

Unit-2

Evolution of Script and Languages in India

A language usually refers to the spoken language, a method of communication. A script refers to a collection of characters used to write one or more languages. A language is a method of communication. Scripts are writing systems that allow the transcription of a language, via alphabet sets

Indus script (Harappan Script)

After the pictographic and petroglyph representations of early man the first evidence of a writing system can be seen in the Indus valley civilization. The earliest evidence of which is found on the pottery and pot shreds of Rahman Dheri and these potter's marks, engraved or painted, are strikingly similar to those appearing in the Mature Indus symbol system.

Later the writing system can be seen on the seals and sealings of Harappan period. Most inscriptions containing these symbols are extremely short (5 symbols), making it difficult to judge whether or not these symbols constituted a script used to record a language, or even symbolize a writing system.

The long inscriptions are found in Gujarat particularly Dholavira where we find slabs of stone inscribed with inscriptions which might represent name plates of the houses with 24 to 34 symbols.

The characters are largely **pictorial but include many abstract signs**. The inscriptions are thought to have been written mostly from **right-to-left** (because there are several instances of the symbols being compressed on the left side, as if the writer is running out of space at the end of the row there), but they sometimes follow a boustrophedonic (sarphalekhana) style. The number of principal signs is about 400. Since that is considered too large a number for each character to be a phonogram, the script is generally believed to instead **be logo-syllabic**.

There were arguments that the Indus **script is nonlinguistic**, which symbolise families, clans, gods, and religious concepts and are similar **to totem poles**. Based on the extreme brevity of the inscriptions, the existence of too many rare signs and the lack of the random-looking sign repetition that is typical of language.

But others have argued that it is a linguistic system and the debate shifted to whether it is the predecessor of **Dravidian script or the Brahmi script**.

Some scholars, have argued that the Brahmi script has some connection with the Indus system, but others, such as **Iravatham Mahadevan**, have argued that the script had a relation to a Dravidian language. This debate has been further fuelled by the arguments of who were the initial and original inhabitants of India the Aryan's or the Dravidian's.

Brahmi script

Brahmi is the originator of most of the present Indian scripts, including **Devanagari, Bengali, Tamil, and Malayalam** etc. **All Indian scripts are derived from Brahmi. There are three main families of scripts: Devanagari; Dravidian; and Grantha.** It developed into two broad types in Northern and Southern India, in the Northern one being **more angular and the Southern one being more circular. It was deciphered in 1838 by James Prinsep.** The best-known Brahmi inscriptions are the **rock-cut edicts of Ashoka** in north-central India, dated to 250–232 BCE.

Many scholars support that Brahmi probably derives from Aramaic influence and others support that the Brahmi language can have some Indus script influence.

The Brahmi script confirms to the syllabic writing system and was used more for writing Prakrit, the language spoken by ordinary people initially and later Sanskrit also was written in this script.

According to the epigraphers- All Indian scripts are derived from Brahmi. There are two main families of scripts:

- Devanagari, which is the basis of the languages of northern and western India: Hindi, Gujarati, Bengali, Marathi, Dogri, Panjabi, etc.
- Dravidian which shows the formats of Grantha and Vatteluttu.

The Vedas

The **Vedas** are a large body of religious texts originating in ancient India. Composed in Vedic Sanskrit, the texts constitute the oldest layer of Sanskrit literature and the oldest scriptures of Hinduism.

There are four Vedas: the Rig-Veda, the Yajur-Veda, the Sam-Veda and the Atharva-Veda. Each Veda has four subdivisions – the Samhitas (mantras and benedictions), the Aranyakas (text on rituals, ceremonies, sacrifices and symbolic-sacrifices), the Brahmanas (commentaries on rituals, ceremonies and sacrifices), and the Upanishads (texts discussing meditation, philosophy and spiritual knowledge).

The Vedas are the religious texts which inform the **religion of Hinduism** (also known as *Sanatan Dharma* meaning “Eternal Order” or “Eternal Path”). The term **veda** means “knowledge” in that they are thought to contain the fundamental knowledge relating to the underlying cause of, function of, and personal response to existence. They are considered among the oldest, if not the oldest, religious works in the world. They are commonly referred to as “scripture”, which is accurate in that they can be defined as holy writ concerning the nature of the Divine.

The Vedas existed in oral form and were passed down from master to student for generations until they were committed to **writing** between c. 1500 - c. 500 BCE (the so-called Vedic Period) in **India**. They were carefully preserved orally as masters would have students memorize them forwards and backwards with emphasis on exact pronunciation in order to keep what was originally heard intact.

The Vedas are therefore regarded as *Shruti* in Hinduism meaning “what is heard” as contrasted with other texts designated *Smritis* (“what is remembered”), accounts of great heroes and their struggles in works such as the ***Mahabharata***, ***Ramayana***, and ***Bhagavad Gita*** (although some sects of Hinduism regard the ***Bhagavad Gita*** as *Shruti*). The texts which make up the Four Vedas are:

- Rig Veda
- Sama Veda
- Yajur Veda
- Atharva Veda

The Vedas are considered the oldest Hindu texts. Scholars believe that they were written down some 2,500 years ago, though the tradition often dates them to the beginning of Kali-Yuga (circa 3000 BCE). Some

Hindus say that there was originally only one Veda, the *Yajur*, which was later divided into four. Scholars, however, usually consider the *Rig-Veda* the oldest of all Hindu writings. The following is an overview of the four Vedas.

- **The Rig-Veda**

The most important and, according to scholars, oldest of the Vedas. It is divided into ten books (called *mandalas*) and has 1028 hymns in praise of various deities. These include Indra, Agni, Vishnu, Rudra, Varuna, and other early or “Vedic gods.” It also contains the famous Gayatri mantra and the prayer called the Purusha Shukta (the story of Primal Man).

- **The Yajur-Veda**

A priestly handbook for use in the performance of *yajnas* (sacrifices) It is divided into two sections, the earlier “black” and the more recent “white.”

- **Sama-Veda**

This consists of chants and melodies to be sung during worship and the performance of *yajna*.

- **Atharva-Veda**

Contains hymns, mantras and incantations, largely outside the scope of *yajna*.

Within each of the four books there are four types of composition, or divisions, as shown below. In the narrowest of senses, only the Samhitas comprise the true Vedas. The first two divisions relate to the performance of sacrificial rituals (the *karma-kanda* section), whereas the second pair consists of philosophy (and belong to the *jnana-kanda* section).

1. The Samhitas – literally “collections,” in this case of hymns and *mantras*. They form the Veda proper (benedictions, prayers, mantras).
2. The Brahmanas – prose manuals of ritual and prayer for the guiding priests. They tend to explain the Samhitas. They also contain early versions of some stories (commentaries on said rituals).
3. The Aranyakas – literally “forest books” for hermits and saints. They are philosophical treatises (rituals, observances).
4. The Upanishads – books of philosophy, also called “Vedanta,” the end or conclusion of the Vedas. (philosophical narratives and dialogues)

There are also two important bodies of supplementary literature, related closely to the Vedas themselves. They are:

- The Vedangas, which expound the sciences required to understand and apply the Vedas.
- The Upavedas (usually considered *smriti*) which deal with the four traditional arts and sciences.
 1. Kalpa (ritual detail)
 2. Siksha (pronunciation)
 3. Vyakarana (grammar)
 4. Nirukti (etymology)
 5. Chandas (metre)

6. Jyotisha (astronomy/astrology)

The Upanishads

The **Upanishads** are the philosophical-religious texts of **Hinduism** (also known as *Sanatan Dharma* meaning “Eternal Order” or “Eternal Path”) which develop and explain the fundamental tenets of the **religion**. The name is translated as to “sit down closely” as one would to listen attentively to instruction by a teacher or other authority figure, but *Upanishad* has also been interpreted to mean “secret teaching” or “revealing underlying truth”. The truths addressed are the concepts expressed in the religious texts known as **the Vedas** which orthodox Hindus consider the revealed knowledge of creation and the operation of the universe.

All four Vedas, however, maintain the same vision, and the Upanishads for each of these address the themes and concepts expressed. Around 108 Upanishads are known, of which the first dozen or so are the oldest and most important and are referred to as the principal or main (*mukhya*) Upanishads. The *mukhya* Upanishads are found mostly in the concluding part of the *Brahmanas* and *Aranyakas* and were, for centuries, memorized by each generation and passed down orally. The 13 Upanishads are:

- Brhadaranyaka Upanishad
- Chandogya Upanishad
- Taittiriya Upanishad
- Aitereya Upanishad
- Kausitaki Upanishad
- Kena Upanishad
- Katha Upanishad
- Isha Upanishad
- Svetasvatara Upanishad
- Mundaka Upanishad
- Prashna Upanishad
- Maitri Upanishad
- Mandukya Upanishad

The Upanishads deal with ritual observance and the individual's place in the universe. The Upanishads are commonly referred to as *Vedānta*. Vedanta has been interpreted as the "last chapters, parts of the Veda" and alternatively as "object, the highest purpose of the Veda". The concepts of Brahman (ultimate reality) and Ātman (soul, self) are central ideas in all of the Upanishads, and "know that you are the Ātman" is their thematic focus.

The Ramayana

Ramayana is one of the two major Sanskrit epics of ancient Indian history, the other being the *Mahabharata*. Along with the *Mahabharata*, it forms the Hindu Itihasa. The *Ramayana* is one of the largest ancient epics in world literature. It consists of nearly 24,000 verses (mostly set in

the Shloka/Anustubh meter), divided into six *kāṇḍas*: the Bālakāṇḍa, ayodhyakāṇḍa, the aranyakāṇḍa, the kiṣkindakāṇḍa, the sundarākāṇḍa, and the laṅkākaṇḍa, and about 500 sargas (chapters).

There are many versions of *Ramayana* in Indian languages, besides Buddhist, Sikh, and Jain adaptations. There also Cambodian (Reamker), Indonesian, Filipino, Thai (Ramakien), Lao, Burmese and Malay versions of the tale.

The Mahabharata

The ***Mahabharata*** is an ancient Indian epic where the main story revolves around two branches of a family - the **Pandavas** and **Kauravas** - who, in the Kurukshetra **War, battle** for the throne of Hastinapura. Interwoven into this narrative are several smaller stories about people dead or living, and philosophical discourses. At 100,000 verses, it is the longest epic poem ever written, generally thought to have been composed in the 4th century BCE or earlier.

The Puranas

The Puranas are religious texts composed in Sanskrit, orally narrated for centuries before being written down from the 2nd century CE onwards. They are part of the sacred literature of the Hindu faith that also comprise of the Vedas, Brahmanas, Aryayankas, Upanishads, and the great epics.

The word **Purana** literally means "ancient, old", and it is a vast genre of Indian literature about a wide range of topics, particularly about legends and other traditional lore. The Puranas are known for the intricate layers of symbolism depicted within their stories. Composed primarily in Sanskrit, but also in Tamil and other Indian languages, several of these texts are named after major Hindu deities such as Vishnu, Shiva, Brahma and Shakti. The Puranic genre of literature is found in both Hinduism and Jainism.

The Puranas also treat various topics concerning religious developments that occurred between about 400 and 1500 CE. Those additional topics include customs, ceremonies, sacrifices, festivals, caste duties, donations, the construction of temples and images, and places of pilgrimage. The Puranas were written to popularise the religion of the Vedas. They contain the essence of the Vedas. The aim of the Puranas is to impress on the minds of the masses the teachings of the Vedas and to generate in them devotion to God, through concrete examples, myths, stories, legends, lives of saints, kings and great men, allegories and chronicles of great historical events.

The sages made use of these things to illustrate the eternal principles of religion. The Puranas were meant, not for the scholars, but for the ordinary people who could not understand high philosophy and who could not study the Vedas.

There are eighteen main Puranas and an equal number of subsidiary Puranas or Upa-Puranas. The main Puranas are:

1. Vishnu Purana,
2. Naradiya Purana,
3. Srimad Bhagavata Purana,
4. Garuda (Suparna) Purana,
5. Padma Purana,
6. Varaha Purana,
7. Brahma Purana,
8. Brahmanda Purana,
9. Brahma Vaivarta Purana,
10. Markandeya Purana,
11. Bhavishya Purana,
12. Vamana Purana,
13. Matsya Purana,
14. Kurma Purana,
15. Linga Purana,
16. Siva Purana,
17. Skanda Purana and
18. Agni Purana.

Of these, six are Sattvic Puranas and glorify Vishnu; six are Rajasic and glorify Brahma; six are Tamasic and they glorify Siva.

Buddhist and Jain Literature in Pali, Prakrit and Sanskrit

Jain literature refers to the literature of the Jain religion. It is a vast and ancient literary tradition, which was initially transmitted orally. The oldest surviving material is contained in the canonical *Jain Agamas*, which are written in Ardhamagadhi, a Prakrit (Middle-Indo Aryan) language. Various commentaries were written on these canonical texts by later Jain monks. Later works were also written in other languages, like Sanskrit and Maharashtri Prakrit.

Jain literature is primarily **divided between the canons of the *Digambara* and *Śvētāmbara*** orders. These two main sects of Jainism do not always agree on which texts should be considered authoritative.

More recent Jain literature has also been written in other languages, like Marathi, Tamil, Rajasthani, Dhundari, Marwari, Hindi, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Tulu and more recently in English.

The religious books of the Jains and the Buddhists refer to historical persons or incidents. The earliest Buddhist works were **written in Pali**, which was spoken in Magadha and South Bihar. The Buddhist works can be divided into the canonical and the non-canonical.

The **canonical literature** is best represented by the "Tripitakas", that is, three baskets - Vinaya Pitaka, Sutta Pitaka and Abhidhamma Pitaka. **Vinaya Pitaka** deals with rules and regulations of daily life. **Sutta Pitaka** contains dialogues and discourses on morality and deals with Dharma while **Abhidhamma**

Pitaka deals with philosophy and metaphysics. It includes discourses on various subjects such as ethics, psychology, theories of knowledge and metaphysical problems.

The **non-canonical literature** is best represented by the **Jatakas**. Jatakas are the most interesting stories on the previous births of the Buddha. It was believed that before he was finally born as Gautama, the Buddha practising Dharma passed through more than 550 births, in many cases even in the form of animals. Each birth story is called a Jataka.

The Jain texts were **written in Prakrit** and were finally compiled in the sixth century AD in Valabhi in Gujarat. The important works are known as Angas, Upangas, Prakirnas, Chhedab Sutras and Malasutras.

Jainism helped in the growth of a rich literature comprising poetry, philosophy and grammar. These works contain many passages which help to reconstruct the political history of eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

The term *Pali*, used today in both Buddhist and Western cultures as a designation of a language, is a relatively modern coinage, not traceable before the seventeenth century. An earlier name given to this language in Buddhist literature is Māgadhī, the language of the province Magadha in Eastern India that roughly corresponds to the modern Indian state Bihār. The only Buddhist school using this language is the Theravāda in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia. Theravādins erroneously consider Pali to be the language spoken by the Buddha himself.

During the nineteenth century, Western scholarship discovered that Pali is not an eastern Middle Indic language and has little relationship to Magadhi, which is known from other sources. By comparing the languages used in the inscriptions of Ashoka (third century b.c.e.), it is possible to demonstrate that Pali, while preserving some very old Eastern elements, is clearly based on a western Middle Indic language, one of the languages that developed out of Vedic Sanskrit, which was used in India roughly until the time of the Buddha (ca. fourth century b.c.e.). Although Pali is clearly younger than the time of the Buddha, it is the oldest surviving variety of Middle Indic.

The Kautilya's Arthashastra

The Arthashastra refers to a practice of political diplomacy that arose in India, and is epitomized by the written material on position, policy and military strategy written by Kautilya ((also known as **Chanakya**, Vishnugupta). Kautilya was an academician at Taxila University and later the Prime Minister of the Mauryan Empire. He is referred to as the **Indian Machiavelli** as a result of his undisputed and shrewd techniques and policies, which mirror a "realist" approach to politics, diplomacy and warfare. His Arthashastra text recommended that no means were on the far side scope of a ruler to expand his territory or obtain power as well as the unscrupulous ethics of permitting torture, trickery, deceit, and spying as legitimate suggests, realizing territory, wealth and power.

Arthashastra deals thoroughly with the qualities and disciplines needed for a king to rule his subjects more expeditiously.

According to Kautilya, a King is one who:

- Has self-control, having conquered the unfriendly temptations of the senses

- Cultivates the intellect by consulting with elders
- Keeps his eyes open and stays updated through spies
- Is always active in promoting the protection and welfare of the folks
- Ensures the speculation of the themes of their Dharma by authority and example
- Improves his own discipline by enhancing his learning in all branches of knowledge; and
- Endears himself to his subjects by enriching them

Quarrels among individuals may be resolved by winning over the leaders or by removing the reason for the quarrel - individuals fighting among people themselves facilitate the king by competing with each other. Conflicts (for power) within the royalty, on the other hand, bring about harassment and destruction to the people and double the effort that is needed to finish such conflicts.

The Code of Conduct for a Prince according to Kautilya

With enriching his self-discipline, he should keep company with learned elders, for in them alone discipline has its firm roots. For a trained intellect pursues yoga because from yoga comes self-control. Only a king, who is smart, disciplined, dedicated to a just governing of the subjects & aware of the welfare of all beings, can get pleasure from the world unopposed.

The name of the work comes from the **Sanskrit** words *Artha* ("aim" or "goal") and *Shastra* ("treatise" or "book") and the goal of the work is a comprehensive understanding of statecraft which will enable a monarch to rule effectively. The title has therefore been translated as ***The Science of Politics, The Science of Political Economy, and The Science of Material Gain***; this last because *Artha* is understood in **Hinduism** as one of the fundamental aims of human beings in pursuing wealth and social status.

The work was known through later references to it in other pieces but was considered lost until a later copy was discovered in 1905 CE by the Sanskrit scholar Rudrapatna Shamasastri (l. 1868-1944 CE) which he published in 1909 CE and then translated into English in 1915 CE. The *Arthashastra* has since enjoyed international fame as one of the greatest political treatises ever written and is frequently compared to *The Prince* (published 1532 CE) by the Italian political philosopher Niccolò Machiavelli (l. 1469-1527 CE) of Renaissance fame.

The *Arthashastra*, composed some 1500 years before *The Prince*, is still studied in the present day for its rational presentation of statecraft and its effectiveness in arguing for the State as an organic entity served best by a strong leader whose most important duty and focus should be the good of the people.

The Famous Sanskrit Authors

Sanskrit is an ancient and classical language of India in which ever first book of the world Rigveda was compiled. Sanskrit language must have evolved to its expressive capability prior to that. It is presumed that the language used in Vedas was prevalent in the form of different dialects. It was to some extent different from the present Sanskrit. It is termed as Vedic Sanskrit. Each Veda had its book of grammar known as Pratishakhya.

Panini (500 B.C.) was a great landmark in the development of Sanskrit language. He, concising about ten grammar schools prevalent during his time.

Sanskrit is said to belong to Indo – Aryan or Indo Germanic family of languages which includes Greek, Latin and other alike languages. William Jones, who was already familiar with Greek and Latin, when came in contact with Sanskrit, remarked that Sanskrit is more perfect than Greek, more copious than Latin and more refined than either. He said – “Sanskrit is a wonderful language”. It is noteworthy that though ancient and classical, Sanskrit is still used as medium of expression by scholars throughout India and somewhere in other parts of the world e.g. America, and Germany. Sanskrit is included in the list of modern Indian Languages in the eighth schedule of the constitution of India.

As per the Indian tradition Sanskrit Language has no beginning and no ending. It is eternal. Self-born God has created it. It is divine. It is everlasting. It was first used in Vedas and thereafter it has been the means of expression in other fields.

Sanskrit has been the source of later languages and literature in India. Pali and Prakrit were first to develop from Sanskrit. Pali was taken as means for exposition of Buddhistic ideas and Prakrit was used for the spread of Jain doctrines. Most of the Buddhistic literature is written in Pali and that of Jain cult in Prakrit. A vast amount of Buddhistic and Jain literature was also written in Sanskrit simultaneously. Prakrit language had different shades in different parts of India. So they were named as Paishachi, Shourseni, Magadhi, Ardha – magadhi and Maharashtri. These Prakrits were used for writing ornate poetry like Gaha Saptashati and Karpur Manjari and also in Sanskrit drama as dialogues of ladies and illiterate characters. From each type of Prakrit various Apabhramsha languages developed bearing the same name as Paishachi Apabhramsha, Shaurseni Apabhramsha and so on. Modern Indian Languages are developed from these Apabhramshalanguages.

Hindi, the official language of India, is developed from Shauraseni Apabhransha. It is said that all the modern Indian languages used in north part of India are evolved from Sanskrit and the other Modern Indian Languages of South India- Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada and Telugu are evolved from the Dravidian family of languages. The South Indian MILs are well enriched and nourished by Sanskrit language.

- Adikavi Valmiki
- Maharishi Veda Vyasa
- Kalidasa
- Bhasa
- Harsha
- Panini
- Patanjali
- Adi Shankaracharya
- Kalhana
- Jaideva

❖ **Adikavi Valmiki**

Valmiki is a sage of an excellent power of pen and wisdom. He is called Adikavi since the moment he cursed an hunter on killing Kraunch bird in a totally original chhandas. Narada advised Valmiki to write in the same poetic meter the life and deeds of Rama. Accordingly Valmiki wrote Ramayana, the Adikavya, in seven sections and 24000 couplets full of the most compelling imagery, idioms and metaphors, wisdom and nobility. He gave birth to a unique literary and philosophical masterpiece, one of the greatest works in world literature. Valmiki loved and respected life in all its splendor and diversity, the birds, the trees, the rivers, the seasons, forests and even scientific inventions.

❖ **Maharishi Veda Vyasa**

Maharishi Vedavyasa is that famous a personality who outstands as a representative of extreme human intelligence and vast ocean like knowledge. He is known to be the grandson of the sage Vasistha and son of Rishi Parashar. He spent his life on Badri fruits only in Badrikashram and thus came to be known as Badarayan. He was born in an island and hence was called Dvaipayana. He was dark in colour and thus acquired the title of Krishna and since he classified the available knowledge of Veda into Samhitas, he got the title of Vedavyasa. His mother was Satyawati.

❖ **Kalidasa**

Kalidasa has been the national poet of India and the brightest star in the firmament of Indian Poetry for the last two thousand years. He has been unanimously acclaimed as the greatest Sanskrit poet. His genius has been acknowledged, appreciated and admired by poets, critics and the literary public alike. Kalidasa enjoys a high rank among global poets like Dante, Goethe, Shakespeare etc. Scholars are of different opinions regarding his date. Different theories place him anywhere between 200 BC to 600 AD.

❖ **Bhasa**

Bhasa was the first great dramatist whose complete dramas are now available to the world. In the year 1910, Mahamahopadhyaya T. Ganapathi Shastri of Travancore discovered a collection of 13 plays with a similarity of expression and construction and declared them as the compositions of one single author, Bhasa. It is certain that this well known dramatist was a predecessor of Kalidasa. The greatest Sanskrit poet Kalidasa mentions his name with respect in the prelude to his first drama, the Malavikagnimitram. Some scholars place him in 2nd or 3rd century A.D. between Ashwaghosha and Kalidasa. Probably Bhasa was a devotee of Lord vishnu.

❖ **Harsha**

Harsha, also known as Harshavardhana, the second son of Prabhakarvardhana and younger brother of Rajyavardhana ruled a large empire in Northern India from 606 to 647 A.D. He was an orthodox Hindu but later became Buddhist convert. Emperor Harsha himself was a great scholar who patronised and sponsored many poets like Banabhatta and Mayura. We come to know his life-history from the famous work Harshacharitam composed by Banabhatta, the foremost Sanskrit prose writer.

❖ **Panini**

Panini is, today, recognised all over the world as the greatest model of human intelligence. Though India had a long tradition of grammarians but the final codification of Sanskrit language is ascribed to Panini only whose grammar has remained normative for its correct usage ever since. Panini's Ashtadhyayi is the oldest complete grammar available but the maturity, depth, and brevity, as found in it, is a proof in itself that this work is a link in the long chain of grammatical works. Panini himself has mentioned the names of

ten grammarians – Apishali, Kashyapa, Gargya, Galava, Chakraverman, Bharadwaj, Shakatayana, Shakalya, Shonaka and Sphotayana.

❖ **Patanjali**

The word Patanjali has been explained as Patantyah Anjalaya yasmai i.e. one for whom the hands are folded as a mark of respect. Patanjali has been regarded as a great sage and referred to by many names such as Gonardiya, Phani, Adhipati, Sheshraja etc. According to a legend, he is considered to be an incarnation of Sheshanaga. Patanjali was an expert of at least three branches of Sanskrit studies namely yoga, vyakarana, and ayurveda. An ancient verse regards him as a sage who cleansed dirtiness of mind with yoga, of speech with grammar and of the body with ayurveda. Thus Patanjali contributed immensely towards the science of meditation, science of language and science of medicines.

❖ **Adi Shankaracharya**

Adi Shankaracharya was not just a philosopher or a scholar. In fact he was a man of amazing energy combining in him a mystic, a saint, a scholar, a poet and above all a practical reformer and an able organizer.

Shankara was born in Kalady village in Kerala. Various evidences prove his date as 509 BC to 477 BC. His mother Aryamba was a pious devotee of Lord Shiva. His father Shiv Guru left him when he was only three years old. At the age of five only he had studied all the Vedas and Vedangas.

❖ **Kalhana**

Kalhana is one poet who composed the first and the best historical Kavya Rajatarangini which portrays the history of Kashmir. It has covered the entire period of developments from 1300 B.C. to 1150 A.D.

Rajatarangini contains eight tarangas (wave). He has surveyed the royal collections with the kings, puranas, various inscriptions, anthologies, seals and coins to make his work more and authentic. Kalhana was a resident of Kashmir. His father Champak was a true follower of King Harsha of Kashmir. After the assassination of the King, Champaka left politics and thus Kalhana also was deprived of the royal grace.

❖ **Jaideva**

Jaideva is an extremely popular lyric poet and his famous Geeti Kavya Geeta Govinda has influenced the later poets, painters and dancers to base their performances on this beautiful work. This Kavya describes the pious love of Radha and Krishna which represents the bondage of Atman with Paramatman. Jaideva was a devotee of Krishna. He has described Krishna and Radha leelas in such a beautiful language that every syllable of it resounds musically when recited. It abounds in rhythmically matching groups of words. Even the long compounds can be tuned perfectly to create a soft musical effect. Every song is composed in fixed Raga and tala. These songs are sung in the whole of India at special occasions and festivals. It is the best lyric Kavya of Sanskrit Literature. It has a beautiful combination of poetry and dialogues which gives it a dramatic effect. Some western scholars treat it as musical drama.

Jaideva was a poet in the court of Raja Laxman Sen of Bengal who flourished in 12th Century A.D. His work has touched the heart of every Indian Bhakta of Krishna.

Telugu Literature

Telugu literature is the body of works written in the Telugu language. It consists of poems, short stories, novels, plays, and song lyrics, among others. There is some indication that Telugu literature dates at least to the middle of the first millennium, the first extant works are from the 11th century when the Mahabharata was first translated to Telugu from Sanskrit by Nannaya. The language experienced a golden age under the patronage of the Vijayanagara king-poet Krishnadevaraya.

The earliest extant Telugu literary work is the *Andhra Mahabharata* by Nannaya Bhatta (early 11th century), an adaptation of part of the Sanskrit Mahabharata. Nannaya Bhatta founded Telugu classical poetry and the Telugu literary language, which became established during the medieval period of Telugu literary development.

Kannada Literature

Kannada literature is the corpus of written forms of the Kannada language, a member of the Dravidian family spoken mainly in the Indian state of Karnataka and written in the Kannada script.

The Kannada language is usually divided into three linguistic phases: Old (450–1200 CE), Middle (1200–1700 CE) and Modern (1700–present);[8] and its literary characteristics are categorised as Jain, Lingayatism and Vaishnava. Kannada literature, also spelled Kannaḍa, also called Kanarese, the literature written in Kannada, which, like the other languages of South India, is of the Dravidian family. The earliest records in Kannada are inscriptions dating from the 6th century AD onward. The earliest literary work is the Kavirājamārga (c. AD 850), a treatise on poetics based on a Sanskrit model. Nearly all of the extant early texts in Kannada are poems on religious subjects written by Jaina authors. One of the most remarkable of these is the 12th-century Rāmāyaṇa of Abhinava Pampa; this work is a Jain version of the famous epic poem of the same name.

After the 12th century the Hindu sect known as Liṅgāyat replaced Jainism as the most important religious influence on Kannada literature. (The Liṅgāyats worship Siva as the only deity.) Most Liṅgāyat works are simple in style, and many were meant to be sung. The most popular works were the Vacanakāvyas, which were devotional poems to Siva written in rhythmic prose.

Malayalam Literature

Malayalam literature comprises those literary texts written in Malayalam, a South-Dravidian language spoken in the Indian state of Kerala.

The earliest known literary work in Malayalam is Ramacharitam, an epic poem written by Cheeraman in 1198 CE. But it is highly influenced by Tamil language, as well as much distinct from modern Malayalam.

In the subsequent centuries, besides a popular pattu ("song") literature, the Manipravalam poetry also flourished. Manipravalam (translates "ruby coral") style consisted of poetry in an admixture of Malayalam and Sanskrit. Then came works such as champus and sandeshakavyas in which prose and poetry were interspersed.

Later, poets like Cherusseri introduced poems on devotional themes. Designated a "Classical Language in India" in 2013, Malayalam literature developed into the current form mainly by the influence of the poets Cherusseri Namboothiri (Born near Kannur), Thunchaththu Ezhuthachan (Born near Tirur), and Poonthanam Nambudiri (Born near Perinthalmanna), in the 15th and the 16th centuries of Common Era.

The earliest examples of Malayalam literature are ballads and folk songs, which are entirely indigenous. Two outside sources, however, contributed much to the development of the later literature: Sanskrit, which was the language of scholarship, and Tamil, which was the language of administration over a long period. *Ramacharitam*, a poem based on the *Yuddhakanda* of the Ramayana, is the most important of the works influenced by Tamil. Both in its grammar and its vocabulary it appears to be a mixture of Tamil and Malayalam. Less markedly dependent on Tamil are the works of a family of poets from Niranam in central Travancore who flourished in the late 14th and 15th centuries. Their works include translations of the *Ramayana*, by Rama Panikkar, and of the Bhagavadgita, by Madhava Panikkar.

The importance of Sanskrit in the development of Malayalam culture lies not only in its position as a literary source, but also in its influence on the language. A special literary dialect arose containing a large admixture of Sanskrit and likened in its name—Manipravalam—to a necklace strung with “pearls and coral.” It is described in detail in the *Līlātilakam*, a 14th-century treatise in Sanskrit on Malayalam grammar and poetics.

Among the many Manipravalam works are *sandesa kavyas* and *campus*. The former, modeled on the *Meghaduta* of Kalidasa (c. 5th century CE), are “message poems” consisting of two parts: the first giving an account of the circumstances in which the message must be sent and the route by which it should go; the second describing the heroine and the actual message. The finest extant work in this form, the *Unnunili sandesam*, was probably written in the 14th century, but the tradition of this type of poem has continued into the modern era. *Campus* are elaborate compositions dealing with a given theme in alternating passages of verse and prose.

Sangama Literature

Sangam literature, sangam also spelled **cankam**, **chankam**, or **shangam**, the earliest writings in the Tamil language, thought to have been produced in three *chankams*, or literary academies, in Madurai, India, from the 1st to the 4th century CE. The *Tolkappiyam*, a book of grammar and rhetoric, and eight anthologies (*Ettuttokai*) of poetry were compiled—*Ainkurunuru*, *Kuruntokai*, *Narrinai*, *Akananuru*, *Kalittokai*, *Patirruppattu*, *Purananuru*, and *Paripatal*. A ninth anthology, *Pattupattu*, consists of 10 idylls that present a picture of early Tamil life.

Sangam writings are possibly unique in early Indian literature, which is almost entirely religious. The poems are concerned with two main topics: those of the first five collections are on love (*akam*), and those of the next two are on heroism (*puram*), including the praise of kings and their deeds. *Paripatal*, the eighth collection, contains poems of both types. Many of the poems, especially on heroism, display great freshness and vigour and are singularly free from the literary conceits of much of the other early and medieval literatures of India. Since they deal almost entirely with nonreligious subjects, these poems

are also free from the complex mythical allusions that are such an outstanding feature of most Indian art forms. There are nonetheless some instances of religious works in *sangam* poetry. *Paripatal*, for example, contains poems about Vishnu, Shiva, Durga, and Murugan.

Northern Indian Languages and Literature

We have already seen how languages evolved in India right up to the early medieval period. The old apabhransha had taken new forms in some areas or was in the process of evolving into other forms. These languages were evolving at two levels: the spoken and the written language. The old Brahmi script of the Ashoka days had undergone a great change. The alphabets during Ashoka's period were uneven in size but by the time of Harsha, the letters had become of the same size and were regular, presenting the picture of a cultivated hand. The studies have indicated that all the scripts of present northern Indian languages, except that of Urdu, have had their origin in old Brahmi.

A long and slow process had given them this shape. If we compare the scripts of Gujarati, Hindi and Punjabi, we can easily understand this change. As for the spoken word, there are over 200 languages or dialects spoken in India at present. Some are widely used while others are limited to a particular area. Out of all these, only twenty-two have found their way into our Constitution. A large number of people speak Hindi in its different forms that include Braj Bhasha, and Avadhi (spoken in Oudh region), Bhojpuri, Magadhi, and Maithili (spoken around Mithila), and Rajasthani and Khadi Boli (spoken around Delhi). Rajasthani is another variant or dialect of Hindi. This classification has been made on the basis of literature produced by great poets over a length of time.

Thus, the language used by Surdas and Bihari has been given the name of Braj Bhasha; that used by Tulsidas in the Ramacharitamanasa is called Avadhi and the one used by Vidyapati has been termed as Maithili. But Hindi, as we know it today is the one called Khadi Boli. Though Khusrau has used Khadi Boli in his compositions in the thirteenth century its extensive use in literature began only in the nineteenth century. It even shows some influence of Urdu.

Persian and Urdu

Urdu emerged as an independent language towards the end of the 4th century AD. Arabic and Persian were introduced in India with the coming of the Turks and the Mongols. Persian remained the court language for many centuries. Urdu as a language was born out of the interaction between Hindi and Persian. After the conquest of Delhi (1192), the Turkish people settled in this region. Urdu was born out of the interaction of these settlers and soldiers in the barracks with the common people. Originally it was a dialect but slowly it acquired all the features of a formal language when the authors started using Persian script. It was further given an impetus by its use in Bahamani states of Ahmadnagar, Golkunda, Bijapur and Berar. Here it was even called dakshini or daccani (southern). As time passed, it became popular with the masses of Delhi.

Urdu became more popular in the early eighteenth century. People even wrote accounts of later Mughals in Urdu. Gradually it achieved a status where literature-both poetry and prose-started being composed in it. The last Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar wrote poetry in it. Some of his couplets have become quite well known in the Hindi and Urdu speaking areas. Urdu was given its pride of place by a large number

of poets who have left inimitable poetry for posterity. The earliest Urdu poet is supposed to be Khusrau (1253-1325). He started writing as a poet in the reign of Sultan Balban and was a follower of Nizam ud-din Auliya. He is said to have composed ninety-nine works on separate themes and numerous verses of poetry. Among the important works composed by him are Laila Majnun and Ayina-I-Sikandari dedicated to Alau-din-Khalji. Among other well-known poets are Ghalib, Zauq, and Iqbal. Iqbal's Urdu poetry is available in his collection called Bang-i-dara. His Sarejahan se achcha Hindostan hamara is sung and played at many of the national celebrations in India. No army parade is considered complete without the army band playing this tune. In big Indian cities like Delhi these are many programmes in which famous singers are invited to sing nazams or Ghazals written by famous poets like Ghalib, Maum, Bulley Shah, Waris Shah besides many others. So you can imagine how rich our language and literary culture must have been to continue till today. It has enriched our lives and is central to people meeting and intermingling with each other.

Among the best prose writers were people like Pandit Ratan Nath Sarshar, who wrote the famous Fasanah-i-Azad. Even in the early days, Munshi Prem Chand, who is supposed to be a doyen of Hindi literature, wrote in Urdu. Urdu has given us a new form of poem that is called a nazm. Urdu was patronised by the Nawabs of Lucknow, who held symposiums in this language. Slowly it became quite popular. Pakistan has adopted Urdu as the state language.

As Persian was the language of the court, much of the literature produced in this period was written in Persian. Amir Khusrau and Amir Hasan Dehelvi wrote superb poetry in Persian. Historians like Minhass-us-Siraj and Zia Barani and Ibn Batuta who came to India during those days wrote accounts of rulers, important political events and incidents in this language. In the medieval period, Persian was adopted as the court language. Several historical accounts, administrative manuals and allied literature in this language have come down to us. The mughal rulers were great patrons of learning and literature. Babar wrote his tuzuk (autobiography) in Turkish language, but his grandson Akbar got it translated into Persian. Akbar patronized many scholars. He got Mahabharata translated into Persian. Jahangir's autobiography (Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri) is in Persian and is a unique piece of literature. It is said that Noorjahan was an accomplished Persian poetess.

Quite a fair amount of Persian literature has been produced by the courtiers of the Mughals. Abul Fazl's Akbarnamah and Ain-e-Akbari is a fine piece of literature. From there we get a good deal of information about Akbar and his times. Faizi wrote beautiful Persian poetry. Several collections of letters of the Mughal period (insha) have come down to us. Besides shedding light on Mughal history, they indicate different styles of letter writing. Another name in prose and history writing is that of Chandra Bhan, a writer of Shahjahan's days. Similarly, we have a work named Tabqat-i-Alamgiri, shedding light on Aurangzeb. Badauni was another writer who belonged during Akbar's time. In the twentieth century, Iqbal wrote good Persian poetry. All this has now become a part of Indian heritage and culture.

Hindi Literature

Hindi literature, the writings of the western Braj Bhasa and Khari Boli and of the eastern Awadhi and Bundeli dialects of the Indian subcontinent and also the writings of parts of Rajasthan in the west and of Bihar in the east that, strictly speaking are not Hindi at all. Hindi literature also conventionally includes

those works of Muslim writers (such as Jayasi) in the Persian script in which the content is Hindu rather than Muslim in nature.

It first began to appear in the 7th century AD and reached a consistency in the 10th. Almost all the earlier literature is in verse and in a dialect other than Khari Boli. The latter, on which modern standard Hindi and Urdu are based, was not widely used as a literary language until the end of the 17th century. Braj persisted as a medium for poetry until the late 19th century, although Khari Boli has now displaced it. Hence the anomaly that the language of modern Hindi literature is different from that of earlier periods.

Hindi literature includes literature in the various Central Zone Indo-Aryan languages which have writing systems. It is broadly classified into four prominent forms (styles) based on the date of production. They are:

- Vir-Gatha kal (poems extolling brave warriors) – 11th–14th century
- Bhakti kal poems (devotional poems) – 14th–18th century
- Riti or Srngar kal poems (poems of romance) – 18th–20th century
- Adhunik kal (modern literature) – 20th century onwards

The literature was produced in dialects such as Khariboli, Braj, Bundeli, Awadhi, Kannauji, as well as Marwari, Magahi, Bhojpuri and Chhattisgarhi. From the 20th century, works produced in Standard Hindi, a register of Hindustani written in the Devanagari script, are sometimes regarded as the only basis of modern literature in Hindi.