the preferred language of the courts, it got an impetus in the Gupta period
- Some scientific texts of the ancient period include:

Pingala	Chandasasra- Book on Mathematics
Charak	Charak Samhita- Book on Medicine
Sushruta	Sushruta Samhita- Book on Surgery
Madhava	Madhava Nidana- Book on pathology
Varahamihira	Pancha-Siddhantika- Book on Mathematical Astronomy
	Brihat Samhita- included a wide range of subjects
Aryabhata	Aryabhatiya- Book on Astronomy & Mathematics
Lagadha	Vedanga Jyotisha

- Two most notable Sanskrit works in medieval times, from Kashmir-
 - Kalhan's Rajatarangini (detailed account of King of Kashmir)

- Somadeva's Katha-sarit-sagar (poetic work)

Literature in Pali and Prakrit

- Prakrit is a term which is loosely attached to any language from the standard one (Sanskrit)
- The Buddhist literature can be broadly classified into canonical & non-canonical ones. Canonical work consists of the Tripitakas:
 - Vinay Pitaka: rules and regulations to be followed by the Buddhist monks
 - Sutta Pitaka: dialogues and speeches of Buddha related to morality and dharma
 - Abhidhamma Pitaka: concentrates on philosophy and metaphysics
- Best example of non-canonical work: Jatakas. These are compilation of stories from the previous births of Buddha; includes stories of Bodhisattvas (available in both Sanskrit & Pali)
- The great epic Buddhacharita by Asvaghosha is another example of buddhist literature in Sanskrit
- Jainism produced texts in Prakrit, most important- Agamas
- Some Jain texts written in Sanskrit- Upamitibhava Prapancha Katha of Siddharasi
- Shantinatha Charita is an important Jain text of the 16th Tirthankara, Shantinatha, written in Sanskrit
- Prakrit texts have some elements of erotica through texts like the Gatha Saptasathi by Hala. A large number of female poets have contributed- Pahai, Roha, Sasippaha, etc.
- Other Buddhist literary texts:

Dipavamsa	Composed in Sri Lanka, mentions about Buddha's visit to Sri Lanka and arrival of tooth relic of Buddha
Milinda Panho	Dialogue between King Menander & Buddhist monk, Nagasena
Mahavamsa	Epic poem similar to Dipavamsa, in Pali; contains account of Buddha's visit to Sri Lanka
Mahavastu	Contains Jataka & Avadana tales; written in Sanskrit, Pali & Prakrit
Lalitavistara Sutra	Important Mahayana text; contains various stories about Buddha till his first sermon at Sarnath
Udana	Oldest Theravada text; contains the famous story of Blind Men and the Elephant
Bodhi Vamsa	Prose poem, written in Sanskritised Pali, by Upatissa
Mahavibhasa Shastra	Contains discussion about other non-Buddhist philosophies; essentially a Mahayana text

Visuddhimagga	Written by Buddhaghosha, a text of the Theravada doctrine; contains discussion on the teachings of Buddha
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Jain Literature

- Apart from writing in Prakrit & Ardha Magadhi,
 - The Jains wrote in Tamil during the Sangam Age
 - Also wrote in Sanskrit, Shauraseni, Gujarati & Marathi
- Two major categories:
 - Canonical or religious texts, called Jain Agamas or Agams
 - Non-canonical literary works
- Jain Agamas:
 - Sacred texts said to be the teachings of Tirthankaras
 - Originally compiled by Ganadharas, Chief Disciples of Mahavira
 - Re-compiled by the Monks of Svetambara sect, after a council held in Vallabhi (Gujarat)
 - The Digambaras reject the originality of the recompilation
 - Agamas comprise of 46 texts- 12 angas, 12 upangas, 10 prakirnakasutras, 4 mulasutras, 6 chedasutras, 2 culikasutras
 - Written in Ardha-Magadhi Prakrit language
 - Digambaras gave sacred status to two works: Karmaprabhrita and Kashayaprabhrita
 - Other important works:

Bhadrabahu	Teacher of Chandragupta Maurya, wrote Uvasaggaharam Stotra, Kalpa Sutra; a pioneer of the Digambara sect
Acharya Kundkund	Samayasara and Niyamasara
Samanta Bhadra	Ratna Karanda Sravakachara and Aptamimansa
Ilango Adigal	Silappadikaram, a moralistic discourse
Tirutakkatevar	Civaka Cintamani
Umaswati	Tattvartha-sutra, in Sanskrit, accepted by both Svetambaras and Digambaras
Jinasena	Revered Digambara monk, wrote Mahapurana & Adipurana
Haribhadra Suri	Svetambara Jain author, who wrote in Sanskrit
Hemachandra Suri	Wrote grammars of Sanskrit and Prakrit; awarded the title of Kalikalarvajna

-	Nalatiyar, ancient Tamil text composed by Jain monks
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- Important learning centres- Universities of Vallabhi & Kalinga

Zoroastrian Literature

- It refers to the religion developed from the teachings of the Persian prophet Zoroaster
- It was the first religion to believe in angels, the day of judgement, demonic figures, and a battle between good and evil
- Most important text- Avesta; written in the (now extinct) Avestan language, similar to Sanskrit
- In the book, Yasna is the most important ceremony of faith
- Other important texts:
 - Denkard: Encyclopedia of Zoroastrians
 - Bundahishn: details about the theory of creation in the religion

Sikh Literature

- The beliefs and philosophies are written in the sacred scripture, Guru Granth Sahib
- Gurbani is the composition of hymns of Sikh Gurus and the Guru Granth Sahib
- Other important works:
 - Adi Granth: compiled by Bhai Gurdas under the aegis of the 5th Guru Arjan Dev
 - Guru Granth Sahib: further expansion of Adi Granth under Guru Gobind Singh. Written in Gurmukhi script in a language called Sant Bhasha. It contains the teachings of bhakti saints, Bhagats
 - Dasam Granth: hymns written by Guru Gobind Singh; some of which are offered in the daily prayers called Nitnem
 - Janamsakhis: contain mythological and exaggerated stories of the first Guru Nanak
- Ardas: set of prayer performed as a daily ritual in the gurdwara

Dravidian Literature

- **Tamil Sangam Literature**
 - Sangam means fraternity and this literature was very popular among the masses
 - Two major schools:
 - Aham/Agam: inner field, discusses abstract human aspects (love, sexual relations)
 - Puram: outer field, discusses human experiences (social life, ethics)
 - Name derived from the Assemblies, known as Sangamas; organized by the Pandyas, where poets, bards & writers joined from all across South India

Sangam	Kingdom	Place organised	Chairman	Books
First or head	Pandya	Madurai	Agastya or Shiva	No book has survived. Used Agattiyam as grammar
Second or Middle Sangam	Pandya	Kapatapuram	Initially, Agastya Later, Tolkappiyar	Tolkappiyam-textbook on Tamil grammar
Third	Pandya	Madurai	Nakkirar	Most of the existing corpus of Sangam Literature

- Around 30,000 lines of poetry have been arranged in 8 anthologies, known as Ettuthogai
- Saint Thiruvalluvar has contributed the Tirukkural to the Sangam literature
- Another famous female saint- Avvaiyar
- Two major texts: Silappadikarm by Ilango-Adigal, and Manimekalai by Sattthananar. These texts focus on the Tamil society and the economic and political changes it was experiencing
- Final turn came in with the Vaishnava Bhakti movements
 - 12 Alvars or saint poets who were immersed in devotion to Vishnu, wrote several texts. One female Alvar saint was named Andal
 - Another group was called Nayanars, who sang the praise of Shiva
- In secular writings, there were two major poets called Periya Puranam and Kambaramayana

● Malayalam Literature

- Usually spoken in Kerala and surrounding areas
- Two major works: Kokasandisan and Bhasa Kautilya (commentary on Arthashastra)
- Ramacharitam: an epic poem written by Cheeraman
- Ezhuthachan: a strong proponent of the Bhakti movement; also known as the Father of Malayalam Language

● Telugu Literature

- Linguists argue that Nannayya was the first Telugu poet
- Reached its zenith during the Vijayanagara period, also known as the Golden Age of Telugu literature
- Uttarharivamsan: composed by Nachana Somanatha; court poet of King Bukka I
- Amuktamalyada: poetry composed by King Krishnadevaraya

- During his reign, 8 learned poets were attached to his court, known as Ashtadiggajas
- He patronised Kannada poets, the Tamil poet Haridasa; and himself, wrote treatises in Sanskrit and Kannada, too
- Out of these, the following deserve a special mention

Poets	Work
Allasani Peddana	Manu Charitra
Nandi Thimmana	Parijatapaharanamu
Tenali Ramakrishna	Panduranga Mahatmayam
Ramaraja Bhushanudu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vasucharitam • Narasabhupaleeyamu • Harishchandra Nalopakhyanamu
Madayyagari Mallana	Rajasekaracharitra
Ayyalaraju Ramabhadru	Ramabhudayamu

● Kannada Literature

- Jain scholars made the first foray
- Best example is DHarmanathapurana, by Madhava on the life of the 15th Tirthankara
- One of the first recorded texts in Kannada is Kavirajamarga, by Amoghavarsha I; a very powerful Rashtrakuta king
- Three unparalleled gems:
 - Pampa: Father of Kannada, wrote Adipurana and Vikramarjuna Vijaya. He mastered the rasa, wrote poetry
 - Ponna: Shanti Purana
 - Ranna: Ajitha Purana
- Grammar of the language was written in Shabdamanidarpana by Keshiraja
- Religious texts: Narahari composed Torave Ramayana; Jaimini Bharata by Lakshmisha
- Sarvajna was given the title of People's Poet; he composed the tripadi (three-lined poems)
- The first poetess in Kannada called Honnamma wrote the Hadibadeya Dharma (duty of a devout wife)

Medieval Literature

● Persian

- It came to India with the coming of Turks and Mongols in the 12th century

- One of the finest poets is Amir Khusrau Dehlavi- he wrote Nuh Sipahr and Duval Rani-Khizr Khan
- Ziauddin Birani is one of the top historians of the Delhi Sultanate period and he wrote Tarikh-e-Firoz Shahi
- Minaj-e-Siraj was another famous historian
- Ibn Battuta, a Moroccan traveller, wrote several accounts explaining the socio-political scenario of the period
- Babur wrote Baburnama in Turkish which is his own biography
- Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, from the period of Jahangir, gives various insights about the period
- Humayun-nama was written by Humayun's half-sister, Gulbadan Begum
- One of the greatest emperor was Akbar, and Ain-i-Akbari and Akbarnama written by his court historian Abul Fazl are the best examples of the literature of that period
- One of the best examples of translations is the Mahabharata translated by Badauni into Razmnama
- Hamzanama depicts the story of the mythical Persian hero, Amir Hamza
- Malik Muhammad Jayasi composed his Padmavat in 1540
- Faizi was among the Navratnas in Akbar's court
- Shah Jahan- Shahjahanama of Inayat Khan, Padshahnama by Abdul Hamid Lahori
- Aurangzeb- Jafar Zafar wrote Kulliyat (collection of poetry). His eldest daughter Zeb-un-Nisa's poetry was compiled posthumously as 'Diwan-i-Makhfi'

● Urdu

- The language mostly follows the grammar of Hindi and script of Persian
- Initially, also called Dakhani (Southern)
- Mirza Ghalib, one of the greatest poets composed Diwan (collection of poetry) in Urdu
- Other poets- Sauda, Dard and Mir Taqi Mir
- Iqbal wrote Bang-e-Dara. He is famous for writing Sare Jahan Se Achcha
- Apart from the last emperors of the Mughal empire, like Bahadur Shah Zafar, who also wrote in Urdu, the Nawabs of Awadh patronised the language
- In modern India, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan wrote several didactic and nationalist texts in Urdu

● Hindi and its dialects

- Evolved from Apabhramsa, which evolved from Prakrit
- It got the biggest boost by the Bhakti movement which shunned the use of Sanskrit as it was the language of the Brahmins
- Prithviraj Raso, probably, wrote the first Hindi book and it documents his life and struggles
- The bulk of the work is by bhakti writers like Kabir who is famous for his dohas (couplets)
- Tulsidas produced couplets in Braj and was peppered by Persian

- He wrote Ramcharitamanas, a revered Hindu text
- Surdas wrote Sur Sagar about Krishna's infancy
- Rahim, Bhushan, Raskhan- wrote about devotion to Lord Krishna
- Mirabai- famous as the woman who renounced the world for Krishna and wrote Bhakti poetry
- Bihari's Satsai is also famous in this regard

Modern Literature

● Hindi

- Bhartendu Harishchandra wrote his most famous drama Andher Nagari; major play on political satire
- His other famous work is Bharat Durdasha. He is known as the Father of Modern Hindu Literature
- Another major writer- Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi
- The movement to make Hindi the national language, which would link all regions, was spearheaded by Swami Dayanand
- His most famous work in Hindi- Satyarth Prakash
- Premchand wrote many anthologies in Hindi and Urdu and his famous works include Godan, Karmabhoomi etc.
- One of the most famous female writers- Mahadevi Verma
- Jaishankar Prasad's Kamayani is considered as the magnum opus of Chhayavaad genre

● Bengali, Odia and Assamese Literature

- It was the nationalist fervor reaching Bengal that literature took a definite turn
- Raja Rammohan Roy was among the first to write in Bengali and English
- His contemporary writers- Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Akshay Kumar Dutt
- The zenith was achieved by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, who wrote Anandamath; from where our national song, Vande Mataram has been taken
- The first Indian to win a nobel prize was also a Bengali writer, Rabindranath Tagore; for Geetanjali
- Others- Sharat Chandra Chatterjee, Qazi Nazrul Islam, R C Dutt
- Assamese literature was dominated by the buranjis in the medieval period
- Sankardev composed devotional poetry in Assamese
- Modern era- Padmanath Gohain Baruah, Lakshminath Bezbaroa
- First work of Odia literature- by Sarala Das
- Medieval period- Upendra Bhanja
- Modern period- Radhanath Ray and Fakir Mohan Senapati

● Gujarati, Rajasthani and Sindhi Literature

- Narsinh Mehta combined devotional songs of Lord Krishna with local folk traditions

- Narmad wrote poetry, and Govardhan Ram wrote prose which includes Saraswati Chandra
- Dr K M Munshi has written fiction and non-fiction; one of the finest being Prithvi Vallabh
- Medieval Rajasthani literature- two main forms of fictional writing called Dingal and Pingal
- Most famous text- Dhola Maru
- The stories of rajasthani writers were usually oral in nature and were spread by bards who sang the virkavya
- Literature in Sindhi is lyrical and meant to be sung
- Two prominent names- Dewan Kauramal and Mirza Kalich Beg

- **Kashmiri Literature**

- One of the earliest texts- Kalhana's Rajatarangini written in Sanskrit
- Influenced from Persian and Hindi dialects
- During Bhakti movement, Kashmiri language saw its first female poetess, Lal Ded, who was a Shaivite mystic
- Noor Din, also known as Nund Rishi, was purported to bring the Hindi and Islamic elements together in his poetry
- With the political power being passed to the Dogra family, Dogri language has eclipsed Kashmiri

- **Punjabi Literature**

- There are two major scripts- Persian and Gurmukhi
- One of the greatest religious text of the world is Adi Granth and majority of it is in Gurmukhi
- It also comprises dohas of Kabir, Dadu and Nanak in Hindi and Braj
- Guru Gobind Singh, had also written Savaiye in Punjabi
- Love stories and epics- Sohni-Mahiwal, Sassi-Punnu, Heer-Ranjha (by Waris Shah)
- Sufi poetry of Baba Farid and Bulley Shah became popular with the masses as well as the rulers
- They composed many songs or classical compositions called Kafi(s)
- Modern era- Bhagat Singh's 'Rang de Basanti Chola'
- Bhai Vir Singh wrote Rana Surat Singh

- **Marathi Literature**

- Oldest known work by Saint Jnaneshwar- he is credited to begin the kirtan and has written a detailed commentary on Bhagavad Gita in Marathi
- Oldest known female writer- Janabai
- Most famous saint- Eknath, wrote commentaries on Ramayana and Bhagavata Purana
- Tukaram and Ramdas are other Bhakti poets

- One of the great nationalistic figures, Bal Gangadhar tilak, started his newspaper, Kesari, in Marathi
- Contemporary poets include- M G Ranade, K T Telang, G T Madkholkar