

Hello everyone,

Today in this session, we will discuss on the **Other Sanskrit literature**

### **Development of Sanskrit literature**

The development of Sanskrit grammar began with **Panini** in **400 BC** with his book **Ashtadhyayi** being the oldest book in Sanskrit grammar. The chaste form of Sanskrit developed **between 300 to 200 BC** and was a refined version of Vedic Sanskrit. The first evidence of the use of Sanskrit can be found in the **inscriptions of Rudradaman at Junagarh** in the present Southern Gujarat region. However, The Gupta period when the use of Sanskrit in poetries can be traced. This is totally a period of creation of pure literature which is evident in works such as Mahakavyas ( epics ) and Khandakavyas (semi-epics). In the field of Sanskrit literature, The Gupta period is known as the period of unique creation because a variety of literary works developed during this reign. Another important aspect of it is related to the ornate style in literary works. Many of the plays developed during the Gupta period were also written in Sanskrit. However, it is to be noted that one of the features of these plays was the use of Sanskrit language by the characters of high varna and the use of Prakrit language by women and Shudras.

### **Classical Sanskrit Literature**

- Most of the literature in Sanskrit has been divided into the Vedic and Classical categories.
- The two epics: Mahabharata and Ramayana are also part of the classical category. Irrespective of their centrality to the Hindu religion, these epics can also be considered to be the pre-cursors of Sanskrit Kavya ( epic poetry ), nataka ( classical drama ), and other treatises on medicine, statecraft, grammar, astronomy, mathematics, etc.
- Most of this Sanskrit literature was bound by the rules of grammar that have been explained brilliantly in Panini's Ashtadhyayi, a treatise on the rigid rules which bind the Sanskrit language.

### **Ashtadhyayi:**

- The only surviving foundational and analytical *source of Sanskrit grammar*, Ashtadhyayi (literally, "eight chapters"), was written by **Panini** and is believed to have been published in the 4th century BCE.

- Despite the fact that India has more than 5000 spoken languages, everyone agrees that Sanskrit is the only sacred language and the source of all known sacred literature. The standardization of the language, which is still used in various forms now, was done by Panini.

### **Sanskrit Drama**

- One of the most popular genres of lyric poetry and prose is the popular romantic tales whose sole purpose was to entertain the public or Lokaranjana.
- These were usually written in the form of stories and yet they gave a unique perspective on life. These were usually written in the form of elaborate dramas.
- The rules regarding performance, acting, gestures, stage direction, and acting have been illustrated in the Natyashastra by Bharata.
- Major dramas written during the ancient period are:
- **Malavikagnimitra**-The love story of the maiden of Queen and Agnimitra the son of Pushyamitra Shunga.
- **Kalidasa-Vikramorvasiya**-The love story of Vikram and Urvasi.
- **Abhigyan Shakunthalam**-The recognition of Shakuntala.
- **Sudraka-Mricchakatika (The little clay cart)**-The love story of young brahmin Charudatta with a wealthy courtesan.
- **Vishakadatta-Mudrarakshasa-Devi Chandraguptam**-Is a political drama and narrates the ascent of king Chandragupta Maurya to power in India-
- **Bhavabhuti-Uttara Ramacharitham (The latter life of Rama)**-It was written in 700 AD.
- **Bhasa-Svapnavasavadatta (Vasavadatta in dream)-Pancharatra-Urubhanga** (story of Dhuryodhana during and after his fight with Bhima).
- **Ratnavalli**-About the love story of princess Ratnavalli, daughter of the King of Ceylon and King Udayana. The mention of the celebration of Holi for the first time can be found here.

- **Harshavardhana-Naganandha** -Story of how Prince Jimutavahana gives up his own body to stop a sacrifice of serpents to the divine Garuda. One unique character in this drama is an invocation to Lord Budha in the Nandi verse.
- **Priyadarsika**-Union of Udayana and Priyadarsika, daughter of king Dritavarman.

### Sanskrit Poetry

- This genre is also called Kavya or poetry.
- Unlike the drama section where the story is the main focus of the text, poetry concentrates more on the form, style, figure of speech, etc.
- One of the greatest Sanskrit poets is **Kalidasa** who wrote **Kumarasambhava** ( the birth of Kumar or Kariya, the son of Shiva and Parvati ), and **Raghuvamsa** ( the dynasty of the Raghus ).
- He also wrote two smaller epics called **Meghaduta** ( the cloud messenger ) and **Ritusamhara** ( medley of seasons ).
- One should not forget to mention the contribution of poets like **Harisena** who wrote during the Gupta period.
- He wrote several poems in praise of the valor of Samudra Gupta and it was so well appreciated that it was inscribed on the Allahabad pillar.
- Another extremely popular Sanskrit poet was **Jayadeva** who wrote **Gita Govinda** in the 12th century. It concentrates on the life and escapades of Lord Krishna. The text combines elements of devotion to Lord Krishna, his love for Radha, and the beauty of nature.
- Other major poems are **Kiratarjuniya** written by **Bharavi** in 6<sup>th</sup> century AD and **Sishupalavadha** written by **Magha** in 7<sup>th</sup> century AD.
- **Other Major Sanskrit texts**
- Several books were written about the sciences and state governance in Sanskrit.
- **Dharmasutras:**

- Historians argue that between 500 to 200 BC, several major books on law were written and compiled, which are called the **Dharmasutras**. These were compiled alongside the smritis that are known as **Dharmashastras**.
- These are the basis of the laws governing the subjects of most of the Hindu kingdoms. These not only elucidate the rules according to which property could be held, sold, or transferred but also elaborate on the punishments for offenses ranging from fraud to murder.
- **Manusmriti ( laws of Manu ):**
- Which defines the role of men and women in society, their interaction at a social plane, and the code of conduct that they were supposed to follow. The Manusmriti might have been written and compiled between 200 BC and 200 AD.
- **Arthashastra:**
- One of the most famous texts about statecraft from the Mauryan period is **Kautilya's Arthashastra**.
- It concentrates on the economic and social conditions of the Mauryan empire.
- The due focus was also given to the military strategy which should be employed by the State.
- The text mentions that ' Kautilya ' or ' Vishnugupta ' wrote it. Historians argue both these names were an alias for Chanakya who was a learned scholar at the court of Emperor Chandragupta Maurya.
- While Sanskrit was the preferred language of the courts in the ancient period, it got an impetus in the Gupta period, which employed many great poets, dramatists, and scholars of various subjects. In this period Sanskrit became the preferred language of communication of cultured and educated people.
- **Scientific texts in Sanskrit**

• Pingala	• Chandasastra (Book on mathematics)
• Charak	• Charak Samhitha (Book on medicine)

• Sushruta	• Sushruta Samhitha (Book on surgery)
• Madhava	• Madhava Nidana (Book on Pathology)
	• Pancha Sidhantika (Book on mathematical astronomy)
• Varahamihira	• Brihat Samhitha (Book on wide-ranging subjects like planetary movements, geology, architecture etc.)
• Aryabhata	• Aryabhatiya (Book on astronomy and mathematics)
• Lagadha	• Vedanga Jyotisha

### **Conclusion**

- Sanskrit has a long and revered history that is commonly linked to worship and devotion. It started out as a Vedic language, and it has been modified over time as a result of different interpretations, precise grammar, and the complexity of its application.
- Which many people have shied away from because of its indomitable scope and depth.
- Many ancient books and manuscripts are translated from Sanskrit today despite its extensive vocabulary and complex grammar and prose because no other language can offer such a lavish literary grasp of the past while yet acting as a vehicle for faultless human expression.