



Examine the nature of Bhakti Literature and its impact on Indian culture. (150 words) (GS 1; Art and culture) [08-03-22]

The Bhakti movement grew in Tamil Nadu during the 7th and 12th centuries. It began in the 9th century in South India with Shankaracharya and extended across India by the 16th century, especially following the tremendous wave generated by Kabir, Nanak, and Shri Chaitanya.

Bhakti Literature's Characteristics:

- Sufi saints recitations find space in Sikh religious canons. The Guru Granth Sahib used Kabir's teachings.
- Spread of Bhakti cult due to mass understanding of vernacular languages.
- It advocated against sectarianism and casteism. Castes and outcasts were included in Bhakti literature.
- Against traditional society's strange traditions.
- Muslim poets Daulat Kazi and Sayed Alaool created poems that merged Hindu and Islamic culture.

The role of Bhakti literature

- Proliferation of Vernacular Languages: Bhakti literature encouraged the growth of vernacular languages across India.
- In eastern Uttar Pradesh, Sufi saints like Mulla Daud, author of 'Chandayan,' and Malik Muhammad Jaisi, author of 'Padmavati,' wrote in Hindi and explained Sufi doctrines in simple terms.
- Chaitanya and the poet Chandidas employed Bengali, an eastern language, to express their love for Radha and Krishna.
- Throughout the 15th century, a Bhakti leader named Shankaradeva popularised Assamese in the Brahmaputra valley. A new avenue for spreading his thoughts.
- Marathi attained its pinnacle in Maharashtra thanks to saints like Eknath and Tukaram.
- Other notable saints like Kabir, Nanak, and Tulsidas contributed greatly to regional literature and language.

It liberated poetry from king-worship and introduced spiritual subjects. It eliminated the hegemony of Sanskrit metrical forms and offered simple and accessible styles like vachanas (in Kannada), saakhis, dohas and other forms in other languages.

The vast amount of literature left by the Bhakti movement continues to pervade the social ethos. Their shared vision rescued us from potential internecine strife and cultivated a climate of tolerance. Their messages were turned into songs, proverbs, and stories, giving rise to Awadhi, Bhojpuri, Maithili, and other languages.