

1. While elaborating on the recurrent themes of the Bhakti literary tradition, examine the contribution of women poets towards India's Bhakti literature.

Introduction

The most powerful trend of medieval Indian literature between 1000 and 1800 A.D. is devotional (bhakti) poetry which dominates almost all the major languages of the country. Krishna and Rama, the two main incarnations of the great god Vishnu, began to be worshipped widely. Many temples were built for them, and their worshippers formed a number of different sects, each one following a particular religious teacher. Much bhakti literature was written in the form of hymns, still sung today. These hymns praised the deities and their deeds, or humbly requested their help.

Body

The recurrent themes of the Bhakti literary tradition:

- Bhakti poetry was an important influence in the development of regional languages because it emphasized people's everyday speech, rejecting the elite tradition of Sanskrit. Bhakti also challenged the caste system as many of its poets were from the lower castes and a common theme of the poetry is that God is within every human being.
- Some of the earliest bhakti poetry was written in Tamil. From the A.D. 900's, Kannada became an important influence, with devotional literature such as the Vachanas (sayings) of the saints of various Hindu sects. Famous Kannada poets of the medieval period include Basavanna and Allama Prabhu.
- The next language to adopt bhakti was Marathi, the most important poet being Gyaneswar (1200's). Other Marathi poets were Eknath and Tuka Ram.
- In Gujarati, prominent poets were Narsi Mehta and Premananda.
- Other languages to follow the tradition were Kashmiri, Bengali, Assamese, Manipuri, Oriya, and early variants of Hindi. Another kind of bhakti is found in the Sant tradition, which believes in one omnipresent God. Bhakti became a great platform for Hindu-Muslim unity.

The contribution of women poets towards India's Bhakti literature

- Lal Ded (1320-1384), the Muslim poetess from Kashmir Lalded & Habba Khatun, represented the sant tradition of bhakti and wrote Vakhs (maxims), which are peerless gems of spiritual experience.
- Mira Bai (1500's) wrote in Gujarati, Rajasthani, and Hindi. She wrote songs of Krishna in a voice of longing, expressing the pain of separation from the god she loved as a husband.

- Avvayyar, writing in Tamil, and Akkamahadevi, writing in Kannada, wrote about the position of women in society
- Janabai was a sudra from maharashtra. She influenced by teachings of Saint Namdev. Her poetry encompasses the discrimination faced by women & sudras. This awoken the sudras and women for their rights.
- Bahina was also from maharashtra and devotee of Krishna. She was the disciple of Saint Tukaram. But unlike others she never left her marriage but devoted to bhakti alongwith marriage.

Conclusion

The women, all wrote small lyrics or poems of devotional fervour, metaphysical depth, and with a spirit of dedication and utmost sincerity. Behind their mysticism and metaphysics is a divine sadness. They turned every wound inflicted by life into a poem.

2. What is 'Romanticism'? Explain. Discuss the trends of romanticism in Indian literature.

Introduction

Romanticism, a cultural movement which sought to develop a particular form of nationalist sentiment. Romantic artists and poets generally criticized the glorification of reason and science and focused instead on emotions, intuition and mystical feelings. Their effort was to create a sense of a shared collective heritage, a common cultural past, as the basis of a nation.

Body

- Romantics such as the German philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) claimed that true German culture was to be discovered among the common people – das volk. It was through folk songs, folk poetry and folk dances that the true spirit of the nation (volksgeist) was popularised. So collecting and recording these forms of folk culture was essential to the project of nation-building.
- The emphasis on vernacular language and the collection of local folklore was not just to recover an ancient national spirit, but also to carry the modern nationalist message to large audiences who were mostly illiterate.

The trends of romanticism in Indian literature

- The trend of Indian romanticism ushered in by three great forces influenced the destiny of modern Indian literature. These forces were Sri Aurobindo's

*(1872-1950) search for the divine in man, Tagore's quest for the beautiful in nature and man, and Mahatma Gandhi's experiments with truth and non-violence.

- Sri Aurobindo, through his poetry and philosophical treatise, 'The Life Divine', presents the prospect of the ultimate revelation of divinity in everything. He wrote mostly in English.
- Tagore's quest for beauty was a spiritual quest, which attained fruition in the final realisation that service to humanity was the best form of contact with God. Tagore was aware of a supreme principle pervading nature and the entire universe. This supreme principle, or the unknown mystique, is beautiful, because it shines through the known; and it is only in the unknown that we have perpetual freedom. Tagore, a many-splendoured genius, wrote novels, short stories, essays and dramas, and never ceased to try out new experiments.
- The age of romantic poetry in Hindi is known as Chhayavad, the age of romantic mystery, in Kannada, is Navodaya, the rising sun, and in Oriya, it is known as Sabuj, the age of green. Jaishankar Prasad, Nirala, Sumitra Nandan Pant and Mahadevi (Hindi); Vallathol, Kumaran Asan (Malayalam); Kalindi Charan Panigrahi (Oriya); B.M. Srikantayya, Puttappa, Bendre (Kannada); Viswanath Satyanarayana (Telugu); Uma Shankar Joshi (Gujarati), and poets of other languages highlighted mysticism and romantic subjectivity in their poetry.
- The poets of Ravikiran Mandal (a group of six poets of Marathi) searched for the hidden reality in nature. Indian romanticism is fraught with mysticism – not like English romanticism, which wants to break puritanic shackles, seeking joy in Hellenism.
- In fact, the romantic trend of the modern times follows the tradition of Indian poetry, where romanticism indicates the Vedantic (the philosophy of one Reality) oneness between Nature and man, more along the lines of Vedic symbolism and not Paganism. Muhammad Iqbal (1877-198), the greatest poet that Urdu had produced, second only to Ghalib, went through initially a romantic-cum-nationalistic phase in his poetry. His best collection of Urdu poems is Bang-i-Dara (1924). His quest for Pan-Islamism did not deter him in his concern for humanity at large.

Conclusion

Thus, Romanticism was a cultural movement that believed in emotions, intuitions and mystical feelings over reason and science. They tried to evoke the feelings of a common past and shared heritage.

3. Instead of the classical dignity, sobriety and simplicity, the medieval school of sculpture tend more towards ornamentation, creating highly ornate art objects. Elucidate.

Introduction

Medieval Indian sculpture clearly demonstrate that as styles went on developing the sculptors frequently departed from the Shilpashastra, texts and rules laid down, and delighted in those departures and the liberties they took with the bodies of humans and even of gods and goddesses.

Body

- The sculptor had attained sufficient dexterity, maturity and skill to be able to infuse a certain individuality in his work of art. This is a sign of dynamism. If art has to grow, it has to react to the changing circumstances of different times, inclinations, tastes to reflect contemporary society.
- The most remarkable achievement of the new artist of this age was to contribute a dreamy, floating quality to the figures of the flying gods and freer movement than in the classical period and there is a tendency towards increasing elegance and slenderness of form.
- There is a new beauty in women. The hips are more slender, the waist more supple, the legs longer. The face still continued to be stylized and the breasts full and firm. The woman is no longer the mother goddess but a divine charmer. One such superb example of the sculptor's art is a lovely figure of Vrikshika, or a celestial damsel, from Gyrapur, in Gwalior, standing in a gracefully flexed pose, against a tree.
- An artistic movement of great importance flourished under the aegis of the Pallava rulers of Kanchi in Mahabalipuram. Some of the outstanding sculptures that are credited to their patronage are the Mahishasuramardini in relief, Girigovardhana panel, Arjuna's penance or the Descent of the Ganga, Trivikrama Vishnu, Gajalakshmi and Anatasayanam. The Pallava style concerns itself with a tall and slender physiognomic form. The thin and elongated limbs emphasise the tallness of the figure. The female figures are much lighter in appearance, with their slender waists, narrow chests and shoulders, smaller breasts, sparse ornaments and garments and generally submissive attitude.
- 8th century the Rashtrakutas created the greatest wonder of medieval Indian art in Kailasa temple at Ellora. Carved out of a hill and solid rocks, magnificent carving shows the Rashtrakuta style of tall and powerfully built figures, reflecting with spiritual and physical poise. The beautiful architectural rock sculpture from Cave No.29 at Ellora shows the marriage of Siva and Parvati. Siva holding the hand of the Parvati occupies the centre of the composition. Another magnificent sculpture at Ellora is a panel depicting Ravana shaking mount Kailasa.
- A good example of Chola craftsmanship in the 11th century is the relief carving of Siva as Gajurasamaharamurti. The irate god is engaged in a vigorous dance of fierce ecstasy after having killed the elephant-demon. The later phase of Chola art, in the 13th century, is illustrated by the sculpture showing Bhudevi or the earth goddess as the younger consort of Vishnu. She

stands in a gracefully flexed attitude on a lotus base holding a lily in her right hand, while the left arm hangs along her side in lolahasta.

Conclusion :

Instead of the classical dignity, sobriety and simplicity, the sculpture in medieval school tending more towards ornamentation, creating highly ornate art objects, with strange and unusual imaginary creatures, such as half human, half monsters, etc. The characteristic new form of style of art is the difference with classical art in attitude, if not in skill and aptitude. Loveliness and idealization are still the artist's passion, but love of the ornate, decorative details is now dominant over classic simplicity. There is more complication, ornamentation and enrichment.

4. Buddhism and Jainism were the prominent motivating forces for the artistic activity in in many parts of India during the ancient and medieval periods. Do you agree? Substantiate.

Introduction:

Buddhism and Jainism were the prominent motivating forces for the artistic activity in many parts of India during the ancient and medieval periods. Buddhism and Jainism has influenced and contributed to many artistic spheres in India, such as painting, sculpture, and architecture, literature.

Body:

Buddhism as prominent motivating force for the artistic activity:

- Stupas: were to commemorate important events or mark important places associated with Buddhism or to house important relics of Buddha. The best examples of stupas are those constructed at Amaravati, Sanchi, Barhut, Saranath and Gaya. One of the most striking architectural remains of ancient India and the earliest and largest of the three stupas found in Sanchi was built by Ashoka (273-236 B.C.)
- Viharas or monasteries: constructed for prayer with a running verandah on three sides or an open courtyard surrounded by a row of cells and a pillared verandah in front. These cells served as dwelling places for the monks. These monastic buildings had a Chaitya hall or Chaitya mandir attached to a stupa - the chief object of worship. Some of the important Buddhist viharas are those at Ajanta, Ellora, Nasik, Karle, Kanheri, Bagh and Badami.
- Paintings: Paintings which has been an accepted art since early times attained heights of excellence in Gupta period. These exquisite paintings or frescos are to be seen in the caves of Ajanta. The entire surface of the caves is exquisitely painted and shows the high standard reached in mural painting.
- Sthambas or Pillars: with religious emblems were put up by pious Buddhists in honour of Buddha or other great Buddhists. Fragments of sthambas

belonging to Mauryan times and later were found at Sanchi, Sarnath, Amaravati and Nagarjunkonda.

- Literature: The canonical literature is best represented by the “Tripitakas”, that is, three baskets -Vinaya Pitaka, Sutta Pitaka and Abhidhamma Pitaka. The non-canonical literature is best represented by the Jatakas.

Jainism as prominent motivating force for the artistic activity:

- Excellent Jain architecture and sculpture can be seen in their Stupas and rock-cut caves found in Mathura, Bundelkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa cave temples. A number of rock-cut caves have been built in Udaigiri and Khandagiri, twin hills in Puri District of Orissa and in Ellora in Maharashtra.
- Medieval Jains built many temples, especially in western India. Dilwara Temple complex built in Rajasthan consists of five ornately carved marble temples, each dedicated to a different Tirthankara .
- The statue of Bahubali called Gomatesvara at Sravan Belgola and Karkal in Karnataka are examples of wonderful jaina architecture. The statue of Bahubali 21 metered high, carved out of a mass of granite was erected in 984 A.D.
- Kannada literature owes its origin to the Jaina literary works. Vikramarjuna-Vijaya, written by Adi Pampa, is famous as Pampa-Bharata. Pandavapurana was written by Shubhachandra. Harivamsapurana was written by Jinasena.
- Ardhakathanaka, by Banarasidas, is the first autobiography in Braj Bhasha which is termed as the precursor to the Hindi.
- Many Jaina literary works were written in Apabhramsa such as Kahas, grammar etc. Apabhramsa is known as the precursor to many Indian languages of the Gangetic plains.
- Some of the oldest Jaina literature is available in Shauraseni, which led to the development of languages such as Gujarati, Marwari etc.
- The motivating force for the painting activity in Western India was Jainism. Malwa painting, Rajasthan School of painting style were prevailed during the time of Jainism.

Conclusion:

Jainism and Buddhism arose to suit the needs of a changing society, patronized by an emerging class and left an indelible mark on India’s culture, architecture, philosophy and way of living. These religions also found their influence in neighboring countries and helped India expand its footprint in these regions, paving way for a cultural connect to this day.

5. What are some of the most striking and unique features of Indo-Islamic architecture. Illustrate.

Introduction

With the arrival of Islamic rulers and subsequent conquest of Delhi throne by the 12th century, Indian architecture underwent a massive change. Though new elements were introduced majorly, the local architects retained certain flavours of the local architectural traditions as well. Thus a confluence of Persian and Indian elements can be seen which is known as Indo-Islamic or Indo-Sarcenic architecture. It was introduced during Delhi sultanate period and evolved during the reign of Mughals

Body

Striking and unique features:

- Arches and Domes: used which is known as 'arcuade' style of architecture replaced the traditional Trabeate style of architecture.
- Minars: are used around the mosques and the mausoleums.
- Mortar: used as a cementing agent in their constructions.
- Natural Figurines: were used. Human and Animal figures are avoided.
- Spaciousness, massiveness and breadth of buildings and structures.
- Calligraphy: used as a means of decoration as well as arabesque method which involved the use of geometrical ornamentation. Further, the decorations followed a symmetrical pattern.
- Jaali work: a feature allowing light into the structures.
- Water: pools in the premises of the building used for cooling, decorative and religious purposes.
- Charbagh style of gardening: in which a square block is divided into 4 adjacent identical gardens.
- Foreshortening technique: in the buildings, such that the inscriptions appear to be closer than it really is.
- Pietra Dura and Mosaic designs: using cut and fitted highly polished gems and stones.

Some of the examples illustrating the same are:

- Delhi Sultanate: Qutb Minar, Quwwat Ul Islam Mosque, Alai Darwaza, Lodi Gardens etc.,
- Mughals: Taj Mahal, Red fort, Fatehpur sikri etc.,
- Deccan sultanate: Gol Gumbaz, Char minar, Golconda fort etc.,
- Provincial: Adina Mosque, Atala Mosque etc.,

Conclusion

Architecturally, a mix of many techniques, stylised shapes and surface decorations evolved through a continuous amalgamation of architectural elements from the various styles. Indo Islamic Architecture flourished in entire India over time. Its influence could be seen in southern Indian structures like Mysore palace and in various buildings under British like Parliament, Victoria terminus etc.,