

Indian Literature

Indian literature - one of the most ancient of literature has been exemplary for rest of the world. The term refers to the literary work that had been produced in various Indian languages, since ages. In ancient times, the literary work used to be imparted orally.

The first ever ancient Indian literature was Sanskrit literature comprising of Rig Veda, the Ramayana and Mahabharata which were written in first millennium BCE. Then developed, Kannada and Telugu Literature in the medieval era. They were followed by Marathi, Bengali and Urdu literature.

Among the Indian literary personnel, the name of Bengali writer Rabindra Nath Tagore shines the brightest. He became the first Indian to receive Nobel Prize for his literary genius. There are two Indian awards for Literature – Jnanpith Award and Sahitya Fellow Academy Award.

The literary tradition in India dominates a large part of Indian culture. Traditionally Indian literature was one of verse and oral. The ancient literary creations in India are the Vedas, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata (Hindu epics) and several other scriptures like Vaastu Shastra in architecture and town planning, and Arthashastra in political science.



Hindu drama, poetry and songs are more than thousand years old. Among the best known works in Sanskrit literature include

Kalidasa's Shakuntalam and Meghduta, Panini's Asthadhyayi, Sudraka's Mirchkatika and Sri Harsha's Ratnavali. Jaydev's Geet Govinda and Vatsayana's Kamasutra are some of the popular works of ancient Indian literature.

Muslim literary traditions also dominate a large part of Indian culture. In the medieval period, India was mostly under Muslim rulers.

Muslim rulers were patronage of art, architecture and literature. Persian and Urdu poetry of Ghalib and Amir Khusrau are important works in Indian literature.

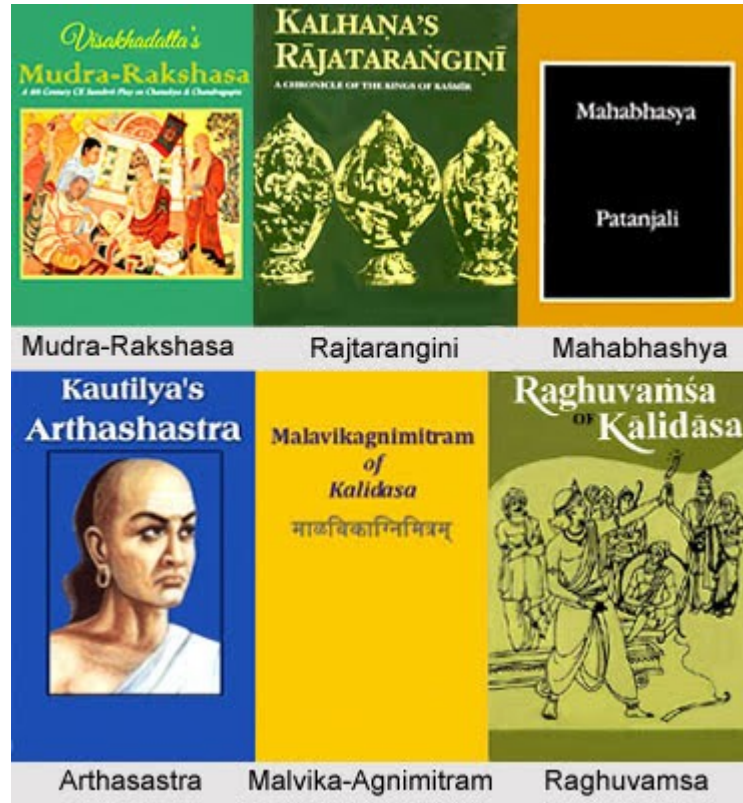
Indian literature flourished in regional languages as well. Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay were great Bengali writers.

Famous Marathi literary figures include saint-poets like Ramdas, Eknath, and modern writers like Vijay Tendulkar, P. L. Deshpande and Vishnu Vaman Shirvadakar. Some notable contributors in Hindi literature include Munshi Premchand, poets like Jaishankar Prasad, Mahadevi Verma, Kedarnath Agarwal and Raghuveer Sahai. Kannada, Tamil, Malayalam literature contributed tremendously towards Indian literature.

Modern Indian literature provides a broad sense of the subcontinent's literary traditions from the mid-19th century to the present day. The work includes both in Hindi and in almost all regional languages and several other languages.

India's contribution to English literature in modern period is also remarkable. Some of the famous Indian writers in English include R. K. Narayan, Arundhati Roy, Raja Rao, Vikram Seth, Amitav Ghosh, Shashi Deshpande, Vikram Chandra, Nayantara Sehgal, Salman Rushdie, Anita Desai, Ashok Banker, Jhumpa Lahiri, and Kamala Markandaya.

Ancient Indian Literature



The first ever literary scripts produced in ancient India were the Vedas, that are based on Hinduism. They include - the Rigveda, the Yajurveda, the Samveda and the Atharvaveda. They comprise of verses written in Sanskrit or Mantras.

The scripts written in epic Sanskrit are the Hindu epics – Ramayana by Valmiki and Mahabharata by Maharishi Vedvyas.

One of the popular quotes from Mahabharata is –

*Yada Yada Hi Dharmasya, Glanirva Bhavathi Bharatha,
Abhyuthanam Adharmasya, Tadatmanam Srijami Aham*

The classical Sanskrit Literature comprises of Raghuvamsha, Shakuntala, Meghdhoota by Kalidasa. The Pali Literature is known for all the philosophical work by Buddhists. It also includes Jaatak Kathayein, Dhammapada, Mahavamsa and Atthhakatha.

The Original Face of Indian Literature

Written in dialects like Brij and Awadhi, Hindi literature got recognition during the medieval era. The renowned names of those times were Tulsidas and Sant Kabir. Other legendary names in Hindi literature are Munshi Premchand, etc.

Following are the excerpts from the award-winning creation of Harivansh Rai Bachchan —

*Mridubhavon ke Angooron ki aaj bana laaya haala,
Priyatam, Apne hi haathon se aaj pilaunga pyaala*

Indian Literature in Various Indian Languages

Later in medieval period, the Indian literature got new dimensions in various other Indian languages like Assamese, Bengali, Bhojpuri, Gujarati, Kannada, Konkani, Malayali, Manipuri, Marathi, Mizo, Oriya, Punjabi, Rajasthani, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu.

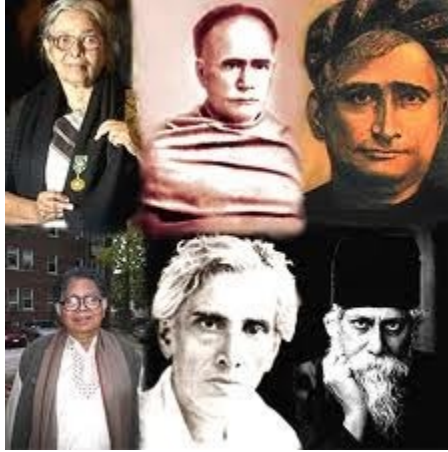
In **Assamese Literature**, the Prahlad Charita by Hema Saraswati, Ashvamedha Parva by Harihara Vipra, Jayadratha Vadha by Kaviratna Saraswati. The most renowned Assamese poets Madhav Kandali, Amulya Barua, etc

Bengali literature is majorly known for the works by Rabindranath Tagore who was awarded the Noble Prize for Literature for Geetanjali. Here is a snippet from that outstanding collection of Bengali poems —

*Alo amar, alo ogo, alo bhubon bhora
alo noyon dhoe amar, alo hridoe hara.*

These poems were either based on nature or on spirituality and mysticism. It was Rabindranath Tagore only who had composed the revered national anthem of India, Jana Gana Mana.

Other big names in Bengali literature are Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Sharat Chandra Chattopadhyay and Sunil Gangopadhyay.



Gujarati literature is known for the great work by the renowned writers Shamal Bhatt, Dalpatram, Govardhanram Tripathi, Pannalal Patel, Permanand Bhatt and K M Munshi. The biggest name in this area is Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi - the father of the nation.

During 1915-1945, Gujarat Vidaypith and Gandhi were the main centres of all literary activities and where every day a new thought and new philosophy would arise. It was during this period that Umashankar Joshi also rose to fame and received Jnanpith award in 1967 for his poem Nishith.

In **Kannada literature**, Chudamani by Thumbalacharya, Gajashtaka by Shivamara and Kavirajamarga by Raja Nripatunga hold lots of significance. The epic Vikarmarjuna Vijaya and Adipurana by Pampa are also well known.

Malayalam literature comprises of songs belonging to various genres. It is known for poetic compositions like Adhyathmaramayanam by Father of Malayalam language, Thunchaththu Ramanujan Ezhuthachan.

The earliest known work of Malayalam Literature is Ramacharitram while modern Malayalam Literature can be attributed to Kumaran Asan, Ulloor S. Parameswara Iyer and Vallathol Narayana Menon.

The **Manipuri literature** that existed thousands of years ago, is known for the great works of writers and poets not only from Manipur, but also from Tripura, Assam, Mayanmar and Bagladesh.

Manipuri Literature also known as Meetei Literature has come a long way after the burning of Puya Meithaba or burning of ancient Manipuri scriptures by the then king Santidas Gosain.

In **Marathi literature**, the popular poets and writers like Tukaram, Mukundaraj, Vijay Tendulkar, Eknath and Ramdas contributed a lot by their genius writings.

Mukteshwar, another great Marathi writer is known for translating the epic Mahabharata into his native language Marathi. The write-ups by Marathi writers are majorly based on social reformation.



Source: marathimati.com

The ancient **Rajasthani literature** comprised of work by Jain writers. It has got close resemblance with the Gujarati literature as well. In medieval era, it comprised of poetry of valor that was written in the honor of all the brave Rajas and Maharajas of those times.

Dating back to seventh century, when Nannayya, the first known Telugu poet started writing, he gave **Telugu literature**, a fresh beginning. Vemana also known as Vemaa Reddy composed various poems in this language, for the common man.

Other Telugu writers and poets are Vishvanadha Satyanarayana, C.Narayana Reddy, Srirangam Srinivasrao and Ravuri Bharadwaj.

Tamil literature is as ancient as 2000 years. The oldest submission to this area was by

Tolkaappiyam. The writers wrote on many genres like social, political and religious. The literature got contributions also from European, Muslim, Vaishvanite and Saivite writers as well.

In 19th century, the trend of short stories, novel writing and poetry came into being. The Tamil cinema is known to be influenced by the great Tamil literary work by some really great geniuses.

The journey of Indian literature is incomplete without the mention of **Urdu literature**. Honored as the ‘Kohinoor Language’, Urdu is known to be the most sophisticated and refined of all languages

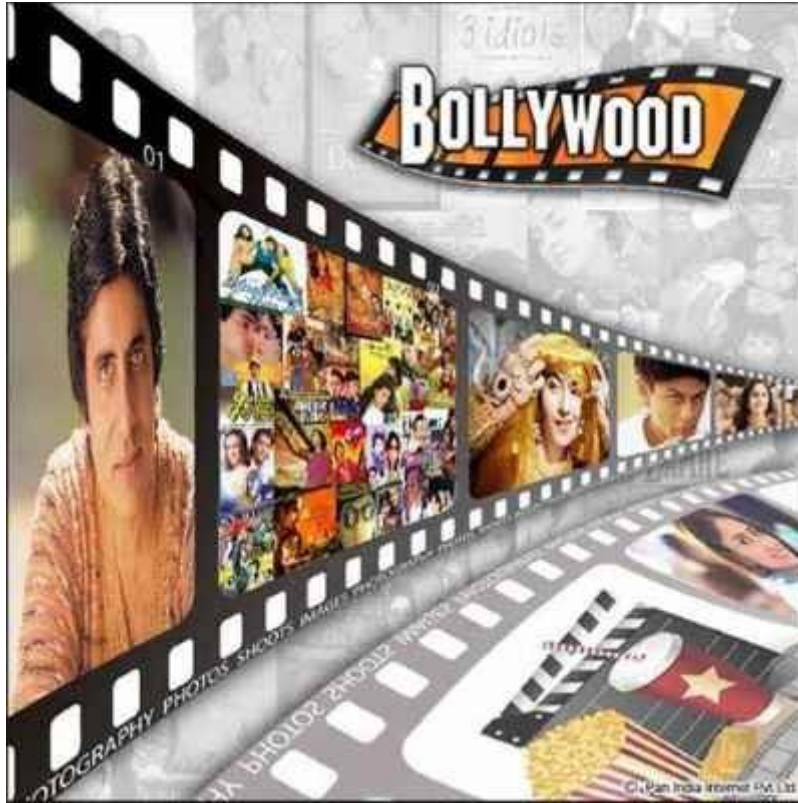
Poets like Mirza Ghalib, Faiz and Iqbal are legendary in Urdu poetry. Apart from this, the Urdu novels written by notable Indian writers like Nazir Ahmed, Munshi Premchand, Rahi Masoom Raza and Saadat Hasan Manto have won hearts of many.



Indian Writing in English

During the twentieth century, due to the influence of British colonization, there developed a different form of English which is referred to as, Indian English. Based on British style of spelling and pronunciation of words, the language soon became a medium of creative expression for Indian writers like the great Bengali writer and poet Rabindranath Tagore.

Indian literature has played a tremendous role in giving the country a distinct identity of intellectualism. Though the face of it has been changing while travelling through innumerable phases, yet even today it holds an honorable position in the entire scenario of world literature.



Indian Cinema is not just about Bollywood or Hindi Cinema. It rather represents the Cinema of all the regions of India as a whole.

The technological, talent, and budgetary advancements in [Indian cinema](#) can be measured through a long journey. This burgeoning industry has produced the films that are remembered along with a huge fan-following.

Indian Art

The term 'Indian Art' serves as a synonym for Indian culture. It is classified into Sculpting, Wall Painting, Miniature Painting, and Jewellery Designing. It represents various bygone eras like the Indus Valley Civilization, Greco-Buddhism era, and Mughal era in various ways.



The folk and tribal art have presented some very amazing art work through pottery-making, metal-work, weaving, paper-art and jewelry making.

Indian Jewellery

Jewellery in India is considered an important medium for enhancing beauty. The traditional ones hold religious significance.

Ranging from essential Mangal Sutra, Bichhiye, Mang Teeka, Kada or bangles, Payal or anklets, and Chudi to the trend-setter items like necklaces, and dangles and bracelets, people have been wearing and flaunting.



Despite the trend of imitation jewelry and antiques, traditional Indian designs always stay in huge demand. Apart from exclusive gold and silver jewelry, there are Kundan, Lac, and Polki jewellery that set the trend.