
Ancient Indian Literature Free PDF By Governmentadda.com

Important details Ancient Indian Literature writings

The Earliest known works of Indian literature was Rig Veda, which is a collection of 1028 hymns written in Vedic Sanskrit.

Even though majority of the literary works which have survived from the ancient Indian literature are religious text, it is not right to define ancient Indian literature only based on religion. Indian literature includes everything that can be included under "literature" broadly- religious and mundane, epic and lyrics, dramatic and didactic poetry, narrative and scientific prose along with oral poetry and song.

The Rig Veda was followed by Yajur Veda, Sama Veda, and Atharva Veda. There are other works after Vedas known as Brahmanas and Aryankas followed by philosophical doctrines of Upanishads. These form the part of Shruti literature.

- Yajur Veda – deals with directions for performance of the Yajnas.
- Sama Veda- deals with prescribed tunes for recitation of the hymns.
- Atharva Veda- deals with prescribing rites and rituals.
- Brahmanas- contains detailed explanation about Vedic literature and instructions.
- Aryankas- are a treatise of forest which explain the the rituals while dwelling into the philosophical discussions of the Brahmanas. They record the transitions between ritualistic symbolism of Brahmanas and philosophical aspects of Upanishads.
- Upanishads- deals with concepts about origin of universe, death and birth, material and spiritual world, which are written in poetry and prose, as expressions of philosophical concepts. Earliest Upanishads are Brihad-Aryanaka and Chanddogya. They explain the highest thoughts described that can be realised by a man, according to ancient sages, in simple and beautiful imagery.

Another type of work that emerged in early period was **Vedangas**: contains astronomy, grammar, and phonetics. For example, *Ashtadhyayi* written by Panini is work on Sanskrit grammar.

Great Epics :

There are two epics from Ancient Indian Literature, Ramayana and Mahabharata. These have developed to their present form over centuries, hence, they represent the ethnic memory of the Indian people. They were transmitted orally over the time by singers and story-tellers and were probably put to their written form around 2nd century BC.

Ramayana is composed of 24000 verses which are spread across seven books referred to as Khandas. It is written in form of poetry which entertains while it instructs. It is the story of Rama,

and tells how to achieve the fourfold objectives of human life(Purushartha), namely, Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha.

1. Dharma- righteous behavior or religion.
2. Artha- achievement of worldly wealth and prosperity.
3. Kama- fulfillment of desires.
4. Moksha- ultimate liberation.

Mahabharata consists of one lakh verses which are spread across ten books, hence, it the longest poem in the world. It is considered to be Ithihasa Purana, meaning Mythical history(because this history is not merely the depiction of events that happened, but these are the vents that will always happen and repeat). It is written by Vyasa, about the story of war of succession to that throne between Pandavas and Kauravs with multiple stories interwoven together to form an epic. Along with the main story of war, a later addition of Bhagvad Gita enshrines an integrated view of Dharma (performance of righteous duty in selfless way of Nishkama Karma).

Puranas:

They helped in development of early Vedic religion towards Hinduism. the literal meaning of the word “Purana” means” to renew the old”. They were written to illustrate the truth of Vedas to the people. Puranas explain the philosophical and religious truths through popular legends and mythological stories. Combined with the Ithihas(Ramayana and Mahabharata), Puranas consist of many stories and anecdotes of religious, social and cultural history of India.

Shastras and Smriti literature:

Shastras contain work of philosophy and science. they covers areas like art, mathematics and other sciences. Arthashastra is a work on science of governance.

Smritis deal with the performance of duties, customs and laws that are prescribed in accordance with Dharma. Manusmriti is the most important example, known as laws of Manu.

Early Buddhist Literature:

The earliest Buddhist literature is written in Pali language. The *Sutta Pitaka* consists of dialogues between the Buddha and his followers. The *Vinaya Pitaka* deals with rules of organisation of the monastries.

Milindapanho is a work of dialogues between buddhist Nagasena and Indo-greek king Menandar. The Jatakas are another important contribution to the early Buddhist literature consisting stories that have also been incorporated in a number of sculptures.

Buddhacharita on life of Buddha is written by Ashvaghosha is a work in Sanskrit language.

Ancient Sanskrit literature:

A number of literary works have been written just prior to the beginning of Gupta age which had secular character. this period saw development of poetry and drama. The subject of these works were majorly political events, allegories, comedies, romances, and philosophical questions.

- The works of Kalidasa include the Kumarsambhava, the Raghuvamsha, the Meghaduta, the Abhijnanshakuntalam are considered classics in field of poetry and style.
- Bana wrote Harshacharita which is a biography of King Harsha and Kadambari.
- Bhavabhuti wrote Uttar-Ramayana.
- Bharavi wrote Kirtarjuniya.
- Vishakadutta wrote Mudra Rakshasa.
- Shudraka wrote Mricchakatika which covers social drama.
- Dandin wrote Daskumarcharita (the tale of 10 prince).

There were also a large number of philosophical literature. Most important ones are those of Sankaracharya. There are collections of stories in *Panchatantra* and *Kathasarit-sagar*.

The Vedas are the oldest sacred texts in ancient Indian literature. How many Vedas are there?

- a) 1
- b) 2
- c) 3
- d) 4

Solution: d) 4

The Rigveda is composed in which ancient Indian language?

- a) Sanskrit
- b) Prakrit
- c) Tamil
- d) Pali

Solution: a) Sanskrit

The Ramayana and the Mahabharata are two great epics of ancient Indian literature. Who is the author of the Ramayana?

- a) Valmiki
- b) Vyasa
- c) Kalidasa
- d) Tulsidas

Solution: a) Valmiki

The Mahabharata is attributed to which sage who is also a character in the epic?

- a) Valmiki
- b) Vyasa
- c) Kalidasa
- d) Tulsidas

Solution: b) Vyasa

The Bhagavad Gita is a part of which ancient Indian epic?

- a) Ramayana
- b) Mahabharata
- c) Rigveda
- d) Atharvaveda

Solution: b) Mahabharata

The Puranas are a genre of ancient Indian literature that contain myths, legends, and genealogies. How many Puranas are there?

- a) 12
- b) 18
- c) 24
- d) 30

Solution: b) 18

The Bhagavad Gita is a conversation between Lord Krishna and which warrior prince?

- a) Rama
- b) Arjuna
- c) Yudhishtira
- d) Bhima

Solution: b) Arjuna

The ancient Indian text, Arthashastra, is attributed to which scholar and political advisor?

- a) Valmiki
- b) Vyasa
- c) Chanakya
- d) Kalidasa

Solution: c) Chanakya

The Kama Sutra is an ancient Indian text that deals with various aspects of life, including relationships and sexuality.

Who is the author of the Kama Sutra?

- a) Valmiki
- b) Vyasa
- c) Kalidasa
- d) Vatsyayana

Solution: d) Vatsyayana

The Sangam literature is associated with which ancient Indian civilization?

- a) Maurya Empire
- b) Gupta Empire
- c) Harappan Civilization
- d) Tamil Civilization

Solution: d) Tamil Civilization

The ancient Indian play, "Abhijnanasakuntalam," is written by which playwright?

- a) Kalidasa
- b) Bhasa
- c) Sudraka
- d) Bhavabhuti

Solution: a) Kalidasa

The Jataka tales are a collection of stories that narrate the previous lives of which religious figure?

- a) Buddha
- b) Mahavira
- c) Shankaracharya
- d) Guru Nanak

Solution: a) Buddha

The ancient Indian text, "Yoga Sutras of Patanjali," is a foundational text of which spiritual practice?

- a) Hinduism
- b) Buddhism
- c) Jainism
- d) Yoga

Solution: d) Yoga

The Natyashastra is an ancient Indian treatise on which performing art form?

- a) Music
- b) Dance
- c) Drama
- d) Sculpture

Solution: c) Drama

The ancient Indian text, "Tirukkural," is a collection of ethical teachings written in which language?

- a) Sanskrit
- b) Prakrit
- c) Tamil
- d) Pali

Solution: c) Tamil

The "Ashtadhyayi" is a comprehensive work on which ancient Indian subject?

- a) Medicine
- b) Astronomy
- c) Grammar
- d) Philosophy

Solution: c) Grammar

The "Panchatantra" is a collection of animal fables that teach moral lessons. Who is the author of the Panchatantra?

- a) Valmiki

- b) Vyasa
- c) Vishnu Sharma
- d) Tulsidas

Solution: c) Vishnu Sharma

The ancient Indian text, "Manusmriti," is a legal code that provides guidelines for which aspect of life?

- a) Politics
- b) Medicine
- c) Ethics
- d) Social conduct

Solution: d) Social conduct

The ancient Indian text, "Nyaya Sutras," is a foundational text of which Indian philosophical system?

- a) Nyaya
- b) Yoga
- c) Vedanta
- d) Sankhya

Solution: a) Nyaya

The "Meghaduta" is a lyrical poem written by which ancient Indian poet?

- a) Kalidasa
- b) Bhasa
- c) Sudraka
- d) Bhavabhuti

Solution: a) Kalidasa

The "Gita Govinda" is a poetic work composed by which Indian poet?

- a) Kalidasa
- b) Bhasa

c) Sudraka

d) Jayadeva

Solution: d) Jayadeva

The "Ain-i-Akbari" is an administrative document written by which Mughal emperor?

a) Akbar

b) Jahangir

c) Shah Jahan

d) Aurangzeb

Solution: a) Akbar

The ancient Indian text, "Kamasutra," deals with various aspects of human life, including relationships and sexuality. Who is the author of the Kamasutra?

a) Vatsyayana

b) Valmiki

c) Vyasa

d) Kalidasa

Solution: a) Vatsyayana

The "Sushruta Samhita" is an ancient Indian text that deals with which subject?

a) Medicine

b) Astronomy

c) Grammar

d) Philosophy

Solution: a) Medicine

The "Amarakosha" is a famous Sanskrit lexicon written by which ancient Indian scholar?

a) Amara Sinha

b) Panini

c) Patanjali

d) Bana Bhatta

Solution: a) Amara Sinha

The "Purusha Sukta" is a hymn from which ancient Indian scripture?

a) Rigveda

b) Yajurveda

c) Samaveda

d) Atharvaveda

Solution: a) Rigveda

The "Naladiyar" and "Manimekalai" are two important works of literature from which ancient Indian language?

a) Sanskrit

b) Prakrit

c) Tamil

d) Pali

Solution: c) Tamil

The "Silappadikaram" is an ancient Tamil epic written by which poet?

a) Valmiki

b) Vyasa

c) Ilango Adigal

d) Thiruvalluvar

Solution: c) Ilango Adigal

The "Ramcharitmanas" is an epic poem written by which medieval Indian poet?

a) Valmiki

b) Vyasa

c) Kalidasa

d) Tulsidas

Solution: d) Tulsidas

The "Katha Upanishad" is one of the Upanishads associated with which ancient Indian text?

- a) Ramayana
- b) Mahabharata
- c) Rigveda
- d) Atharvaveda

Solution: b) Mahabharata

The "Aitareya Brahmana" is associated with which ancient Indian text?

- a) Rigveda
- b) Yajurveda
- c) Samaveda
- d) Atharvaveda

Solution: a) Rigveda

The "Charyapada" is a collection of poems written in which ancient Indian language?

- a) Sanskrit
- b) Prakrit
- c) Tamil
- d) Bengali

Solution: d) Bengali

The "Kadambari" is a romantic novel written by which ancient Indian writer?

- a) Kalidasa
- b) Bhasa
- c) Sudraka
- d) Banabhatta

Solution: d) Banabhatta

The "Vikramorvasiya" is a play written by which ancient Indian playwright?

- a) Kalidasa
- b) Bhasa
- c) Sudraka
- d) Bhavabhuti

Solution: a) Kalidasa

The "Amuktamalyada" is a poetic work written by which medieval Indian poet?

- a) Valmiki
- b) Vyasa
- c) Kalidasa
- d) Krishnadevaraya

Solution: d) Krishnadevaraya

The "Sarngadhara Paddhati" is an ancient Indian text that deals with which subject?

- a) Astrology
- b) Architecture
- c) Music
- d) Medicine

Solution: c) Music

The "Chanakya Niti" is a collection of aphorisms attributed to which ancient Indian scholar and political advisor?

- a) Valmiki
- b) Vyasa
- c) Chanakya
- d) Kalidasa

Solution: c) Chanakya

The "Bhakti movement" in ancient Indian literature was characterized by devotion to which deity?

- a) Vishnu
- b) Shiva
- c) Brahma
- d) Durga

Solution: a) Vishnu

The "Divya Prabandham" is a collection of hymns composed by which group of ancient Indian poets?

- a) Alvars
- b) Nayanars
- c) Siddhas
- d) Virashaivas

Solution: a) Alvars

The "Krittivasi Ramayan" is a version of the Ramayana written in which ancient Indian language?

- a) Sanskrit
- b) Prakrit
- c) Tamil
- d) Bengali

Solution: d) Bengali