**Volume 4│Literature**

Literature narrates the nation.

Indian literature, it is said often, narrates not one but multiple nations. This book captures the history of Indian literary genres of poetry, fiction and drama. It looks at the progression of Indian literature after Independence as a series of responses to the postcolonial situation. It highlights the need to go beyond the established norms of literature and accept an alternative body of work.

Experience literature in India through the writers—Firaq, Manto, Chugtai, Mahasweta Devi and many others—the works they inked, the movements they inspired and how the nation changed thereafter.

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Patfinders

* One name that crosses all borders of fame in the realm of the short story in modern Urdu literature is that of **Saadat Hasan Manto**, who had once declared:

*Saadat Hasan will die one day,*

*But Manto will never die*

Ironically, the writer who lived a life of penury became famous soon after his death. He is today perhaps the one Urdu writer whose Partition stories are known and loved all over the world. Popular though he was, he was a very controversial writer, prosecuted and dragged to the courts several times for his candid depiction of sex­uality. Disgusted with the hypocrisy and pretensions of the conservative society he lived in, he pursued and explored reality in his stories as he witnessed it.

* **Kota Shivarama Karanth** strode over the Kannada literary field like a colossus throughout the last century. His extraordinary sweep and depth as a writer were incredible: he has to his credit 417 works, including 45 novels, 30 major plays and operas, 9 science and art encyclopedias, 2 dictionaries, 13 collections of discursive essays and 231 children’s stories, besides 5 critical works in English. In addition, he was a *Yakshagana* artist, researcher, and environmentalist. He received many honours and awards including the Jnanpith Award (1978) and the Padmabhushan Award (which he returned in 1975 as a protest against the Emergency). Many of his novels have been translated into other languages and turned into successful plays and films.
* The pioneer of the *Navakavya* or *Navakavita* (New Poetry) in Marathi, **B.S. Mardhekar** has to his credit three collections of poetry—*Shishiragama* (1939), *Kahi Kavita* (1947) and *Anakhi Kahi Kavita* (1951); three novels of which the most applauded—*Raatricha Divas* (1942) introduced the Western stream-of-consciousness technique to Marathi literature; four operas; *Arts and Man* (1937), a collection of essays in English on literary criticism; and a seminal book on aesthetics, *Saundarya Ani Sahitya* (1955), which won him the prestigious Sahitya Akademi Award. Although in a lesser way than in poetry, Mardhekar was also a pathfinder in criticism.
* **Phanishwarnath Renu** was among the first writers of the post-Premchand generation to introduce the genre of the *Aanchalik Upanyas* or the regional story. A regular student of the Summer School of Politics run by Jaiprakash Narain at Sonepur, Renu had seen the high tides of the Gandhian movement, as well as the more localised and parallel movements at the grassroots in Bihar and Nepal.
* Poet, writer and academic, **Harbhajan Singh** is unequalled among all Panjabi writers in his articulation of the complexities of being a 20th century Indian from his part of the country. Merging the heritage of *Sufism*, memories of folklore and the repeated displacements borne by a historically ravaged people, with the best and latest concepts borrowed from the West, which he imbibed due to his modern education, Singh stretched the boundaries of Punjabi literature in a way that no other writer before him had done. His writing includes the genres of verse, free verse, criticism and non-fictional narrative.
* **Mahasweta Devi** is one of post-independent India’s foremost literary personalities. A prolific writer of short fiction and novels, she has published 20 collections of short stories and close to 100 novels. Her writing is steeped in her commitment to political and social activism and liberal humanistic values. Her work in this field has taken her to the root causes of the social and economic injustices faced by marginalised communities like tribals and landless labourers in East India. She has travelled widely across Palamau, Chhota Nagpur, and the Santhal Parganas, living with and building an intimate connection with the communities there.