



Mains Practice Question

Q. Evaluate the nature of the Bhakti Literature and its contribution to Indian culture. (150 words)

10 Jul, 2023 GS Paper 1 History

Approach

- Start your answer with a brief introduction of Bhakti Literature.
- Explain Nature of Bhakti literature and Contribution to Indian culture:
- Conclude accordingly.

Introduction:

Bhakti literature refers to the devotional writings of various saints, poets, and mystics who expressed their love and devotion to God through various languages and genres. It emerged as a popular movement in different regions of India, challenging the dominance of Brahmanical orthodoxy and ritualism.

Body:

- **Nature of Bhakti Literature:**
 - It was composed in vernacular languages such as Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Hindi, Marathi, Bengali, etc., making it accessible to the masses.
 - It was influenced by various religious traditions such as Vaishnavism, Shaivism, Shaktism, Sufism, etc., reflecting the diversity and syncretism of Indian culture.
 - It was characterized by simplicity, spontaneity, emotional intensity, personal experience, and poetic beauty, appealing to the hearts and minds of the people.
 - It was often accompanied by music, dance, drama, and art forms such as bhajans, kirtans, dhrupads, ragas, etc., enhancing its aesthetic and spiritual appeal.
- **Contribution to Indian Culture:**
 - It enriched the linguistic and literary heritage of India by producing works of great literary merit such as the Nalayira Divya Prabandham, Tirumurai, Vachana Sahitya, Alwars and Nayanars, Ramcharitmanas, Sur Sagar, Padavali Gita Govinda Abhangas etc.
 - It promoted social harmony and reform by rejecting caste distinctions, gender discrimination, religious intolerance, and ritualistic formalism.
 - It advocated equality, fraternity, humanism, and universalism. For example, Ramananda accepted disciples from all castes; Kabir criticized both Hindu and Muslim practices; Mirabai challenged patriarchy; etc.
 - It fostered a sense of national identity and resistance against foreign invasions by invoking the love for one's motherland and one's faith.
 - For example, Guru Nanak denounced the atrocities of the Mughals; Shivaji was inspired by the teachings of Tukaram; etc.

Conclusion:

Bhakti literature was a remarkable phenomenon that enriched the cultural fabric of India. It reflected the aspirations and sentiments of the people and contributed to the development of a composite culture.

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