General Studies Manual for UPSC and State Public Services Examinations 2014

Salient Features of Indian Culture
Module-9: Vernacular Indian Literature

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Chapter 1. Assamese Literature

Dhrubajyoti Bora

- Dhrubajyoti Bora is the Guwahati-based Assamese playwright, who was awarded 2009 Sahitya Academy award for his novel "*Katha Ratnakar*".
- He has published novels these are that include *Kalantarar Gadya* (Prose of Tempest), *Tejor Andhar*(Darkness of Blood) and *Arth* (Meaning), a trilogy based on tragedy of Assam have been acknowledged as major literary creations.

Sameer Tanti

- Sameer Tanti is a renowned Assamese poet. He was awarded the prestigious Assam Valley Literary Award for the year 2012. The award, instituted by Williamson Magor Education Trust, is given to preserve and promote the rich literary heritage of Assam.
- Sameer Tanti has penned 12 collections of poems, four critical and literary essay collections, two translations of African poems and love songs and Japanese love poetry and two story collections.
- Some of his prominent publications are ' *Yuddhabhumir Kabitaa*' , ' *Kadam Phular Rati*' , ' *Shokakool Upatyaka'* and ' *Somoy Sabdo Sopun'*.

Hiren Bhattacharyya

- Hiren Bhattacharyya (1932-2012) was a popular and celebrated Assamese poet and winner of the Sahitya Akademi Award and several honours.
- Popularly known as Hiru-da, Bhattacharyya was widely known for using simple words in his poems, through which he could establish direct communication with his readers. He possessed a large vocabulary of simple Assamese words, very rare in contemporary Assamese literature.
- He had to his name 10 anthologies of poems apart from two collections of rhymes for children. He won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1992 for his anthology of poems 'Saichor Pathar Manuh.'

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Chandana Goswami

- Chandana Goswami is an Assamese Writer and winner of Sahitya Akademi Award 2012 for his work "Patkai Epare Mor Des".

Indira Goswami

- Indira Goswami (1942-2011) was an Assamese editor, poet, professor, scholar and writer, who used to write with the pen name **Mamoni Raisom Goswami**. She won the Sahitya Akademi Award (1983) and Jnanpith Award (2001). In 2002, she was also nominated for Padma Shri, which she refused to accept.

Indira Goswami

- She also worked as mediator between United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) and the Government of India. Her involvement led to the formation of the People's Consultative Group, a peace committee.
- She referred to herself as an "observer" of the peace process rather than as a mediator or initiator. She was awarded the Ambassador for Peace from the Inter Religious and International Federation for World Peace.

The Bronze Sword of Thengphakhri Tehsildar

One of the most notable novels of Indira Goswami is on the legendary **Bodo heroine** Thengphakhri, who had apparently worked as a Tehsildar during the British regime in Assam. This novel was Indira's last work of fiction. Thengphakhri was a tehsildar (tax collector) in Bijni kingdom in lower Assam that was then ruled by the British. It was the late 19th century and Thengphakhri was the first woman to fill the post.

Thengphakri was initially in favour of the British because they shielded the people from incursions by the Bhutanese army. However, she soon faced an inner conflict when she found the colonial taxes were milking poor farmers of their last pennies in a drought-hit year. The novel ends with Thengphakhri picking up her famed bronze sword to join the underground nationalist movement.

The novel vividly describes the life of a widow turned British Official in the times where women seldom stepped out of their homes, child marriages were common and, in a kingdom nearby, five queens burned on their husband's pyre.

- She also received Asom Ratna - the highest civilian award in Assam. The notable works are "*The Shadow of Kamakhya*", "*Pages stained with Blood*" or "*The Moth-Eaten Howdah of the Tusker*" and "*The Bronze Sword of Thengphakhri Tehsildar*".

Chapter 2. Early and Medieval Bengali Literature

Early Literature: Charyapadas

- Charyapada is considered to be the *earliest extant work in the field of Bengali, Assamese, Odiya as well as the Maithili Language*. It's a collection of Buddhist mystical poems or songs belonging to 8th–12th century.
- These songs have the element of the ritual gathering of practitioners in a tantric feast. The Charyapadas were written by the *Mahasiddhas* or *Siddhacharyas*, who belonged to the various regions of Assam, Bengal, Odisha and Bihar. Charyapada is also the collection of the oldest verses written in pre-Modern Bengali.

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Influence of Vidyapati / Chandidas

- Bengali as a distinct language evolved by around 10th century. The early medieval Bengali literature was influenced by Vidyapati, whose *Padas* though written in Maithili; influenced the medieval Bengali poets immensely.
- Chandidas is the name of one or possibly more than one poets of Bengali literature, belonging to the 15th century. He / they have been ascribed to around 1250 poems related to the love of Radha and Krishna in Bengali with the bhanita of Chandidas. The modern scholars say that these poems are works of at least 4 poets named Chandidas, who have used different sobriquets.

Development of Bengali Literature in 14th -15th century - Mangal-Kāvya

- In the 15th century, adaptations from various events of Ramayana became popular in the Bengali Literature. This led to development of the **Mangal-Kāvya** tradition. Mangal-Kāvya literature was written to popularise the worship of deities such as Manasa and Chandi. This genre of Bengali literature includes the majority of works of the medieval Bengali literature.
- This genre includes three sub-genres viz. Manasā Mangal, Chandī Mangal and Dharma Mangal that refer to the portrayal of the magnitude of Manasā, Chandī and Dharmathakur respectively.

Chaitanya Bhagavata

- In the 16th and 17th century, the literature that revolved around the life of Chaitanya developed, which was earliest biographical literature in Bengali. The notable work in this was the Chaitanya Bhagavata, written by *Vrindavana Dasa Thakura.* It was the first full-length work regarding Chaitanya Mahaprabhu written in Bengali language. The text details Chaitanya's theological position as a combined Avatar of both Radha and Krishna.

Chaitanya Charitamrita

- The Chaitanya Charitamrita is the magnum-opus of the Bengali saint/author Krishna Dasa Kaviraja. It is a hybrid Bengali and Sanskrit biography, documents the life and precepts of the Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. This became the main theological source of the Gaudiya Vashnav sect.

Chapter 3. Modern Bengali Literature

The Bengali literature gained momentum in the 19th century. The Bengali Pandits of Fort William College did the tedious work of translating the text books in Bengali to help teach the British some Indian languages including Bengali. This work played a role in the background in the evolution of Bengali prose. This era also saw a rise in new literary publications, magazines and newspapers. A number of educational institutes also appeared all over the region. All these developments helped to nurture and advance the modern Bengali literary movement.

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Contribution of Raja Rammohun Roy

- In 1814, Raja Ram Mohan Roy arrived in Calcutta and engaged in literary pursuits. Translating from Sanskrit to Bengali, writing essays on religious topics and publishing magazines were some the areas he focussed on. He established a cultural group in the name of 'Atmiya Sabha' (Club of Kins) in 1815.
- Raja Rammohun Roy started national press in India. He published "*Sambad Kaumudi*" in 1821. This was one of the pre-reformist publications that had actively campaigned for "Abolition of Sati".

Dinabandhu Mitra – Nil Darpan

- Immediately after the revolt of 1857, the Indigo Revolt scattered all over then Bengal region. This revolt lasted for more than a year (In 1859-1860). In the light of this revolt, a great drama was published from Dhaka in the name of 'Nil Darpan' (The Indigo Mirror). Dinabandhu Mitra was the writer of this play.

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar

- Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820 – 1891) was a great Sanskrit and Bengali scholar who provided significant contribution to simplify and modernize Bengali prose . He also reconstructed the Bengali alphabet and reformed Bengali typography into an alphabet of twelve vowels and forty consonants. Vidyasagar contributed significantly to Bengali and Sanskrit literature. His "*Barna Porichoy*" is considered a classic in Bengali Literature.

Michael Madhusudan Dutt

- Michael Madhusudan Dutt (1824-1873) emerged as the first epic-poet of modern Bengali literature. Dutt, a Christian by conversion, is best known for his Ramayana-based masterpiece, "*Meghnadh Bodh Kabyo*" (Slaying of Meghnath). He is credited to be a pioneer of the blank verse in Bengali literature. His style was deemed as "*Amitrakshar Chhanda*" or **Blank Verse.**

Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay

- Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay (1838–1894) was one of the greatest scholars of Bengal Movement in 19th century. His first novel was Durgeshnandini, published in 1865. He is best known as the writer of "Vande Mātāram", the national song of India, which appears in his novel Anandamath (1882). Kapalkundala and Devi Cahudhrani are his other works.

Ishwar Chandra Gupta

- Ishwar Chandra Gupta (1812-1859) was a Bengali Poet and writer who is best known to have brought modern era of poetry in Bengali. He did not describe the life of Gods and Goddesses, but the daily life of human beings. He also wrote biographies of many Bengali poets and musicians.

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Mir Mosharraf Hossain

- Mir Mosharraf Hossain (1847–1912) was considered as the first novelist to emerge from the Muslim society of Bengal. He is principally known for his famous novel Bishad Sindhu.

Rabindranath Tagore

- The most prolific writer in Bengali is Rabindranath Tagore, who dominated both the Bengali and Indian philosophical and literary scene for decades. His 2,000 Rabindrasangeets play a pivotal part in defining Bengali culture, both in West Bengal and Bangladesh.
- He is the author of the national anthems of both India and Bangladesh, both composed in Bengali. Other notable Bengali works of his are Gitanjali, a book of poems for which he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913, and many short stories and a few novels. His contribution is significant in Music, Paintings, Theatre, Novels, Stories as well as poetry.

Works of Rabindranath Tagore

At age sixteen, Rabindranath released his first substantial poems under the pseudonym Bhānusiṃha. It is known as Bhanusimha Thakurer Padabali, comprising 22 songs. It was first written in 1884. In 1874 his firstpoem 'Abhilash' was published in *'Tattvabodhini Patrika'*. Manasi, the first collection of Tagore's poems was published in 1890.

Poems & Books

Manasi (1890), Sonar Tari (1893), Chitra (1896), The Evening Songs, The Morning Songs, Kadi O Komal (1896), Gitanjali (1910), Balaka (1916), The Cresent Moon, The Gardener, Stray Birds, Fruit-Gathering, Lover's Gift, Crossing, Karna and Kunti, Sacrifice, Chaitali (1896) Kalpana (1900), Ksanika (1900), Naivedya (1901), Puravi (1925), Mahuya (1929), Prantika (1938), Navajataka (1940) and Janmadine (1941). The poems Sisu (1903) and Sisu Bholanatha (1922) were meant for children.

Prose-Poems

Punasca (1932), Sesa Saptaka (1935), Patraputa (1936) and Shyamali (1936).

Novels

Bauthakuranir Hat (1885), Choker Bali (1902), Gora (1910), Chaturanga (1916), Raja Aur Rani, Muktdhara, Raj Rishi, Ghare Baire(1916), Seser Kavita (1929), Yogayoga (1930), Car Adhyaya (1934) and Nauka Dubi Bindoni.

Famous Short-Stories

Kabuli Wallah and Kshidit Pashan.

Lyrical Plays (Dance-Dramas)

Malini (1895), Chaitrangada (1936), Shyama (1938) and Chandalika (1938).

Plays

Raja O Rani (1889), Visarjana (1890), Goday Galad (1892), Malini (1895), Vaikunther Khata (1897), Chirakumara Sabha (1901), Raja (1910), Achalayatana (1911), Dakghar (1912), Tapati (1920), Muktadhara (1922), Raktakaravi (1924), Taser Desa (1933) and Bansari (1933).

Kazi Nazrul Islam

- Kazi Nazrul Islam was the national poet of Bangladesh, called the 'rebel poet' for his fierce resistance to all forms of repression.
- His poetry forms a striking contrast to Rabindranath Tagore's poetry. He was an active revolutionary during the Indian Independence Movement. His major works are based on revolutionary notions as well as more spiritual, philosophical and romantic themes.
- Through his written *Rajbandir Jabanbandi* (a political prisoner's deposition) and his 40-day hunger strike, he protested against the harassment of British.
- In support of him, Tagore dedicated one of his books to him. Other famous books of his include, Bidrohi" ("The Rebel"),"Bhangar Gaan" ("The Song of Destruction"), Barangan(prostitute) as well as a biweekly magazine by name "Dhumketu" ("The Comet"). Some of his novels include Bandhan Hara (Free from Bonds), Mrityukshuda (Hunger for Death), Kuhelika (Mystery).

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Nurul Momen

- Nurul Momen (1908 – 1990) also known as Natyaguru is recognized as the pioneer of modern Bengali dram "acting as a bridge between earlier and later playwrights in terms of content and style", and even referred to as the "Father of Bangladeshi theatre".
- He was deeply influenced by Rabindranath Tagore.

Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay

- Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay (1876-1938) was one of the most popular novelists of early 20th century. His work explored the life and sufferings of women in contemporary rural Bengal. His sympathy towards the common rural folks in "pallisamaj" and a trademark simplified Bengali as a writing style made him one of the most popular writers in his time.
- His first story was Mandir. His first long story (Bordidi) was published in two installments in Bharati (1907). His earliest writings show striking influence of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee. In Devdas (written in 1901, published 1917), Parinita (1914), Biraj Bau (1914) and Palli Samaj (1916), the themes and their treatment are similar to those of Bankim but they are presented in a modernistic setting and in an easier and more simpler language. He was also influenced by Tagore.
- Many of the movies in Bollywood were based upon his works.

Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay

- Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay (1894-1950) is best known for his autobiographical novel, Pather Panchali (The Song of the Road), which was later adapted (along with Aparajito, the sequel) into the Apu Trilogy films, directed by Satyajit Ray.
- Pather Panchali is considered Bibhutibhushan's masterpiece and is included in the CBSE syllabus for students choosing to study Bengali.

Tarasankar Bandyopadhyay

- Tarasankar Bandyopadhyay (1898 -1971) was a towering novelist, who was awarded by Rabindra Puraskar, Sahitya Akademi award, Jnanpith Award, and Padma Bhushan in various phases of his literary journey. He wrote 65 novels, 53 story-books, 12 plays, 4 essay-books, 4 autobiographies and 2 travel stories. His "Arogya Niketan" bagged him Sahiyta Akademi award in 1956 while "Ganadevta" won him the Jnanpith award in 1966. He was honoured with the Padma Shri in 1962 and the Padma Bhushan in 1969.

Ashapoorna Devi

- Ashapoorna Devi (1909-1995) was a Bengali Novelist best known for her "Pratham Pratisruti", which led her to get the Jnanpith award in 1976. She was awarded Padma Shri by the Government of India in 1976 and for her contribution to Bengal Literature, Sahitya Akademi conferred its highest honour, the Fellowship, in 1994.

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Subhash Mukhopadhyay

- Subhash Mukhopadhyay (1919 – 2003) was one of the foremost Bengali poets of the 20th century. He won Jnanpith award for his poems collection titled "Padatik" (The Foot Soldier).

Mahasweta Devi

- Mahasweta Devi (Born 1956) has recently been spearheading the movement against the industrial policy of the government of West Bengal. Apart from being a social activist, she has been a prolific writer who won Jnanpith award in 1996 for *Hajar Churashir Maa*.

Chapter 4. Hindi Literature - Brief History

The history of Hindi poetry, extends over a period of almost one thousand years. Hindi verse literature as a whole can be divided into four yugas (kal) or stages:

- Adikal (the Early Period)
- Bhaktikal (the Devotional Period)
- Ritikal (the Scholastic Period)
- Adhunikkal (the Modern Period)

Adikal

- Adikal Literature of Hindi belong to the period between 10th to 14th centuries.
- The poetry of this period either highlights certain religious ideologies or praises the heroic deeds of the Rajput rulers and warriors in the form of verse-narratives (raso-kavyas). Thus the era is noted for heroic poems of eulogies which include Chandbardai's Prithviraj Raso, Dalpativijay's Khuman Raso, Narpati Nalha's Visaldev Raso and Jagnik's Parmal Raso
- The earliest poetry of this period is represented by the Apabhramsha poetry, which includes the **Siddha literature**, **Nath literature** and the **Jain literature**.
    - Siddha literature was written in the popular language and this echoed devotional themes combined with a strong erotic feeling.
    - The Nath literature represents the mystico-devotional poetry, written between the 7th and the 14th century by the poet Gorakhnath and his followers, using the doha and the chaupai styles.
    - Jain poets like Swayambhu, Som Datt Suri, Sharang Dhar and Nalla Singh composed the Charit Kavyas, which propagate moral tenets and portrayals of nature.

Bhakti Kal

- Bhakti Kal refers to the period between the 14th and the 17th century. This period saw the rise of the Bhakti Kavyas (devotional poetry).
- The Bhakti Kal poetry is divided into Nirguna and Saguna Schools depending upon the devotional attitude of the poets towards the Lord.
    - The Nirgunas believed in a formless god, while the Sagunas believed in a human incarnation of god.

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- The Nirgunas have been further divided into two groups on the basis of the different sadhanas (disciplines) followed by them.
  - One group includes Kabir, Guru Nanak, Dharma Das, Maluk Das, Dadudayal, Sunder Das etc, who emphasised on monotheism through their Sakhis (couplets) and Padas (songs).
  - Another group of the Nirguna poets was of the Sufi poets, who believed that love was the path of realising God. These included Jayasi, Manjhan, Kutuban and Usman.
- The **Saguna poets** are either the followers of Rama or Krishna. Tulsi Das depicted Rama as the Ideal Man in his classical works Ramacharitamanasa, Gitavali, Kavitavali and Vinay Patrika. Surdas was greatest among the Krishna followers. His Sur Sagar and Sur Saravali are the masterpieces of devotional Hindi poetry. Other poets of this category included Parmananda and Meera Bai.
  - Meera Bai is the most celebrated of the women poets of medieval times. She was one of the most significant figures Sant of the Vaishnava bhakti movement. Some 1,300 pads (poems) commonly known as bhajans (sacred songs) are attributed to her.
  - Malik Mohammad Jayasi and Abdur Rahim Khankhana were among the important Saguna poets of this period.

Ritikal

- Ritikal of Hindi literature was between 17th to 19th century in which the Sanskrit rhetorical tradition was emulated on several aspects such as *rasa, alankara and nayak-nayika bheda* etc.
- However, it is not true for all, the poets who were bound to the Sanskrit rhetoric were called Riti-Baddha, while those who did not bind were called Riti-mukta.
- Brajbhasha was used in poetry predominantly.

Adhunik Kal

- The Adhunik kal or the Modern Period in Hindi literature begins in the midth of the 19th century. The Hindi prose evolved in this period. There was a proliferation of the use of Khariboli in poetry in place of Brajbhasha. This period is divided into four phases as follows:
  - Bharatendu Yuga or the Renaissance (1868-1893)
  - Dwivedi Yug (1893-1918)
  - Chhayavada Yug (1918-1937)
  - Contemporary Period (1937 onwards).

Bhartendu Yuga

- Bharatendu Harishchandra (1849-1882) is known to have brought in a modern outlook in Hindi literature. He is described as "Father of Modern Hindi Literature".

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- Other writers of this period include Radhakrishna Das, Pratapnarayan Mishra, Balkrishna Bhatta, Badrinarayan Chaudhuri and Sudhakar Dwivedi

Dwivedi Yuga

- Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi (1868-1938) is regarded as the architect of modern Hindi prose. He brought in the refined prose writing. Dwivedi Yuga is known for portrayel of various social, political and economic problems in Hindi Literature.
- Other important writers of this period are Nathuram Sharma Shankar, Ayodhya Sinha Upadhyay , Maithalisharan Gupt, Ram Naresh Tripathi etc.
- Maithalisharan Gupt is known to have revived the epic tradition with his long narrative poems such as Jayadrath Vadh, Panchavati, Saket, Yashodhara etc. He also translated Madhusudan Dutt's Meghnadvadh-kavya into Hindi.

Chhayavad (Shadowism) Kal

- Chhayavad refers to the romantic upsurge in poetry, in which emphasis was laid on aesthetic and romantic subject matter instead of the formalism and didacticism
- Important poets of this era include Makhanlal Chaturvedi, Jayashankar Prasad, Surya Kant Tripathi 'Nirala', Sumitranandan Pant, Mahadevi Verma and Subhadrakumari Chauhan.

Adhunuk Kal

- The decline of the Chayavad movement saw the emergence of several different styles in Hindi poetry such as Pragativada (progressive poetry), Hridayavad (poetry of passion) and Prayogavad (Poetry of experiments).
- The important poets among the Pragativadis were Bhagvati Charan Varma, Ramdhari Singh Dinkar and Narendra Sharma.
- Important poet of Hridayavad was Harivansh Rai Bachchan, who wrote Madhushala, Madhubala and Madhukalas.
- The experimental movement or Prayogavada was called later the 'Nai Kavita'. Important poets of this genre included S.H.Vatsyayan 'Agyeya', Shivmangal Singh 'Suman', Girija Kumar Mathur, Dharamvir Bharati etc.

The development of Hindi prose has been classified into three periods:

- Early Phase: (1868-1918): This includes the prose literature of the Bhartendu and Dwivedi. This phase is known for the development of drama, novel, essay, short story etc.
- Phase of growth (1918-1937): The period of growth is represented by Premchand, Jayshankar Prasad and Mahadevi Verma. The period of growth is represented by Jayshankar Prasad (Chaya, Akash Deep), Rai Krishna Das and Mahadevi Varma. Munshi Premchand was the greatest of all among the fiction writers.
- Present phase (1938 onwards). The important fiction writers of the contemporary period include S H Agyeya, Dharamvir Bharati, Rahi Masoom Raza etc.

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Chapter 5. Important Writers and Poets of Hindi

Chand Bardai

- Chand Bardai was the court poet Prithviraj III Chauhan and he composed the Prithviraj Raso, an epic poem in Hindi about the life of Prithviraj.

Ramananda

- Swami Ramanand (1299-1410) was a Vaishnava saint from Benaras and was a pioneer of the Bhakti movement. He was known for communicating in vernacular Hindi. His 12 disciples include the famous stalwarts of that era such as Kabir, Pipa, Ravidas, Bhagat Sain.
- He played significant role in the development of Hindi literature, because he generally spoke and wrote in vernacular Hindi. One of his poems is included in Guru Grantha Sahib.

Malik Muhammad Jayasi

- Malik Muhammad Jayasi (1477–1542) wrote his poems in the Avadhi dialect of Hindi. He is best known for **Padmavat,** a poem describing the story of the historic siege of Chittor by Alauddin Khilji in 1303.

Goswami Tulsidas

- Goswami Tulsidas (1532-1623) was a disciple of Ramananda, a contemporary of Akbar and is best known for Ramcharitmanas, wrote in Awadhi as well as Brajbhasha dialects. He also composed Hanuman Chalisa and founded the Sankatmochan Temple dedicated to Hanuman in Varanasi. His Awadhi works include the *Ramcharitmanas, Ramlala Nahachhu, Barvai Ramayan, Parvati Mangal, Janaki Mangal* and *Ramagya Prashna* and Brajbhasha works include Krishna *Gitavali, Gitavali, Kavitavali, Dohavali, Vairagya Sandipani and Vinaya Patrika.* **Vinaya Patrika** was his last composition.

Surdas

- Surdas, the famous poet of 15-16th century is known for his magnum opus the 'Sur Sagar', which is said to comprise one lakh songs, out of which only about 8,000 are extant. He was a diciple of Vallabhacharya, who taught him Hindi Philosophy and advised him to sing the 'Bhagavad Lila' - devotional lyrical ballads in praise of Lord Krishna and Radha. The songs in Sursagar present vivid description of childhood Lilas of Krishna.

Kabir

- Kabīr (1398-1518) was a mystic poet and saint whose poetry greatly influenced the Bhakti movement. His writings include Bijak, Sakhi Granth, Kabir Granthawali and Anurag Sagar. He was a disciple of Ramananda. He is seen as one who balanced the life of a householder, a mystic and a tradesman. The hallmark of Kabir's works consists of his two line couplets (Doha), which reflect his deep philosophical thinking.
- He expressed his poems in vernacular Hindi, borrowing from various dialects including Avadhi, Braj, and Bhojpuri. His poems also include Sakhis and Shlokas. Bijak is the best

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known of the compilations of the compositions of Kabir, and as such is the Holy Scripture for followers of the Kabirpanthi sect. Bijak is also known to be one of the earliest of the major texts in vernacular Hindi.

Rahim

- Abdul Rahim Khan-e-Khana (1556 – 1626) or Rahim was one of the Navaratnas of Akbar. He wrote Hindi couplets and his books on Astrology. He was a devotee of Lord Krishna and wrote poetry dedicated to him. His works in Astrology include Khet Kautukam and Dwawishd Yogavali.

Meera

- Meera Bai (1498-1557) is the most celebrated of the women poets of medieval times. She was one of the most significant figures Sant of the Vaishnava bhakti movement. Some 1,300 pads (poems) commonly known as bhajans (sacred songs) are attributed to her.
- The Bhajans of Meera are popular throughout India and have been published in several translations worldwide. Born as a Princess, got married to son of Rana Sanga, got widowed, escaped several efforts of killing her, left home, became disciple of Ravidas, travelled and more travelled and finally met her love at Dwarkadhish temple.

Premchand

- The birth name of Munshi Premchand (1880 – 1936) was Dhanpat Rai Srivastav. He was such a prolific write of Hindi Novels that he is known as Upanyas Samrta (King of Novels). He first wrote with a pen name "Nawab Rai", but subsequently switched to "Premchand". His works include more than a dozen novels, around 250 short stories, several essays and translations of a number of foreign literary works into Hindi. His first work was Asrar-e-Ma'abid (Urdu) or Devasthan Rahasya (Hindi) published in 1903.

Writing Style:

- Premchand was the first Hindi author whose writings prominently featured realism, depicting rationalistic outlook. His work arouses the public awareness about various social issues. His works often depict the menace of corruption, child widowhood, prostitution, feudal system, poverty, colonialism and freedom struggle. His novels describe the problems of the poor and the urban middle-class.

Important works

- Godaan (1936) was Munshi Premchand's last completed work and is generally accepted as his best novel. The protagonist, Hori, a poor peasant, desperately longs for a cow, a symbol of wealth and prestige in rural India. Other important works are Seva Sadan, Rangbhoomi, Pratigya, Kayakalp, Gaban, Kamabhoomi etc.

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Bharatendu Harishchandra

- Bharatendu Harishchandra (1850 – 1885) lived only for 34 years but he was such a great writer that he is known as father of modern Hindi literature as well as Hindi theatre. His pen name was "Rasa". The title "Bharatendu" was conferred on him at a public meeting by scholars of Kashi in 1880 for his role in the development of Hindi Literature. Government of India confers the Bharatendu Harishchandra Awards since 1983 to promote original writings in Hindi mass communication.

Writing Style

- The works of Bharatendu Harishchandra represent the agonies of the people, poverty, dependency, inhuman exploitation, the unrest of the middle class and the urge for the progress of the country. He made contributions in journalism, drama, and poetry. He edited the magazines Kavi Vachan Sudha in 1868,In 1873 Harishchandra Magazine , Harishchandra Patrika and Bal Vodhini.

Major works

- His most famous dramas include **Bharat Durdasha** (1875), Neel Devi (1881) and Andher Nagari (1881). Andher Nagari is a popular political satire.

Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi

- The active period of Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi (1893–1918) represents the second phase of modern Hindi literature (Dwivedi Yug) which was preceded by the Bharatendu Yug (1868–1893), followed by the Chhayavad Yug (1918–1937). He is known to be the mentor of Maithilisharan Gupta and great nationalist, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi. He edited the Hindi Magazine **Saraswati** from 1903 to 1920 and during this time, Saraswati became most popular Hindi magazine.

Maithili Sharan Gupt

- Maithilisharan Gupt (1886 – 1964) was one of the first poets to use Khari Boli in poetry at a time when Brajbhasha was prevalent. He wrote in various magazines including Saraswati. In 1910, his first major work, **Rang Mein Bhang** was published. His magnum opus is **Bharat Bharati**. Most of his poems revolve around plots from Ramayana, Mahabharata, Buddhist stories. His famous work **Saket** revolves around Urmila, wife of Lakshmana, while another of his works Yashodhara revolves around Yashodhara, the wife of Gautama Buddha. His nationalist poems became popular during the final days of freedom struggle.

Makhanlal Chaturvedi

- Makhanlal Chaturvedi (1889 – 1968) is known for his participation in India's national struggle contribution to Chhayavaad or Neo-romanticism movement of Hindi literature. He was awarded the first Sahitya Akademi Award in Hindi for his work Him Taringini in 1955.

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Jaishankar Prasad

- Jaishankar Prasad is considered one of the Four Pillars of Romanticism (Chhayavad) in Hindi Literature along with Sumitranandan Pant, Mahadevi Verma, and Suryakant Tripathi 'Nirala'. He wrote in Brajbhasha as well as Khari Boli.

Suryakant Tripathi 'Nirala'

- Suryakant Tripathi 'Nirala' was one of the most significant poets of modern Hindi and he is known for his contribution to Chhayavad movement along with Jaishankar Prasad, Sumitranandan Pant and Mahadevi Varma. Nirala's Parimal and Anaamika are considered as the original Chhayavaadi Hindi literature.

Sachchidananda Vatsyayan

- Sachchidananda Hirananda Vatsyayana 'Agyeya' was the pioneer of modern trends (Nai Kavita) and Prayog (Experiments) in Hindi poetry. He edited the 'Saptaks', a literary series, and started Hindi newsweekly, Dinaman. He served as Editor-in-Chief of Hindi daily Navbharat Times (1977–80) of the Times of India Group. His wife Kapila Vatsyayan is a leading Indian scholar of classical Indian dance, Indian art and Indian architecture and art historian. She has remained the founder director and chairperson of Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, Delhi.

Mahadevi Varma

- Mahadevi Varma (1907-1987) was known as Modern Meera. She contributed to the Chhayavaad genre of Hindi poetry. She was awarded Sahitya Akademi Fellowship in 1979, followed by the Jnanpith Award in 1982. She was the recipient of the Padma Vibhushan in 1988.

Chapter 6. Gujarati Literature

Acharya Hemachandra

- Though the history of Gujarati Literature can be traced to as back as 1000AD; the discussion starts with **Acharya Hemachandra** (1089–1172), the great Jain scholar, poet, and polymath. He was trained in religious discourse, philosophy, logic and grammar and is known as Kalikal Sarvagya. He was ordained as the acharya of the Svetambara sect of Jainism and was given the name Hemachandra also Somachandra.
- Hemachandra was contemporary and teacher of the Kumarapala of the Solanki dynasty of Gujarat. Kumarapala was such a dedicated disciple of Hemachandra that he banned all kinds of cruelty against any living being in his kingdom. Such was the kingdom of Solankis, based on the principles of Ahimsa. He also built the Taranga Jain temples and took up the project of restoring the Somnath temple. Acharya Hemachandra wrote grammars of Sanskrit and Prakrit, texts in logic, philosophy and mathematics.

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Narsi Mehta

- Narsi Mehta or Narsi Bhagat (1414 – 1481) was a Vaishnavite poet-saint, who is revered in Gujarati literature as its Adi Kavi. Mahatma Gandhi's favourite Bhajan "*Vaishnav Jan To*" was a creation of Narsi Mehta.
- Narsi Mehta was the pioneer poet of Gujarati literature. His wrote Padas called Akhyan and Prabhatiya and numerous Bhajans and Kirtans which were preserved orally for centuries before being scripted in writing.

Shamal Bhatt

- Shamal Bhatt was a Gujarati author of 18th century. He is special because, Mahatma Gandhi once said that idea of Satyagraha was conceived in a primitive form by him taking inspiration from one of the poems of Shamal Bhatt.

Mahatma Gandhi's idea of Satyagraha took inspiration from the following:
1. A Poem of Shamal Bhatt, which he learnt when he was eight year old.
2. Sermon on the Mount (Saying of Jesus)
3. New Testament
4. Bhagavad-Gita and
5. Kingdom of God is within you (Leo Tolstoy).

Narmadashankar Dave

- Narmadashankar Dave or **Narmad** was a Gujarati author, poet, scholar and lexicographer of 19th century. His most popular work is the poem "*Jai Jai Garavi Gujarat*". In 2004, the South Gujarat University was renamed after his name.

K M Munshi

- Kanaiyalal Maneklal Munshi (1887 – 1971) was freedom movement activist, politician and the founder of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. He wrote numerous novels, dramas and non-fiction works in Gujarati and several works in English.
- The most famous work is his trilogy which includes Patan-ni-Prabhuta (The Greatness of Patan), Gujarat-no-Nath (The Ruler of Gujarat) and Rajadhiraj (The Emperor).
- He was active participant in freedom movement ever since arrival of Gandhi in India. In the Bardoli Satyagraha, he supported Sardar Patel. For a brief period, he joined the Swaraj party but later returned to INC on Gandhi's behest at the time of launch of Salt Satyagraha. Munshi was on the ad hoc Flag Committee that selected the Flag of India in August 1947, and on the committee which drafted the Constitution of India under the chairmanship of B. R. Ambedkar.

Umashankar Joshi

- Umashankar Jethalal Joshi was the first winner of Jnanpith award in Gujarati Language in 1967 for his collection of poems titled Nishitha.

Chapter 7. Kannada Literature

Kavirajamarga

- This is the earliest available work in Kannada written in circa 850 AD by the Rasjtrakuta king Nripatunga.

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Pampa

- Pampa was the most renowned poet of Kannada who adorned the court of the Chalukya king Arikesan II. He is also known as *Adi Kavi* of Kannada. He authored the two great classics Adi Purana, which deals with the life of Vrishaba - the first Jain Tirthankara, and Vikramarjuna-vijaya (also called Pampa-Bharata), which an adaptation of Vyasa's Mahabharata into Kannada.

Kempu Narayana

- Kempu Narayana wrote Mudramanjusa in 1823, which is the first historical romance written in prose in Kannada. He and another poet N.Lakshminarayanappa or Muddana are known as jewels of Modern Kannada Literature.

Kuvempu

- Kuppali Venkatappa Gowda Puttappa (1904 – 1994), popularly known as Kuvempu was greatest poet of 20th century Kannada literature. He is the first among eight recipients of Jnanpith Award for Kannada. He along with M. Govinda Pai are revered as Rashtra Kavi in Kannada Literature. He was awarded Jnanpith award for "Sri Ramayana Darshanam".

Chandrashekhara Kambara

- Chandrashekhara Kambara (born January 2, 1937) is a prominent poet, playwright, folklorist, film director in Kannada language and the founder-vice-chancellor of Kannada University in Hampi.

- He is known for his effective usage of North Karnataka dialect of Kannada language in his plays and poems. He has been conferred with many prestigious awards including the Jnanpith Award in 2011 for the year 2010, Sahitya Akademi Award, the Padma Shri by Government of India, Kabir Samman, Kalidas Samman and Pampa Award.

Chapter 8. Kashmiri Literature

Rehman Rahi

- Abdur Rehman Rahi (born 1925) is a Kashmiri poet, translator and critic. He is a winner of Sahitya Akademi Award in 1961 for his poetry collection Nawroz-i-Saba, the Padma Shri in 2000, the Jnanpith Award 2004 for his contribution to Indian literature. *He is the first and only Kashmiri writer to be awarded the Jnanpith award* for his work *Siyah Rud Jearen Man*(In heavy downpour of Black rain).

Chapter 9. Malayalam Literature

Ramacharitam

- *Ramacharitam* (13th century) is the oldest Malayalam text and is a mixture of Malayalam and Tamil languages. It was written by Cheeramakavi.

Cherusseri Namboodiri

- Cherusseri Namboodiri was the first big name in Malayalam literature, whose work *Krishna Gatha* (15th century) is considered as one of the masterpieces in pure Malayalam.

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Ezhuttachchan

- Tunchattu Ramanuja Ezhuttachchan was a 16th century poet of Malayalam language and is known as "*the father of the Malayalam language*". The most revered work of his are *Adhyathmaramayanam* and *Mahabharatham.* He was a strong proponent of the Bhakti Movement and his poems are classified under the genre of kilippattu.

Kumaran Asan

- Kumaran Asan (1873-1924) was a poet, philosopher, a social reformer and a disciple of Sree Narayana Guru. He is considered to be one of the first modern poets of Malayalam language. He wrote the epic poem *Buddha Charitha* in Malayalam. Because of the quantum of his work, he is seen as only *Malayalam poet who became a Mahakavi without writing a Mahakavya*.

G. Sankara Kurup

- The Jananpith awards in India were initiated in 1965 and the first winner G. Sankara Kurup, a Malayalam poet, who won this award for Odakkuzhal (The bamboo flute, 1950).

O. N. V. Kurup

- Ottaplavil Neelakandan Velu Kurup or simply ONV is the 2007 Jnanpith Award winner. He received the Padmashri Award from the Government of India in 1998. ONV is 5th Malyalee & second Malyalee poet to get the Jnanpith Award.
- The other three Jnanpith award winners from Kerala are S.K. Pottekad (1980), Thakazhi Siva Sankara Pillai (1984) and M.T. Vasudevan Nair (1995).
- He writes songs for Malayalam Films as well as in 1989, he won the national award for best lyricist for the film "Vaishali". He has also won 13 state film awards for best lyricist. His first published poem was "Munnottu" (Forward) which appeared in a local weekly.

Chapter 10. Marathi Literature

Earliest development of Marathi under Yadavas

- Marathi was the court language of the Yadavas of Devagiri (850-1312 CE). The Yadavas contributed greatly towards the origin and growth of the Marathi literature by patronising learned men of this language.

Bakhars
The Bakhars are important in the construction of history of the Marathas. Bakhar means to tell the news or record of happenings or biography of an eminent person and is written on its own orders. Bakhars are written in Modi script of Marathi language. Some historians say that Bakhars are based on hearsay and secondary information and can not cent percent be relied upon them. Among the
Bakhar literature, the Sabhasad Bakhar is the prime and the most important, which is written by Krishnaji Anant Sabhasad, a ministerof Chhatrapati Rajaram in 1694. In Marathi language, Shakavalies and official files and diaries also are treated as sources of this history.

Sant Dnyaneshwar / Jnanadev

- Dnyaneshwar (1275–1296) or Jnanadeva was a 13th century yogi of the Nath tradition and is

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considered to be first Marathi literary figure who had wide readership and profound influence. His work *Bhavartha Deepika* (a commentary on Bhagavad Gita) and Amrutanubhav are considered to be milestones in Marathi literature. *Bhavarth Deepika* is a 9000-couplets long commentary on the Bhagavad Gita).

Sant Tukaram

- Sant Tukaram (1577–1650) was Varkari Sant and spiritual poet of the Bhakti. He is widely considered to be the first modern poet of Marathi. Tukaram was a devotee of Vitthala or Vithoba and a disciple of Bahagat Namdev.
- His poetry is considered to be the zenith of the literary development by the Varkari sect in Marathi Language. He is best known for many Abhangas written by him. The Abhangas are the devotional poetry sung in praise of Vithoba, first by the Varkari saints like Namdev, Dhyaneshwar, Eknath and Tukaram in Marathi.

Samarth Ramdas

- Samarth Ramdas (1608–1681) was one of the most important spiritual poets of India who is best known for his Marathi Arti of Lord Ganesha " Sukhkartā Dukhhartā Vārtā Vighnāchi". Dasbodh is the most famous book ascribed to Samarath Ramdas. Dasbodh is a treatise on Advaita Vedanta.

Jyotiba Phule

- Mahatma Jyotirao Govindrao Phule (1827 – 1890) was a social reformer, writer, philosopher, theologist, scholar, editor and revolutionary, best known as pioneer of women's education in India.
- He formed **Satya Shodhak Samaj** in 1873 with the main objective of liberating the Bahujans, Shudras and Ati-Shudras and protecting them from exploitation and atrocities.
- One of his best known works is **Ghulamgiri,** which was inspired by the American civil war. He gave a message to the lower castes to take inspiration from America. Another famous work is **Shetkaryaca Asud**(The Whipcord of the Cultivators), a critique of the joint exploitation of peasantry by the British and Brahmans in bureaucracy.

Gopal Hari Deshmukh (Lokhitwadi)

- Gopal Hari Deshmukh (1823 – 1892) was a social reformer from Bombay Presidency. He retired as a sessions judge in the British Government. He used to write in a weekhly Marathi newspaper under the pen name Lokhitawadi, on several social issues such as caste system, education of women, arranged child marriages, dowry system, polygamy etc. He also founded a public library in Bombay and also played role in foundations of several periodicals such as Gyan Prakash (ज्ञानप्रकाश), Indu Prakash (इंदुप्रकाश), and ''Lokhitwadi (लोकहितवादी) in Maharashtra.

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Mahadev Govind Ranade

- Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade (1842 – 1901) was one of the founding members of the Indian National Congress. He was an influential personality in the 19th century British India.
- He helped in the establishment of the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha and the Prarthana Samaj. He is best known as the first Indian thinker to give the idea of a "welfare state".

Ranade and Welfare State
Concept of Welfare State was first given by Archbishop William Temple during the Second World War and was first implemented by Bismarck. In modern India, it was Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade who is accepted to be the first thinker who gave the idea of a welfare state. He said that the state now is more and more recognized as the national organ for taking care of the national needs in all matters in which individual and cooperative efforts are not likely to be effective as nation's effort.

Hari Narayan Apte

- Hari Narayan Apte was a Marathi writer of 19th and 20th century, who wrote many social and historical novels, reflecting the contemporary life. Some of his notable novels are Manjughosha and Muktamala.

Vishnu Sakharam Khandekar

- Vishnu Sakharam Khandekar was an eminent writer, who was the first Jnanpith award winner in Marathi language for his magnum opus **Yayati**. Yayāti (ययाति) received three prestigious awards: A Maharashtra State Award (1960), a Sahitya Akademi Award (1960), and a Jnanpith Award (1974).

Kusumagraj (Vishnu Vāman Shirwādkar)

- Kusumagraj was the popular name of **Vishnu Vāman Shirwādkar** (1912 – 1999), an eminent Marathi poet, playwright and novelist. He is best known for his play Natsamrat which won him Jnanpith award in 1987. His other work Vishaka (1942) is a collection of lyrics, inspired a generation into the Indian freedom movement, and is today considered one of the masterpieces of Indian literature.

Chapter 11. Odiya Literature

Charyapadas

- Charyapada is considered to be the earliest extant work in the field of Bengali, Assamese, Odiya as well as the Maithili Language. It's a collection of Buddhist mystical poems or songs belonging to 8th–12th century. These songs have the element of the ritual gathering of practitioners in a tantric feast. The Charyapadas were written by the Mahasiddhas or Siddhacharyas, who belonged to the various regions of Assam, Bengal, Odisha and Bihar. Charyapada is also the collection of the oldest verses written in pre-Modern Bengali.

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Sarala Das

- Sarala Das was a 15th-century poet and scholar of Odiya literature, best known for a trilogy Mahabharata, Vilanka Ramayana and Chandi Purana. He is considered to be the first Odiya writer.

Panchasakha

- Panchasakhas were the five poets of Odiya Language in 15th and 16th century. These were Balaram Das, Jagannath Das, Achyutananda Das, Ananta Das and Jasobanta Das. All of were from the Utkaliya vasihnavism.

Upendra Bhanja

- Upendra Bhanja was a Odiya Poet of 17th century who wrote Bidehisha Bilasa, Koti Brahmanda Sundari and Lavanyabati. These are considrered to be the landmarks of Odiya Literature. Also somtimes referred as Kabi Samrat among Odiya poets.

Radhanath Ray

- Radhanath Ray (1849–1908) was the most well-known Odiya poet of this 19th century. He wrote intially in Bengali as well as Odiya but later shifted entirely to Odiya language. He is honoured in Odiya literature with the title Kabibara.

Fakir Mohan Senapati

- Fakir Mohan Senapati (1843–1918) was a prolific Odiya fiction writer and is known as father of modern Odiya prose fiction. His **Rebati** (1898) is widely recognized as the first Oriya short story.

Gopabandhu Das

- Gopabandhu Dash (1877–1928), fondly called as *Utkalamani* was a social worker, reformer, political activist, journalist, poet and essayist. He was instrumental in making Oriya journalism suitable for the common man. He published a monthly magazine called Satyabadi in 1914. He also started the popular Odiya newspaper Samaj.

Gopala Chandra Praharaj

- The *Purnachandra Oriya Bhashakosha* is a monumental 7-volume work of about 9,500 pages published between 1930 and 1940. It was a result of the vision and dedicated work of Gopal Chandra Praharaj (1874–1945) over nearly three decades.

Gopinath Mohanty

- Gopinath Mohanty (1914–1991) was the first winner of the prestigious Jnanpith award for Odiya Language and is considered to be the most eminent Odiya writer after Fakir Mohan Senapati. He received Jnanpith award for Matimatala (1964), a novel of epic dimension based on life in rural Odisha.

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Sitakant Mahapatra

- Sitakant Mahapatra (born 1937) is a former IAS officer and is a notable poet and literary critic in Odiya and English language. He was awarded the 1974 Sahitya Akademi Award in Oriya for his poetry collection, *Sabdar Akash* (The Sky of Words) and was awarded the Jnanpith Award in 1993 for outstanding contribution to Indian literature.

Pratibha Ray

- Pratibha Ray is a leading Oriya novelist and academician, who has written over 40 novels, travelogues and short stories. She is winner of the Jnanpith Award for the year 2011. She was the first woman to win the Moortidevi Award in 1991.

Chapter 12. Punjabi Literature

The Adi Grantha or Guru Granth Sahib is one of the earliest texts in Punjabi. It was written not strictly in Punjabi but in the Gurumukhi script.

Baba Farid

- Baba Farid or Hazrat Farīduddīn Ganjshakar was a 12th-century Sufi sant of the Chishti Order. Punjab's Faridkot takes it name from Baba Farid.
- He is recognized as the *first major poet of the Punjabi Language*. Baba Farid is also one the fifteen Sikh bhagats.
- Some parts of the poems of Baba Farid have been included in the Guru Granth Sahib.

Baba Farid : Contribution to Literature
One of Farīd's most important contributions to Punjabi literature was his development of the language for literary purposes. Whereas Sanskrit, Arabic, Turkish and Persian had historically been considered the languages of the learned and the elite, and used in monastic centres, Punjabi was generally considered a less refined folk language. Although earlier poets had written in a primitive Punjabi, before Farīd there was little in Punjabi literature apart from traditional and anonymous ballads. By using Punjabi as the language of poetry, Farīd laid the basis for a vernacular Punjabi literature that would be developed later. (wikipedia).

Shah Hussain

- Shah Hussain was a Punjabi Sufi poet of 16th century, who, along with **Bulleh Shah** and **Baba Farid,** is considered a pioneer of the Kafi form of Punjabi poetry. Shah Hussain's love for a Brahmin boy called "Madho" or "Madho Lal" is famous, and they are often referred to as a single person with the composite name of "Madho Lal Hussain".

Kafi versus Qawwali
Kafi is a lyrical composition, mostly in Punjabi and Sindhi, meant for singing in certain style. The subject matter is essentially mystico-ethical in nature. One of the verses comprises the central theme which is emphasised by repitition. Kindly note that practically Kafi and Qawwali are same as far as singing is concerned but the major difference is that Kafi is used to express the religious seinsibility while Qawwalis have a wide range of themes. Baba Farid, Bulleh Shah and Shah Hussain are the most important pioneers of Kafi genre of poetry and singing. The most important contemporary singers of Kafi and Qawwali are Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, Abida Parveen etc.

Bulleh Shah

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- Bulleh Shah (1680–1757) was one of the most eminent Punjabi Sufi poet and philosopher who is best known for his Kafi verses.

Qissa Tradition: Heer Ranjha and Sohni Mahiwal
Punjabi Sufi poetry also influenced other Punjabi literary traditions particularly the Punjabi Qissa, a genre of romantic tragedy which also derived inspiration from Indic, Persian and Quranic sources. The Qissa of Heer Ranjha by Waris Shah (1706–1798) is among the most popular of Punjabi qisse. Other popular stories include Sohni Mahiwal by Fazal Shah, Mirza Sahiba by Hafiz Barkhudar (1658–1707), Sassi Punnun by Hashim Shah (1735?–1843?), and Qissa Puran Bhagat by Qadaryar (1802–1892). (Wikipedia)

Waris Shah

- Waris Shah (1722–1798) was one of the pioneers of the Qissa (story) tradition of the Punjabi folk literature.
- He is best known for his *magnum opus* **Heer Ranjha,** based on the traditional folk tale of Heer and her lover Ranjha.

Nanak Singh

- Nanak Singh (1897 – 1971) was a poet, songwriter and novelist in the Punjabi language, who helped link the novel to the story telling traditions of Qissa and oral tradition.
- He wrote the novel Pavitar Paapi in 1942. The novel became immensely popular and won him literary acclaim. It was translated into Hindi and several other Indian languages and was adapted into a successful motion picture (Pavitra Paapi) in 1968 by his ardent admirer, Balraj Sahani.

Amrita Pritam

- Amrita Pritam (1919 – 2005) was the first prominent woman Punjabi poet, novelist, and essayist. In her literary life of over 6 decades, she produced over 100 books, of poetry, fiction, biographies, essays, a collection of Punjabi folk songs and an autobiography.
- Her most famous poem *is Aj Aakhaan Waris Shah Nu* (Today I invoke Waris Shah), in which she expresses her anguish over massacres during the partition of India.

- Her most noted novel was Pinjar (1950) in which she vividly depicted the violence against women, loss of humanity and ultimate surrender to existential fate. The novel was made into an award-winning film, Pinjar in 2003.
- In 1956, she became the first woman to win the Sahitya Akademi Award for her magnum opus, a long poem, Sunehe (Messages), later she received Jnanpith Award in 1982 for Kagaz Te Canvas (The Paper and the Canvas). Padma Shri came her way in 1969 and finally, Padma Vibhushan, in 2004, and in the same year she was honoured with Sahitya Akademi Fellowship.

Surjit Patar

- Surjit Patar is a Punjabi language writer and poet. He was honoured with Saraswati Samman award 2009 for his book 'Lafzan Di Dargah'. He is the second Punjabi poet to receive this

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honor after eminent Punjabi Writer Dalip Kaur in 2001. In 2012, he was awarded Padma Shri.

Chapter 13. Tamil Literature

The earliest Tamil literature goes back to the Sangam period about which you can read here

Alvar Saints

- The twelve Alvars were Tamil poet-saints, who lived between 6th and 9th centuries AD and espoused 'emotional devotion' or bhakti to *Visnu-Krishna* in their songs. The devotional songs of the Alvars were created during the Early medieval period of Tamil history and they helped can be called the pioneers of the Bhakti Movement in India.
- The collection of their hymns is known as **Divya Prabandha**. All the saints were male except one named Andal.

Nayanar Saints

- The 63 Nayanar saints were the *Shiva* devotional poets, who lived between 5th and 10th centuries. These 63 Nayanar saints, along with the 12 Alvars are known as South India's 75 Apostles of Bhakti movement.

Kamban

- Kambar or Kamban was a 12th century Tamil poet, who wrote *Ramavatharam*, popularly known as *Kambaramayanam*, the Tamil version of Ramayana. Kamba Ramayanam of Kamban is an epic of about 11,000 stanzas as opposed to Valmiki's 24000 couplets and is the original retelling of the epic story rather than a translation of the later.

Subramanya Bharathi

- Subramanya Bharathi (1882-1921) was a Tamil writer, poet, journalist, Indian independence activist and social reformer, popularly known as Mahakavi Bharathiyar.
- He is a pioneer of modern Tamil poetry. On December 11, 2012 his 130th birth anniversary was celebrated.
- Subramanya Bharati 's songs are a part of contemporary popular culture and have featured in Tamil cinema in last many decades and also been set to music by famous composers like Illayaraja and sung by celebrated artistes like M.S. Subbulakshmi.

Brief Biography: Subramanya Bharathi

Subramanya Bharati was born at Ettayapuram, a small princely state in the Tirunelveli district in Madras state. He was an intellectually precocious child and at eleven years was given the title 'Bharati', when he gave an impressive exhibition of poetic gifts at a court function. He spent four years in Banaras from 1898 to 1902, where he learnt Sanskrit, Hindi and English, and attended lectures by Annie Besant.

After returning to Etlayapuram in 1902, he worked as a sub-editor of the Tamil daily Sweadesmitram and as the editor of India for some years. He was actively involved in politics. His meeting with Sister Nivedita in Calcutta was a landmark event. He pledged himself for the freedom of India and eradication of the casteism and emancipation of the women.

The second milestone in Bharati's life was his meeting with Sri Aurobindo in Pondicherry in 1910. From him Bharati imbibed the teaching of the Vedas and the ideas of vedantic humanism. Bharati was in political exile in Pondicherry for ten years because of his provocative writing against British rule and returned to British India in 1918. He spent the rest of his life in Madras until a tragic accident in 1921, when he was cast to the ground by the Triplicane temple elephant, claimed his life.

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- He published his first two collections of poems *Swadesa Gitangal* and *Janmabhoomi* in 1908. His entire Tamil Literature can be divided into several parts of which the most prominent are the patriotic poems and the devotional poems viz. the **Kannan Pattu** (collection of songs devoted to Krishna) and **Kuyil Pattu** (Songs of Kuyil). It was only after his death in 1921, that his literary greatness came to be more and more appreciated and the value of his works Kannan-pattu and Kuyil- pattu was fully recognised.
- Today, Bharathiar is a household name in Tamil Nadu and a revered poet in rest of India.

Bharathidasan

- Bharathidasan (1891-1964) was a disciple of Bharathiar. He was a poet and rationalist whose literary works handled mostly socio-political issues. His writings served as a catalyst for the growth of the Dravidian movement in Tamil Nadu.

Gopalakrishna Bharathi

- Gopalakrishna Bharathi lived during the early 19th century. He wrote numerous poems and lyrics set to tune in Carnatic music. His most famous work is the Nandan Charitam on the life of Nandanar who having been born in a sociologically lower caste, faces and overcomes the social obstacles in achieving his dream of visiting the Chidambaram temple.

Chapter 14. Telugu Literature

Nannaya, Tikkana and Yerrapragada

- Nannaya Bhattaraka is the earliest known (11th century) Telugu author. He was one of the three authors who translated the Sanskrit Mahabharat to *Andhra Mahabharatamu*, a Telugu retelling of the epic story. He is also known as Adi Kavi in recognition of his great literary work.
- He also wrote the first Grammar work in Telugu called *Andhra Shabdha Chintamani*. At the same time, it is thought that the well developed language of Nannaya suggests that Telugu literature may have developed earlier to him, however, no literature is available to prove that.
- Nannaya along with Tikkana and Yerrapragada are known as Kavitrayam of Telugu Language, who translated the great epic Mahabharata into Telugu.

Krishna Deva Raya / Astadiggaja

- Krishna Deva Raya (reign 1509–1529) was an Emperor of the Vijayanagara Empire. His times are known as the golden age of Telugu literature. The period of the Empire is known as "Prabandha Period," because of the quality of the prabandha literature produced during this time. Eight poets known as Astadiggaja were part of his court. These eight poets were the eight pillars of his literary assembly.
- Among these eight poets **Allasani Peddana** is considered to be the greatest and is given the title of *Andhra Kavita Pitamaha* (the father of Telugu poetry). Another one, **Tenali Rama** is

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one of the most popular folk figures in India today, a quick-witted courtier ready even to outwit the all-powerful emperor.

Tenali Rama

- Tenali Ramakrishna , popular as Tenali Rama and Vikata Kavi, was another sixteenth century court poet of the Vijayanagara empire and also one of the Ashtadiggajas. He hailed from Tenali in Guntur District. He is noted for brilliance and wit and for mocking other poets and great personalities. His best literary work is ***Panduranga Mahatyamu***.
- He took the theme for Panduranga Mahatyam from the Skanda Purana and enhanced it with many stories about the devotees of God Vitthala (Panduranga)

Tyagaraja

- Tyagaraja (1767–1847) of Tanjore composed a big repertoire of devotional songs in Telugu, which are now sung in Carnatic Music. This, his role in the deveopment of Carnatic Music is immense.
- He composed thousands of devotional compositions, most in praise of Lord Rama , many of which remain popular today. He also wrote two musical plays viz. Prahalada Bhakti Vijayam and the Nauka Charitam.

Tirupati Venkata Kavulu

- Tirupati Venkata Kavulu refers to the Telugu poet duo Divakarla Tirupati Sastry (1872–1919) and Chellapilla Venkata Sastry (1870–1950). This twin poets are acclaimed as harbingers of modern poetry in Telugu.
- Several of their plays, especially pandavodyogavijayalu have been extremely popular with many drama clubs and audiences across Andhra Pradesh.

Viswanatha Satyanarayana

- Viswanatha Satyanarayana (1895 – 1976), popularly known as the Kavi Samraat was the first Jnanpith award winner Telugu writer. He was a disciple of the Tirupati Venkata Kavulu.
- His works included poetry, novels, drama, short stories and speeches, covering a wide range of subjects such as analysis of history, philosophy, religion, sociology, political science, linguistics, psychology and consciousness studies, epistemology, aesthetics and spiritualism.

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