

## **CC-5: HISTORY OF INDIA (CE 750-1206)**

### **V. RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS:**

#### **(C). REGIONAL LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE**

The Early Medieval period marks the spread of Sanskrit throughout the subcontinent along with the emergence of a number of regional vernaculars. Sanskrit was indeed the language of the court and elites and its currency was confined to a handful of learned people. This was the preferred language for writing matters related to Brahmanical philosophy, religion, especially the Vedanta and the Mimamsa texts (digests), and the normative texts and their commentaries. Significantly enough, Buddhist and Jaina centres of learning extensively used Sanskrit. The famous Jain polymath, Hemachandra, composed Sanskrit texts like Dvayasrayakavya and Parisishtaparvan. Sanskrit was the principal medium, at least in north India, for composing life stories (charitas) of prominent political personalities. The first text of this genre was Banabhatta's Harshacharita; the tradition continued unabated in Sandhyakaranandin's Ramacharitam and Bilhana's Vikramankadevacharitam. The Ramacharitam is a complex composition as each verse therein offers two meanings: one about Ramachandra of Ayodhya and the other regarding the life and achievements of Ramapala of the Pala dynasty, the actual hero of this composition. Sanskrit was also the chief vehicle of writing north Indian inscriptions and the literary standard of the royal eulogy in epigraphic texts usually followed that in the literary texts. The significant point here is the simultaneous use of both Sanskrit and a regional language in inscriptions. This is especially noticeable in land-grant charters where the royal eulogy and dynastic accounts were composed in Sanskrit, while the actual grant portion, the operative part of the record was written in a local vernacular. This may hint at the possibilities of bilingualism;

the migrant Brahmanas could well have been bilinguals. That Prakrit could also be the vehicle of writing the kavya style life-stories of rulers is borne out by Vakpatiraja's Gaudavaho that narrated the event of the killing of the Gauda king by the Kashmirian king.

The best example of the itihasa-purana tradition of chronicling the past belongs to this period in the form of Kalhana's Rajatarangini, which attempts at narrating the connected account of the past of Kashmir. It is particularly noted for its remarkable accuracy of recording events in Kashmir for the post-AD 700 period.

Sanskrit was also the principal vehicle for writing technical treatises.

Considerable emphasis was given on the mastery of grammar. The study of grammar and etymology can be considered rational enquiries, which were pursued by both orthodox and heterodox schools. Most of the Buddhist monasteries were also noted for the study of grammar. Interestingly enough, in the large brahmana settlement in Srihatta there was provision for the maintenance of the teacher of Chandravayakarana, i.e., the study of the treatise on grammar written by the Buddhist grammarian Chandragomin. If the earliest of the lexicon was the Namalinganusana by Amarasimha in the fifth-sixth century, it became a regular intellectual practice. Two famous instances of lexicons of this period is Halayaudhasarman's Abhidhanachintamani and Hemachandra's Desinamamala .The latter text explains and gives Sanskrit synonyms of a selection of western Indian vernacular vocabulary. Another notable feature of the literary activities is the availability of a number of technical treatises. If there were specific treatises on agriculture and plants, Krishiparasara and Vrikshayurveda respectively, there were also major texts on medicine. The best illustrations of this are the Ashtangahridayasangraha by Vagbhata (seventh/eighth century) and the treatise by Chakrapanidatta in the eleventh century, both drawing upon and elaborating on the medical treatise by

Charaka. It is likely that such technical treatises reflected the cooperation and transactions between Sanskritists and professional specialists in their respective fields. To this genre also belonged the famous treatises on aesthetics and prosody, namely the Dhvayaloka of Anandavardhana and Abhinavagupta's Dhvanyaloka-lochana. Abhinavagupta was also the author of the celebrated treatise on dramaturgy, Abhinavabharati. The tradition continued, as will be evident from Sagarandin's Natakalakshanaratnakosa (13th century). In addition to voluminous literary output in creative Sanskrit literature, Tamil, Telugu and Kanarese language gained considerable prominence for literary expressions.

The most remarkable linguistic development of the Early Medieval period was the gradual emergence of several regional languages. In the Indo-Aryan speaking belt, this development was through the intermediate stage of Apabhramsa. Traces of Apabhramsa has been found in very early literary works, but considered to be a dialect till the period of Bharata's Natyashastra, it developed a literary standard only in a later period.

Among the north Indian desibhasas that originated in the Early Medieval period may be listed- Marathi, Bengali and Gujrati. A similar linguistic burst is visible in south India too, where Kanarese and Telegu now really came into their own. The development of these languages were closely connected with regional socio-political structures and particularly, the religious movements of these areas made important contribution to their growth.

Between 1000-1300 CE the Indo-Aryan languages of north, central and east India attained a specific regional identity. Among them Hindi, Marathi, Bengali, Assamese and Oriya particularly attracted attention.

The Aihole Inscription of Pulakeshin II (634 CE) written by his court poet Ravikirti in Sanskrit language and Kannada script is considered an excellent piece of poetry.

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## **REFERENCE**

Chakravarti Ranabir, Exploring Early India upto Circa AD 1300