

A new form of cultural diversity emerged during the medieval period, known as the Ganga–Jamuni Tehzeeb. This Tehzeeb was a product of the mutual exchange between Hindu and Islamic cultures. Several factors contributed to the promotion of cultural diversity during this period.

**1. Migration of population from North-West**

- New social groups from Central Asia and West Asia arrived during the medieval period, including Turks, Mongols, and Mughals. Both external and internal factors played crucial roles in the migration of these populations. The external factor was the unstable politics of Central Asia and West Asia. Initially, the Turks were a Central Asian tribe that embraced Islam and began serving under Islamic rulers, eventually becoming a political force that expanded towards India. The invasions of Ghazni and Ghori should be understood in this context. The arrival of Afghans and Mughals followed a similar pattern.

At the same time, an internal factor contributed to this migration, which was the attraction of India. India was a prosperous country, and under the rule of the Sultans and Mughals, talented individuals found better opportunities. This increased the attraction towards India. The Mongol invasion played a significant role in attracting talented individuals from Central Asia and West Asia to migrate in India. Amir Khusro was among those who made the journey. During this period, Sufi saints, scholars, artists, and artisans also migrated, contributing to the development of Indian culture. Additionally, a considerable number of Turks, Tajiks from West Asia, and Afghans joined the service of the state. Under the Mughals, Delhi and Agra became important centers of attraction in the Islamic world, attracting numerous scholars, artists, and entrepreneurs. Alongside the Iranian influences, significant elements of

Khurasani also became part of the Mughal aristocracy (Amirs).

The influx of new elements was not limited to North India alone. Even before the establishment of Arab power in Sindh, Arab traders had settled on the Malabar Coast in the Southwest. With the establishment of Turkish rule in North India, the Turkish state transformed into an empire extending southward until the 14th century. This expansion led to further movements towards the south. Alauddin Khilji launched campaigns in the south, and under Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq, the Turkish Empire expanded to the farthest southern regions. In a bid to exert better control over South India, Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq even shifted his capital to Devagiri. Consequently, a group of Muslim elites from the north migrated to the south, resulting in the spread of Islamic culture there. This trend continued during the Mughal period. Shah Jahan conquered Ahmednagar and assimilated it into the Mughal Empire, while Aurangzeb pursued a policy of expansion towards south beyond the Krishna River by conquering Bijapur and Golconda. As a result, new elements naturally migrated from the north to the south. The Muslim population distributed in regions such as Kashmir, Punjab, and Gujarat in North India to Bengal in the East, and eventually reached the far south. Alongside the conquerors, Sufi saints also ventured southward, aiming to illuminate the softer aspects of Islam to the people there. One such Sufi saint was Banda Nawaz Gesudaraz, who established his 'Khanqah' in Hyderabad.

**2. The specific nature of Islam and Hinduism and their mutual exchange-**

Hinduism, being an inclusive religion, assimilated various opposing sects and religious groups that emerged in India. Similarly, Islam was also a comprehensive religion that continued to expand its influence wherever it went, often

replacing existing faiths. Consequently, Muslims initially arrived as a minority in new regions but gradually became the majority.

However, Hinduism in India could not completely absorb Islam due to its distinct religious nature. Islam prioritized religion above society, while Hinduism had a deep-rooted and ancient heritage. These factors prevented Islam from displacing Hinduism entirely. As a result, Muslims in India maintained their minority status over time.

After coexisting for several centuries, Hinduism and Islam developed a syncretic culture, which found expression in various aspects of life. This integrated culture thrived in domains such as cuisine, lifestyle, religion, art, language, and literature during the rule of the Sultanate and Mughal dynasties for around five hundred years. This unique blend was commonly referred to as “Gangi-Jamuni Tehzeeb.”

In the realm of religion, this fusion was evident through the Bhakti and Sufi movements. Hindu and Muslim mystics shared such similar ideas that they worked towards fostering emotional unity. Nirguna saints like Kabir and Nanak, alongside Sufi saints such as Nizamuddin Auliya, made significant contributions to the composite culture of India. Both sets of saints expressed profound love and devotion towards the formless God. Kabir, in particular, cannot be easily classified within a specific Hindu or Muslim tradition. Similarly, Sufi saints often used the language of the Hindus, such as Awadhi and Punjabi, in their works and even described the households of Hindus in their writings.

Likewise, in the domains of art, architecture, painting, and music, Hinduism and Islam influenced and contributed to each other in significant ways.

Before the establishment of Muslim rule, India had a rich architectural tradition, commonly known as the Lintel style. However, with the advent of Islam, construction shifted towards the

use of the arch style. Arch and dome structures became prominent features, influenced by the Mehrabi (Arcuade) style. Islam drew inspiration for this architectural style from the Byzantine Empire or the Roman Empire. Despite this shift, the deeply ingrained influence of the prevailing Lintel style remained pervasive, making it impossible to escape its impact. As a result, a harmonious relationship between the two styles emerged in the construction works carried out until the Mughal period.

Similarly, during the Sultanate period, a distinct form of painting did not fully emerge. However, there was improved coordination between the Iranian and Indian styles under the patronage of the great Mughals. The Chaurapanchasika style, also known as the pothi style, exerted a strong influence on Mughal miniature paintings. In the field of music art, Hindustani style developed through the amalgamation of Iranian and Indian styles. Various forms of singing such as Dhrupad, Khayal, Ghazal, Tappa, and Thumri flourished under the Hindustani style. Dhrupad singing thrived during the reign of the great Mughals. It was during this period that Kathak dance also received patronage from the Mughals, despite its origins in temples.

The coordinated contributions of Hindus and Muslims in the realm of language and literature hold significant importance. During the Sultanate and Mughal periods, Persian served as the official language. Hindus played a crucial role in promoting Persian language and literature, exemplified by figures like Ishwardas Nagar and Bhimsen Burhanpuri during the Mughal era. Subsequently, Urdu emerged as a shared language for both Hindus and Muslims. Urdu was commonly referred to as Zuban-e-Delhi. Following the partition, Urdu became the official language of Pakistan, instead of Persian. Meanwhile, the Muslim rulers in India extended patronage to Indian languages. Sanskrit and Hindi literature received protection and support in the Mughal court. It is pleasantly surprising

to find that Raskhan, a Muslim, composes melodious poetry in Braj Bhasha.

### 3. Harmony of Islam with regional elements-

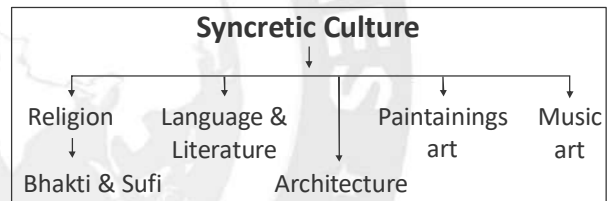
Whenever the central Muslim empire collapsed, regional power was established by Muslim officers, leading to a harmonization of Islamic principles with local cultures. Regional styles of art emerged, and Muslim rulers actively supported regional languages and literature. Consequently, Muslim communities were influenced by the local food habits and lifestyles. This pattern was observed in regions such as Gujarat, Bengal, Jaunpur, and the Deccan, where the rule of Muslim rulers was established. As a result, Islam in India underwent both Indianization and regionalization. There were notable differences in the ways of life between Muslims in Punjab and Bengal. Hence, it was not feasible for Pakistani rulers to unite all Indian Muslims under the banner of Pakistan solely based on religion.

**4. 18<sup>th</sup> century India, a rainbow mix of cultures-** The 18th century marked a significant era in India's history as a rich and diverse multicultural society took shape on the cusp of British rule. The interactions between Hindus

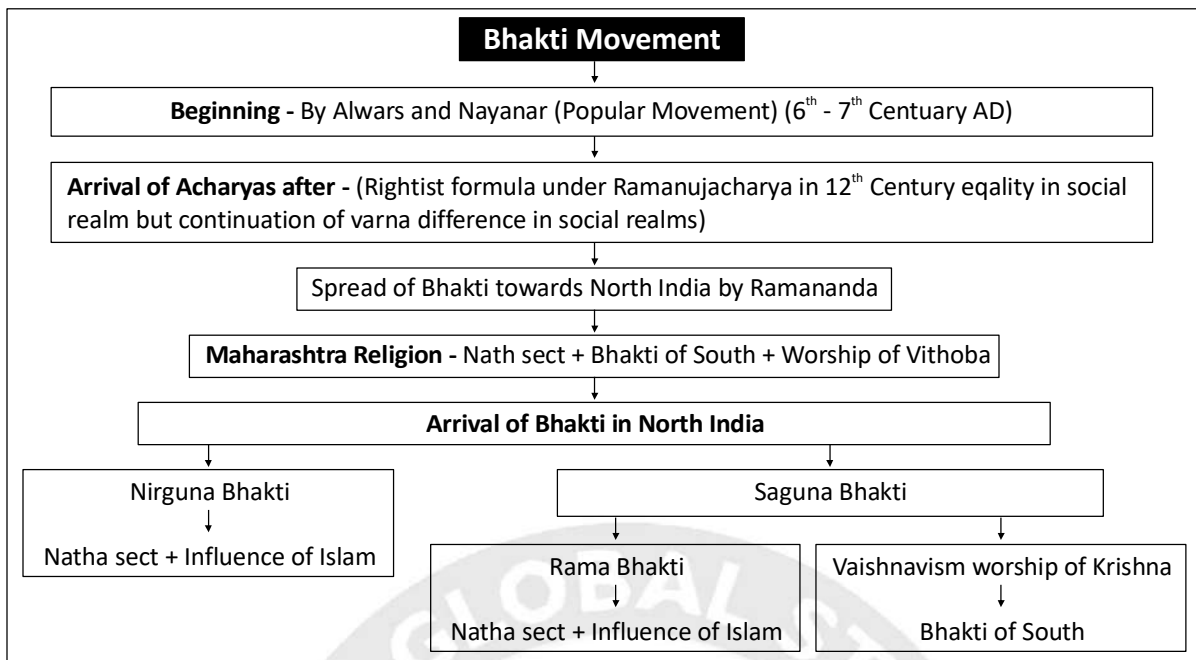
and Muslims greatly influenced their food habits, lifestyles, and overall ways of life. Hindawi emerged as a popular language, with Khadi Boli and Urdu serving as notable forms of expression.

Despite the decline of the Mughal Empire, the enchanting essence of Mughal culture continued to thrive and expand at the regional level. Local states wholeheartedly embraced and supported the grandeur of Mughal traditions, resulting in a lasting imprint. The far-reaching influence of Mughal culture was so captivating that even the British, during the 18th century, found themselves unable to resist its allure. This observation was eloquently conveyed by acclaimed British writer William Dalrymple in his renowned work, 'White Mughals.'

The blending of Hinduism and the Sufi order played a pivotal role in differentiating South Asia( India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh) from the broader Islamic world.



## Bhakti and Sufi Movement



The Bhakti movement originated in South India, taking shape through the teachings of the Alvar and Nayanar saints. The movement gained stability and structure under the guidance of the Acharyas. Gradually, Bhakti spread from the south to the north, while simultaneously evolving into a distinct form in Maharashtra known as 'Maharashtra Dharma'.

### ■ Explaining the nature of Maharashtra religion, explain its role in state building-

The Maharashtra religion held a unique form, centered around the worship of the regional deity 'Vithoba' with Pandharpur as its focal point. Prominent saints like Gyandev, Namdev, Eknath, Tukaram, and Ramdas Samarth played significant roles within this tradition. Influences from both the Vaishnava and Nath sects shaped the Maharashtra religion, leading to the rejection of caste divisions and the cultivation of a unified Marathi identity among the people of the region. The Maharashtra saints revitalized the Marathi language, which was the language of the common people, expressing their emotions through heartfelt compositions called 'Abhangas'. This religion embraced the masses, removing distinctions of high and low castes. It provided a platform for progressive leaders like Shivaji to rally and organize lower-caste

individuals within his army.

While Hinduism is generally known for its tolerance, the Maharashtra religion exhibited a fervent desire for victory, known as "Jayishnu". During conflicts with the Mughals, the Maharashtra religion played a crucial role in the establishment of the Maratha state, leveraging the aforementioned factors.

### ■ How did the arrival of Bhakti from South India influence and shape the religious practices in the northern regions of India?

The Bhakti movement in South India manifested with two prominent characteristics: first, the worship of deities in physical form, such as Vishnu and Shiva; and second, a compromise with the prevailing varna and caste divisions under the influence of the Acharyas.

As the Bhakti movement spread to the northern regions, it underwent a division into two streams: Saguna Bhakti school and Nirguna Bhakti school. The Saguna Bhakti school shared many similarities with the southern Bhakti, including the worship of deities in physical form and compromise with caste divisions. The only difference lay in the specific deities worshiped, with Rama and Krishna gaining prominence in the north instead of Vishnu and Shiva.



In contrast, the Nirguna Bhakti school emerged as a distinct and unique stream in the north, establishing its own identity apart from the Bhakti movement in the south. It centered its worship on the formless God and expressed profound love for Him, incorporating elements of mysticism. Moreover, it rejected the caste divisions under the influence of the Natha sect. These factors contributed to the distinctiveness and significance of Nirguna Bhakti. Its development can be attributed to the combined influences of the Natha cult, Bhakti tradition, monotheism in Islam, and the Sufi sect.

#### ■ **Throw light on the contribution of Nirguna Bhakti with special reference to Kabir and Nanak.**

Nirguna Bhakti, a religious movement led by saints like Kabir and Nanak, had a profound impact on contemporary society, religion, and culture.

**1. Religious Reformers:** The Nirguna saints served as religious reformers by emphasizing the worship of the formless God. Consequently, they questioned the significance of temples, idol worship, and priesthood. Kabir, in particular, did not adhere to traditional scriptures, relying instead on his personal experiences as wisdom. Similarly, Guru Nanak emphasized the importance of the concept of 'Ek Hi Omkar' (the belief in the existence of one supreme reality).

**2. Social Reformers:** Kabir strongly rejected the caste system and advocated for Hindu-Muslim unity. He questioned the division between the followers of God and Allah, as they were essentially the same. Through the pursuit of divine unity, he paved the way for human unity. Guru Nanak, too, rejected caste identities and emphasized the discipleship as the sole important identity, leading to the emergence of the term 'Sikh.'

**3.** Nirguna Bhaktas did not emphasize a monastic life but rather the life of householders. Kabir and Nanak both remained actively engaged in their respective occupations throughout their

lives. Kabir even referenced the importance of productive work in his couplets. As- 'Jhini Jhini Beeni Chadriya, Kahe Kai Tana Kahe Kai Bharni, Kaun Tar Se Beeni Chadriya'.

Similarly, the Sikh tradition places great importance on Kirat Karni, which refers to honest and productive labor. Thus, Nirguna Bhaktas encouraged craft production.

**4. Cultural contribution:** The Nirguna Bhaktas made significant contributions to literature and music. Kabir Das, for instance, gave importance to the Hindawi language alongside Sanskrit and enriched Hindawi literature through the use of Dohe(couplets), sakhis, and other poetic forms. Most notably, Kabir's couplets and sakhis are lyrical and serve as excellent musical examples.

Similarly, Nanak's writings enriched Punjabi literature. The 'Sabads' penned by Nanak are remarkable musical compositions.

#### ■ **Limitations of the Nirguna Bhakti**

1. Saints like Kabir and Nanak were primarily religious and spiritual figures rather than social reformers. Hence, despite their criticism of social ills, they were unable to offer concrete alternatives.

2. Kabir has been likened to Martin Luther of the 15th century, but the reality is that, like the Protestant movement, the devotion of Kabir and Nanak could not dismantle the stronghold of feudalism.

**Question: What factors led to the establishment of the Sikh Panth as a Sikh state?**

**Answer:** Since its inception, Guru Nanak's devotion had a distinct focus on community. His followers, known as Shishyas or Sikhs, actively engaged with him and participated in communal activities, including singing devotional songs together. Guru Nanak emphasized the importance of the Langar system, where meals for everyone were served, fostering a strong sense of brotherhood among his followers.

- In response to the Mughal Empire's oppressive measures against the peaceful Sikh

religion, the Sikh community transformed into a military force. The Khalsa, representing Sikh unity, emerged as a symbol of strength and resilience. Eventually, this movement inspired the establishment of a separate Sikh state.

- The Sikh sect, therefore, emerged as a result of Guru Nanak's teachings and the subsequent challenges faced by the Sikh community, leading to their transformation from a religious group to a military force and ultimately paving the way for the formation of a distinct Sikh state.

### **Sagun Bhakti or Vaishnavism Movement**

In the realm of Saguna Bhakti in northern India, prominent deities such as Rama and Krishna are revered as incarnations of Vishnu. Saints like Tulsidas and Nabhadass have been associated with Ram Bhakti school, whereas Krishna Bhakti school has gained wider influence and popularity. Notably, Vallabhacharya and the poets of 'Ashtachap' in North India have contributed significantly to this tradition. Surdas, who composed 'Sursagar,' is also counted among these notable figures.

In Gujarat, Krishna Bhakti school found representation through Narsi Mehta, while Meerabai became an iconic figure for it in Rajasthan. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu played a significant role in spreading Krishna Bhakti in Bengal, and Shankardev did the same in Assam. The reason behind Krishna Bhakti's greater popularity can be attributed to its emphasis on Sankhya Bhav, a devotional sentiment based on deep affection and love. On the other hand, Rama Bhakti was characterized by a sense of devotion rooted in servitude, known as Dasya Bhav.

#### **■ Contribution of The Saguna Bhakti**

1. In the social realm, although Saguna Bhakti did not completely abolish or reject the caste system, it did help alleviate its bitterness to some extent. Tulsidas, through his Ram Katha, made an attempt to mitigate the impact of the caste system by illustrating the close relationships between Lord Rama and

individuals from various castes such as Shabari, Kevat, monkeys, and bears. Conversely, Krishna Bhakti does not appear to address the issue of caste dignity seriously.

The development of language and literature has witnessed a unique contribution from Saguna Bhakti, significantly enriching the linguistic and literary traditions of North India. This impact can be comprehended in the following manner:-

#### **(i) Braj Language:**

The credit goes to the Bhakti movement for bestowing literary status upon Braj Bhasha, an important dialect of the Hindi region. Surdas's masterpiece, 'Sursagar,' stands out as a unique literary work abundant in Vatsalya Rasa (parental love) and Shringar Rasa (romantic love).

#### **(ii) Awadhi Language:**

The significance of Awadhi, another dialect of the Hindi region, grew due to its association with Lord Rama's birthplace. Tulsidas's composition, 'Ramcharitmanas,' elevated raw Awadhi to the status of a literary language. As a result, 'Ramcharitmanas' gained immense popularity. Today, if the narrative of Lord Rama is alive, it resonates not through Valmiki's voice but through the verses of Tulsidas. Grierson referred to 'Ramcharitmanas' as the Bible in every Hindu home.

#### **(iii) Gujarati Language:**

Narsi Mehta, a poet devoted to Krishna Bhakti, enriched the Gujarati language. His devotional songs attracted the attention of Mahatma Gandhi.

#### **(iv) Rajasthani Language:**

Credit goes to Meera Bai for elevating the Rajasthani dialect to the realm of sophisticated literary language. Meera's hymns are not only a part of Indian literature but also a cherished heritage of Indian music. On his last birthday, Mahatma Gandhi expressed his desire to hear Meera's hymns.

#### **(v) Bengali Language:**

Several saints, from Chandidas to Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, have made significant contributions to the development of the Bengali language. The works of Chaitanya and the writings of scholars on his life have enriched Bengali literature.

#### **(vi) Assamese Language:**

Bhakti saints like Shankardev played vital roles in the development of the Assamese language. Through their works, they elevated Assamese to the status of a literary language.

### **3. Contribution to the Arts:**

#### **(i) Architecture:**

Saguna Bhakti greatly encouraged the development of architecture in North India. Even today, some of the important temples built in the Nagara style bear the influence of Bhakti and are associated with Rama and Krishna.

#### **(ii) Sculpture:**

Saguna Bhakti emphasized idol worship, thereby promoting the art of sculpture. Inspired by Saguna Bhakti, beautiful idols of Ram-Sita and Radha-Krishna were created and installed in temples.

#### **(iii) Dance Art:**

The evolution of Kathak dance in North India and the Sattriya dance in Assam is closely associated with Vaishnava philosophy.

#### **(iv) Painting Art:**

The stories of Ramayana and Mahabharata have played significant roles in Indian painting. Particularly, the idols of Radha-Krishna have been important inspirations for styles like the 'Kishangarh style' of Rajput paintings, Pahari style and Madhubani painting styles.

#### **(v) Music Art:**

Saguna Bhakti provided special encouragement to music. Swami Haridas made important contributions to 'Dhrupad Gayaki' (a style of classical vocal music). The bhajans (devotional songs) composed by Meera and Narsi Mehta exemplify excellent singing.

Similarly, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu introduced the Sankirtana system, a form of congregational chanting.

#### **■ Contribution of women in the Bhakti movement-**

1. In Saguna Bhakti, women saints emerged from time to time, exerting their influence on the Bhakti movement.

2. Based on devotional literature, it is estimated that there were approximately 80 female saints. The earliest information we have is about the Alvar saint Andal. In northern Kashmir, a female saint named Lal Ded (Lalleshwari) held a special influence. She had interactions with Nuruddin, a saint belonging to the saints Sufi order. Similarly, Mahadevi Akka, a female saint from the Veerashaiva sect in Karnataka, defied societal norms by walking naked on the open road with her hair covering her body, challenging the honor expected from the royal family. Lastly, a discussion of women saints would be incomplete without mentioning Mirabai. Despite being a daughter-in-law of the Sisodia dynasty, Meera openly accepted Krishna as her husband, disregarding the expectations of the royal family. Her devotional songs, known as "Meera bhakti songs," have become a unique musical heritage.

**Contribution:** Women saints challenged the male-dominated feudal society by breaking social and familial norms. Their actions during the medieval period symbolized social rebellion.

**Limitations:** Their resistance against the male-dominated feudal society remained personal and individualistic. Rather than engaging in open struggle, they sought refuge in religion and spirituality.

#### **Sufi Movement**

The word "Sufi" is derived from "Safa," which has various meanings such as holy or coarse cloth made of wool. Sufism represents the development of the mystical aspect within Islam. It has been influenced by diverse ideas and philosophies, including Mahayana Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Neoplatonism, and Christianity.

The influence of monistic thinking, as seen in Nirguna Bhakti, is also evident in Sufi thought. Sufism emphasizes the unity of the individual soul (Jiva) with the Supreme Reality (Brahman). Initially, orthodox Sunni Muslims opposed this notion, but the credit for establishing it within the Muslim world goes to Al-Ghazali. Sufi thought flourished in the land of Iran. The arrival of Sufi thinkers in India began with the conquest of Sindh, and during the period of Ghazni and Ghori, a large number of Sufi saints migrated to India. In the 16th century, Abul Fazl mentioned 14 Sufi orders in India, with Chishti and Suhrawardi being prominent among them.

### **Socio-Cultural Contribution of Sufis**

1. Sufi saints created the social basis of Muslim rule in India by presenting a humanistic form of Islam.
2. They served as an ideological bridge between Hindu and Muslim societies.
3. Kabir emphasized the unity of spiritual existence, while Jayasi achieved unity in real-life experiences. Sufi saints told stories in the languages of the Hindus, with Jayasi using Awadhi and Bulleh Shah and others using Punjabi.
4. They made significant contributions to the development of Urdu language and literature.
5. Sufi saints greatly influenced the development of Indian music, particularly Hindustani music. They organized Sama gatherings in their Khanqahs, leading to the emergence of Qawwali as a new style of music.

**Question: Sufis and medieval saints failed to modify either religious ideas and practices or the outward structure of Hindu/Muslim societies to any appreciable extent. Comment**  
[UPSC-2014]

**Answer:** Sufism and Bhaktism have been regarded as medieval socio-religious movements with the belief that they aimed to

reform the social system through religious transformations. However, upon closer examination, it becomes evident that their efforts to bring about social reform through religion and spirituality did not yield significant practical results.

Prominent saints such as Kabir, Nanak, and Sufi saint Jayasi endeavored to eliminate religious and social inequalities prevailing within Hindu and Muslim societies by emphasizing key religious and spiritual principles. They rejected various rituals and rituals-based practices. Kabir sought to establish the oneness of Allah and God, questioning the division between Hindus and Muslims. He also questioned the necessity of idol worship and rituals in attaining unity between the soul and Brahman. However, for effective transformation within medieval society, a well-organized and structured social movement was required. Mere promotion of religious and spiritual unity proved insufficient. Consequently, the Bhakti and Sufi saints achieved limited success in their objectives.

**Question- The 'flute-playing Krishna' theme is very popular in Indian art. Discuss**

[UPSC-2012]

**Answer:** Both Ram and Krishna have been popular subjects in the folk tales of India, but Krishna has enjoyed greater popularity. This is because Krishna's Bhakti, characterized by a sense of divine love, brings more joy and entertainment to the people compared to Ram's Bhakti.

**Literature:** The poetic works of Rahim, encompassing hymns about Chaitanya and Meera, along with the writings of Surdas and Vallabhacharya, are centered around the captivating persona of Murli Manohar Krishna.

**Architecture:** Mathura and Vrindavan cities in north, Bengal and Assam in the east, and Gujarat and Rajasthan in the west, along with numerous grand temples throughout India, showcase the divine beauty of Murli Manohar Krishna's idols.

**Sculpture:** Indeed every skilled sculptor in India



has made exquisite idols of Murli Manohar Krishna with their own hands.

**Painting:** Radha Krishna, being the epitome of divine love, has been central to various painting styles, ranging from Rajput and Mughal paintings to the Kishangarh and Madhubani styles.

**Dance Art:** The profound relationship of Radha and Krishna forms the foundation of Kathak and Satriya dances, but their influence can also be observed in other dance styles.

**Music Art:** Whether in the Hindustani or Carnatic style of music, numerous ragas have been developed based on the divine love and connection between Radha and Krishna.

**Question:- Describe the contribution of Mirabai to the Indian Bhakti tradition.**

1. Meerabai provided an alternative voice within the Bhakti movement, emphasizing women's identity. Devotion, temples, and saints were primarily associated with a male-dominated society. Meera's remarkable step of joining a group of male sanyasis challenged societal norms and was a revolutionary act. Despite coming from the royal Sisodia family, she voluntarily renounced worldly comforts and set a powerful example for women.
2. Meera's arrival signaled a rebellion by women against the male-dominated society, making her a symbol of social revolution. Consequently, her memory is not cherished in the eyes of the male-dominated society, as evidenced by the reluctance to name daughters Meera in Rajasthan even today.
3. The essence of Krishna Bhakti finds its most tender expression through Meera's devotion. Her bhajans have become a treasured heritage of Indian music. In fact, Mahatma Gandhi, on his

last birthday and that was first birthday of independent India, celebrated by listening to Meera's bhajans.

4. Meera's works hold a unique place in Rajasthani literature, representing a rich literary heritage.

**Question:- The Bhakti movement received a remarkable re-orientation with the advent of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Discuss [UPSC-2018]**

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu introduced a deeply emotional element to Bhakti and fostered closer ties with the Sufi order. He started the sankirtan system, which transformed the Bhakti movement into a popular movement. Both Hindus and Muslims in Bengal were drawn towards the practice of Sankirtan.

Chaitanya's influence extended to Muslim-majority areas, where he not only prevented conversions to Islam but also witnessed many Muslims converting to Hinduism under his influence.

His impact was so significant that he came to be regarded as an incarnation of Krishna. He then sent his six Goswami saints to establish the foundation of Bhaktism in Vrindavan.

Chaitanya firmly established Bengali culture in Bengal, which endured even after the partition of India. Pakistan could not escape the rich heritage of Bengali culture, leading to the eventual division of East Pakistan to form Bangladesh.

Chaitanya's Bhakti revolutionized Krishna Bhakti to such an extent that it became a captivating force not only for Indians across different regions but also for foreigners. The ISKCON temple stands as a vivid testament to this phenomenon.

**Practice Question: Evaluate the nature Of the Bhakti literature and its contribution to Indian culture. [UPSC-2021 250 words]**