
UNIT 18 PATRONAGE OF LITERARY CULTURE*

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18.0 OBJECTIVES

The study of this unit would enable you to:

- Comprehend various approaches to study the Indic literary traditions,

* Prof. Abha Singh, School of Social Sciences, Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi

- Identify the characteristics of Indic literary traditions,
- Understand the nature and pattern of Mughal patronage to Sanskrit literature.
- Contemplate the patronage given to the Indic literary traditions at the Mughal court,
- Assess the growth of vernacular literary tradition during the sixteenth century,
- Examine the role of bhakti in the growth of Indic literary tradition, and
- Appraise the process of assimilation of classical Sanskrit tradition into vernacular traditions and the emergence of new styles of *genres*.

18.1 INTRODUCTION

The present Unit attempts to dig into re-evaluating the literary achievements during the Mughal period. Two things are important here: a) To what extent there was a decline of the Sanskritic tradition; b) To what extent Imperial patronage was received by Sanskritist scholars; and c) The nature of patronage at Sub-Imperial level to Sanskrit and vernacular traditions. However, the mega-translation works from Sanskrit to Persian undertaken at the Imperial Court are kept out of the discussion here, for we have already touched upon this in **Unit 1** in the context of the activities at the *maktabhkhana* at the Imperial establishment of Akbar.

To recapitulate, in our Course **BHIC 107** we have discussed the general decline of Sanskrit much before the emergence of the Turks on the scene primarily, on account of the rise of the vernaculars. The present Unit aims to elaborate the details further into the sixteenth century, particularly under the Mughals.

The present Unit also delves into the major debate prevailing among the historians over the break in the ‘millennial’ Sanskrit literary and cultural traditions. As a result of Turkish and Mughal ascendancy Persian dominated, and Sanskrit literary tradition gradually faded away. However, you would find that still Kashmir, Gujarat, and Banaras were major centres of Sanskrit learning, though no longer it enjoyed the language of the court. Even Indo-Muslim patronage played a crucial role in the development of vernacular tradition, particularly Brajhasha.

Even though Persian remained chiefly the language of the elites from the advent of the Turks, Hindawi did enjoy an important place and remained the chief language of all administrative and revenue transactions/records at the local level till 1582 when finally Akbar declared Persian as official language and records were to be maintained thence onwards till *pargana* level in Persian, though still at village level revenue records continued to be maintained/written in Hindawi.

However, the development of vernacular literature was not linear; it passed through multiple experiences. The dominant influence and themes in general picked up by these vernacular poets/writers were either *Puranic* or were eulogistic poems.

In the medieval period, it is difficult to bind languages within the bounds of geographical spaces; instead, multiplicity was the commonplace. Boundaries were flexible, cutting across regions, and fluidity, mobility and borrowings across linguistic bounds was the norm.

We would be using terms ‘cosmopolitan’ and ‘vernacular’ quite often in the present

Unit. Here let us explain the terms ‘cosmopolitan’ and ‘vernacular’ in the context of Indic literary tradition. The term ‘cosmopolitan’ indicates something that had wide-ranging expanse in terms of space and time and which cut across in terms of religious and regional boundaries; while ‘vernacular’ speaks something confined to limited space and time, often circumscribed to a limited locality/region.

18.2 APPROACHES TO STUDY THE INDIC LITERARY TRADITIONS

The categories ‘cosmopolitan’ and ‘vernacular’ are not exclusive. Some prominent ‘vernaculars’ did assume ‘cosmopolitan’ character. Braj and Awadhi within no time emerged ‘cosmopolitan’ ‘within their regional worlds’. Equally, not all ‘cosmopolitan’ languages necessarily passed through the process of vernacular. It is very much true for the cosmopolitan Sanskrit that does not seem to have passed through the phase of vernacular. Pollock (February 1998: 25) argues, ‘As the cosmopolitan is constituted through cultural flows from the vernacular, so the vernacular constructs itself by appropriation from the cosmopolitan...’ A ‘cosmopolis’ did enjoy ‘imperial-cultural association and aesthetic style’, ‘shaped political vocabulary and culture’ (Pollock February 1998: 15).

In the light of the ‘Cosmopolitan’ vs. Vernacular’, the present Section focuses on three major approaches current among the scholar pertaining to the emergence of Indic literary traditions during the medieval period.

Here, our emphasis is on the growth of Indic literary traditions in northern India for we have already discussed the growth of regional languages in south India and the Deccan in our Course **BHIC 107**.

18.2.1 Sheldon Pollock on Vernacularisation of Indic Literary Tradition

The emergence of local/regional dialects during the early medieval period is looked at by Sheldon Pollock as ‘vernacularisation’ ‘a process of change by which the universalistic orders, formations, and practices of the preceding millennium were supplemented and gradually replaced by localized forms’ (Pollock Summer 1998: 41). According to him, through the process of literalization (local language exposed to literacy), produced literature, leading to homogenization and thus unified and eventually succeed in ‘territorialization’ and in some cases ‘ethnicization’. Through this process, argues Pollock (Summer 1998: 42), ‘vernacular literary cultures gradually encompassed and superseded the translocal codes, aesthetic forms, and geocultural spaces that had earlier been prevalent’. This vernacularization created ‘new regional worlds’, argues Pollock. These vernaculars, unlike cosmopolitan Sanskrit (which had reached from Central Asia to Srilanka to Afghanistan to Annam), had limited reach, were not global, transregional, or cosmopolitan. Initially, these languages were used for local documentation and local inscriptions were inscribed in that, much before the appearance of any literary text. In the case of Kannada, the first document appears in the fifth century and the ninth century, almost four hundred years later first literary text appears in the court of the Rashtrakutas, around 850, *Kavirjamrgam* (The Way of the King of Poets), a text-based on Sanskrit *Kavyadarsa* (Mirror of Poetry). Thus first was the attempt to establish the ‘language of science’, a step in the direction of establishing itself as

a literary language. The next important feature was their attempt to situate themselves in the local geocultural spheres. In North India, by fifteenth century ‘non-Muslim courts’ were vernacularised. Braj assumed prominence in the Tomar court of Gwalior in the fifteenth century. Again here the Sanskrit idioms and texts were ‘redeployed’ to the contemporary concerns and situations. Vishnudas’ *Mahabharata* (1435) and his *Ramayanakatha* was an attempt in this direction. ‘Vernacular language choice, within the context of Sanskrit cultural norms and activities, entails a commitment to a range of disciplinary language practices (grammaticization, for example) and technologies for reproduction (especially writing) that ensure the unification, standardization, and above all differentiation of the vernacular code’ (Pollock Summer 1998: 58).

This trend, argues Pollock, varied in periods: In Gujarati, such literary productions started in the 12th century; in Assamese in the 14th century; in Oriya and Malayalam in the fifteenth century, in Avadhi in the 14th century, while in the Braj in the 15th-16th century, nonetheless, visible uniformly across the subcontinent. Pollock (Summer 1998: 54) argues, ‘By appropriating Sanskrit models for inscriptional and literary expressivity, remapping epic space, invoking new sociotextual communities that would inhabit the new vernacular places and (re)produce themselves by reading/hearing those new vernacular texts, courtly intellectuals in southern Asia at the start of the second millennium created a wholly new kind of cultural formation. Although the cosmopolitan code of Sanskrit is not eliminated, . . . its significance in the literary sphere and in the articulation of the political dramatically decreased.’ Pollock (Summer 1998: 57) argues that of this vernacularization three features were common across the subcontinent: ‘the new definition of culture-space, the importance of superposed models for local language literary creation, and the interest of the court in the production of vernacularity’. Further, Sanskrit holy scriptures were hardly translated, instead vernacular writings produced their scriptures, Saiva *vachanas* (in Kannada), Tamil *Veda* (*Tirumulai*). In the context of Kannada Pollock argues (February 1998: 25), ‘Kannada could not achieve its new rank [cosmopolitan idiom] unless it possessed both the epistemological status of Sanskrit and the dignity of its philological apparatus (i.e. *lakshanagranthas* or rule-setting texts.’

18.2.2 Allison Busch on Indic Literary Tradition

While analysing courtly patronage and courtly *riti* poetry of Brajbhasha in the court of the Bundela rulers of Orchha Busch argues that during the colonial period in the garb of ‘modernity’ and ‘nationalism’ Indian literati failed to appreciate the vibrant character of classical Hindi poetry i.e. *riti* poetry. Here our focus is not to enter into that part of the debate to what extent British colonialism played a decisive role in undermining the importance of ‘pre-modern’ (Mughal period) vernacular literary culture, instead, our focus is to look into the vibrancy of vernacular literary tradition vis-à-vis the patronage received.

Though scholars have largely discarded and looked down upon the *riti* poetry (vernacular Brajbhasha) lacking in intellect (*acharyatva*) and originality (*maulikta*), Allison Busch argues that Braj writers like Keshavdas did not dissociate themselves with classical Sanskrit style. However, they brought changes to the need of the time, suggestive of the fact that they were ready to question the supremacy of Sanskrit and the existing literary norms. ‘In short, the *ryiti* aesthetic was a unique blend of the old and the new, the familiar and the unfamiliar, the cosmopolitan and the regional’ (Busch 2011: 66). According to Busch *riti* poetry was much radical in this manner. They considered themselves not just the transmitter of Sanskrit texts instead viewed themselves as the theorists of a new style of *bhasha kavita* (vernacular literature). Braj poets proclaimed that they ventured

out to pen down ‘new literary theory’ in Brajbhasha. Keshavadas’ *Rasikapriya* is an adaptation of the Sanskrit *Sringaratilaka* of Rudrabhatt nonetheless he had his detour in that. Further, Keshavdas also attempts to bring in Braj milieu in that. He did borrow motifs from Sanskrit, but modified them as per his perspective and attempted to break the ‘age-old linguistic hierarchies’.

Allison Busch (2011) in the context of *riti* poetry attempts to establish the link between the Imperial (Mughal) and sub-Imperial (regional; Orchha) literary cultures. While articulating Keshavdas’ literary genius she argues how the poet gradually adapted his poetry to the political needs of his patron, the Orchha rulers. She comments that Keshavdas attempted to embody Orchha king, his patron, with ‘divine’ king ‘Rama’ thus in turn attempted to raise the position of the Orchha king in the Mughal (‘Imperial’) ‘court’. Even Keshavdas wrote a panegyric in praise of Emperor Jahangir. Sub-Imperial-Imperial connections of Brajbhasha *riti* poetry were the key to power, argues Busch. She projects Raja Birbal as a possible mediator to the Mughal court. She remarks that Brajbhasha poets worked under the ‘penumbra’ of Mughal court. Keshavdas’ writings had a great impact on his disciples, particularly on woman courtesan disciple, Pravi.

Riti poets made conscious choice to create Indic linguistic register distinct from the Persian register, though deriving heavily long ‘topai’ and phrases. Keshav’s conscious choice to use vernacular equivalents, e.g. for earth instead of *bhumi* he uses the vernacular equivalent ‘*puhumi*’.

Busch argues that vernacular was more popular in the sub-Imperial courts (in their *watan-jagirs*) for it was ‘more culturally relevant’. It was there that ‘they cultivated the richest range of genres’. She argues that the Rajput and other nobles though possessed working knowledge of Persian to interact at the Mughal court, in their *watan-jagirs* they encouraged the local dialect and patronised the local talents.

Nonetheless, Indic literature possessed distinct charm among the Persianate literati as well. This could be gleaned from the fact that Tulsi’s *Ramcharitmanas*, *Sursagar*, and *Prabodhachandrodaya* were sparingly copied in Persian script. Keshavdas’ *Rasikapriya*, *Sundarshringar*, and *Bihari Satsai* were also penned down in *nastaliq*; all this is suggestive of addressing at Persianised readership (elites) of the time.

18.2.3 Audrey Truschke on Cultural Encounters

Truschke takes the debate to the issue of patronage to Indic literary traditions, particularly to Sanskrit provided by the Mughal emperors. She has elaborated upon the patronage networks and their impacts on production of Indic literature. Truschke argues that Mughals cultivated ‘multicultural and multilingual imperial image’. However, the Mughal patronage was not meant to win over the Indian communities instead for ‘themselves’. Truschke (2016: 23) underlines the importance of Sanskrit as ‘a significant frontier within India that stands on its own as a consistent component of imperial court life and a political potent tradition for the Mughal rulers’. Truschke argues that unlike the generally accepted view Mughal cultural world was vibrant and not just confined to Islamicate and Persian Cultural tradition. Thus, according to Truschke (2016: 62), ‘Mughal power and sovereign imagination often operated entirely outside Islamicate culture and Persian literary production’.

These encounters not went uncontested in Akbar’s court. Badauni refused to write the preface of *Ramayana*. Badauni was critical of Abul Fazl’s preface of *Razmnama* which he believed was ‘diversification of Indo-Islamic knowledge’; he found

himself in an awkward position writing something without the praise of ‘Prophet Muhmmad’ (Truschkey 2016).

Power and Patronage

While exploring the relationship between power and patronage Truschke argues that the Mughal patronage to Sanskrit works not meant to ‘justify imperial rule to Brahmans, Hindu, or Jain populations’, rather ‘were far more complex’. ‘The Mughals were formulating the contours and boundaries of their imperial culture, and Sanskrit was a significant part of that process...Sanskrit thinkers, texts and knowledge systems participated in the ongoing project of defining and redefining Mughal power, particularly its cultural politics’ (Truschke 2016: 99-100). The equally important goal of the translation project as rightly commented upon by Abul Fazl was ‘to prompt conservative Muslims to reconsider their beliefs’ (Truschke 2016: 207). That fitted well into Akbar’s scheme of claiming *mujtahid* (interpreter of law) in a bid to drive away power from the hands of the powerful *ulama* (Islamic jurists). Truschke argues that in the networks of the literary engagements among the Mughal elites, Jain, Brahman and other literati Mughal royal court occupied the key position. ‘Many thinkers, both Persianate and Sanskrit, viewed the imperial court as a principal hub for negotiating the boundaries of their respective traditions. The Mughals bolstered this image by bestowing lavish patronage on people working in Persian, Sanskrit, Hindi, and other languages’ (Truschke 2016: 229). Further, ‘Mughals saw unique possibilities in the Sanskrit tradition to know India in historical, mythic, and empirical senses’ (Truschke 2016: 230). Truschke identified ‘multiculturalism’ as the key factor of Mughal imperial practices and thus they ‘so crafted their royal court as a space defined by multiple cultural frontiers’ (Truschke 2016: 231). It was Hindi that served the mediating tongue between Persian and Sanskrit intellectuals.

Check Your Progress-1

1) Mention Sheldon Pollock’s views on the vernacularization of Indic literary tradition.

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2) Do you agree with Allison Busch’s argument that Indian literati failed to appreciate the vibrant character of classical Hindi *riti* poetry?

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3) What relationship Audre Truschke sees between power and patronage? Analyse in the context of sub-Imperial patronage to Sanskrit literature.

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18.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF INDIC LITERARY TRADITIONS

The chief characteristic of vernacular literature was, largely it was the poetry and not the prose that remained the concern of the composers.

18.3.1 Political Will and the Vernacularisation

In elevating the vernacular status, political linkages and the patronage played a key role. Instead of cosmopolitan Sanskrit by the turn of the millennium inscriptional records were penned down in vernacular, thus vernacular assumed the 'expression of political will'. It was the patronage that Braj received from the Orchha household as well as from the Mughals and the elites that elevated the status of Braj on the path of 'cosmopolitan' status. Pollock, while undermining the role of religion in the process of vernacularization emphasises the importance of court in elevating the status of vernacular to a literary language. Pollock (February 1998: 31) argues, 'It is cosmopolitan elites...writing courtly poetry for their peers, who first turned Kannada (and Telugu, Malayalam, Braj, Assamese) into an instrument for literary and political expressivity...The grammatical and literary-normative will-to-unification of the language...is intimately connected with the political will-to-unification, since the power over language is power over the users of the language.' Inscriptions and royal orders were then inscribed in the vernacular, thus assuming the character of 'cosmopolitan vernacular', thus recreating the 'conditions of imperial culture at the level of the region'.

18.3.2 Circulation and Porous Boundaries

An important feature of medieval vernacular literature was its circulation, circulation of ideas, intellectuals as well as the dissemination of literature and texts across boundaries which led to the idea of poetic community, the *kavikul*, sharing the common shared heritage and genre. Cultural boundaries were fluid and porous; the flow of ideas and borrowings was a natural and common trend of the period. The agents of these literary circulations were courts, merchants/merchant centres, and the religious divines, particularly the bhakti saints. Merchants served links between the 'regional and supra-local' levels. This fluidity and circulation did not remain confined within the 'single' linguistic tradition but travelled widely across literary traditions. Vernaculars were particularly porous and borrowed liberally from both the Sanskrit and the Persian literary traditions. However, these borrowings were not just remained confined within a single religious community, instead, it travelled across 'socio-linguistic communities', it was peripatetic in nature. Keshavdas himself kept on moving from Orchha to Mughal patronage to the patronage of Rahim and later his son Iraj and then again joining the Orchha kingdom. 'No tradition was *sui generis* or isolated within its own boundaries' (Bruijn and Busch 2014: 4). Thus Braj *kavikul* was not just in dialogue with each other but also with their Sanskrit predecessors. 'The *kavikul*,... was a complex structure of cultural power... It was a mechanism by which writers transmitted cherished cultural traditions' (Busch 2014: 201).

Thus, textual fixity or textual purity was not a feature of the medieval vernacular tradition. Fluidity and mobility were such a strong component that scholars followed no standardized format and twisted and borrowed liberally from one and all traditions. There also no

linguistic barriers on the basis of caste and religion. Another important feature of this fluidity and popularity of the Hindawi texts was their rendition in Persian script. *Premakhyan*, written in Awadhi, but in the Persian script, borrowed liberally from both the Brahmanical and Islamic cultural traditions.

Mobility and Early Modernity

As discussed above mobility of ideas as a result of vibrant travels, particularly of the Vaishnavite saints and as well as those of the literati desiring to seek patronage, became the hallmark of the period between 1500-1800, thus viewed by the scholars as features of early modernity.

18.3.3 Hybridity

Hybridity and not the 'exclusivity' was the norm. Indic poets borrowed from both the Sanskritic tradition as well as Persianate cultural tradition. Nonetheless, they established their signature, distinct both from the Sanskrit and Persian traditions. The Krishna bhakta Braj poets Hit Harivansha (1502-1552?), the so-called founder of the Radhavallabha Sampradaya, Swami Haridas, Hariram Vyas, and Surdas derived inspiration from *Bhagavat Purana* and Sanskrit *alankarashastra* (aestheticised love).

Similarly, Tulasidas' *Ramcharitmanas* was largely an Awadhi version of the Sanskrit *Ramayana*. Equally representative are the works of Shaiva and Vaishnava Bhakti poetry across India which, deriving inspiration from *Bhagavata Purana*, represented *Bhagavata* versions/commentaries in their literary *genre*. 'A defining feature of the early modern landscape in India is the cross-pollination between Persianate and vernacular realms that occurred during the heyday of Mughal rule (1526–1857)' (Bruijn and Busch 2014: 7). Rahim's (Khan-i Khanan) *dohas* on ethics and morality appear to have derived heavily from Sanskrit *niti* tradition. His *Nagarshobha* (*doha*) and *Barvai Nayikabheda* (*barvai*) suggest the impact of court-poetry and linked to *sringara rasa* and suggest the influence of Awadhi and both loaded heavily with the Sanskrit and Persian vocabulary. It not only suggests Rahim's command over Persian and Sanskrit traditions at the same time help establish the linkages between the Persian and Hindawi tradition and thus bridges the 'gap between the Braj bhasha and Persian Poetry genre' (Lefebvre 2014: 97). At the same time, his *viraha* poetry (on separation of *gopis* from Krishna) appears to have been inspired by bhakti poetry. His *Madanashatak* is more tilted towards Khari Boli idioms; while his *Kheta Kautukam* (astronomical verses) is a mixture of Sanskrit and Persian.

Braj poets were also influenced greatly by Rajasthani (Prakrit) *raso* style, particularly their historical works represent great borrowings in terms of style from *raso* tradition. Keshavdas' *jahangirjaschandrika* was written in *raso* style in *chhappay* (sextets), the favourite metre of the *raso*.

The sheer presence of the community of poets can be gleaned from the presence of the idea of *kavikul*. It was very much present in Keshavadas's *Rasikpriya*. It indicates that the idea of 'solidarity' 'common concerns' 'common genre/idiom' was very much present at that time. It thus suggests, whether a poet was in the Mughal court or serving at Orchha or other Rajput courts this awareness of 'community' feeling of 'fellow' poets of the same *genre* was very much present among them. Thus, 'even when the poets never met one another they were bound together by a literary consensus about classical aesthetics which encouraged a certain uniformity even conformity of genres', argues Busch (2009:16).

Riti poets favoured *muktakas* (free-standing verse) suggests that they did succeed in developing their signature mark and established trans-regional literary tradition.

18.3.4 Vernacularisation of the Sanskrit Texts

Indic writers even attempted to produce vernacular versions of the Sanskrit texts. Hariram Vyas who enjoyed the patronage of Madhukar Shah of Orchha penned down the Braj version of the five chapters of *Bhagavat Purana* in his *Rasapanchadhyayi*. Vyas even skipped certain chapters of the Sanskrit text. Nand Das's (1570) Braj compositions also had heavy imprints of Sanskrit works and Sanskrit styles: he brought out the braj verses of *Rasamanjari* of Bhanudatta, *Rasapanchadhyayi* (five chapters of *Bhagavata Purana*), and *Prabodhacandrodaya* of Krishna Mishra; similarly, his *Manmanjari* and *Anekarthamanjari* (Braj dictionaries) followed the pattern of *Amarkosha*; while his *Panchadhyayi* was an imitation of Jayadev's *Gita Govind*. These were not mere translations of Sanskrit texts but they employed their styles, imprints into it. As A.K. Ramanujan puts it these translations were 'indexical translations' and not the word-by-word translations of modern writers. They reworked on *shastras*; modified themes and localized them in the specific Braj milieu, comments Busch (2014: 128). Further, the main objective of bringing in vernacular translations was to make available the Sanskrit texts to the vernacular readers. 'Brajbhasha appropriated Sanskrit space, rendering the classical language increasingly irrelevant' (Busch 2014: 129).

18.3.5 Bhakti Tradition and Vernacular Literature

In the rise of vernacular tradition bhakti, particularly Vaishnava *saguna* bhakti tradition played a key role. Braj and Gujarati traditions were largely centred around Krishna bhakti, while Awadhi centred around Rama tradition. Though Keshavdas compares Jahangir in his *Jahangirjaschandrika* to the Suryavanshi Raghu clan of Lord Rama. However, they did not 'embrace the idea of bhakti *rasa*' instead opted for *shringara rasa* (aestheticized love). However, Pollock questions the 'role' of bhakti in the process of 'vernacularization'. He argues in the case of Kannada that the 'vernacularization [was] not driven by religious imperatives, it was not in any meaningful sense popular... What is abundantly clear however in virtually every case we can historically capture... is the role of court in the vernacular turn' (Pollock February 1998: 30-31).

Check Your Progress-2

- 1) Discuss chief characteristics of vernacular literary traditions.
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- 2) What do you understand by circulation and porous boundaries? Explain in the context of vernacular literary tradition.
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- 3) Define hybridity in the context of vernacular literature.
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- 4) Do you agree that there was a subtle relationship between the rise of bhakti and the emergence of vernacular literary tradition.

18.4 SANSKRIT AND THE MUGHAL PATRONAGE

Sanskrit intellectuals' visits to Akbar's court began in the 1560s which further got accelerated in the 1570s particularly with the establishment of *Ibadatkhana*; such religious discussions continued throughout Akbar's period down to Jahangir's reign. Akbar sponsored Persian renditions of a number of Sanskrit texts in translations – *Ramayana* (1588) *Mahabharata* (*Razmnama*), *Harivamsha*, *Panchatantra*, *Katha Sarit Sagar*, etc. All this we have already taken up and discussed in **Unit 1**, therefore a discussion on the plethora of patronage given by the Mughal rulers to the Sanskrit translation project is intentionally kept out of the discussion of the present Unit. Here our focus would be more on the nature of patronage provided by the Mughals.

Truschke argues that Mughal cross-cultural interests were primarily confined to literature and grammar. To articulate official histories, royal proclamations, and documentation, etc. Mughals largely opted for Persian. One should remember neither did the Mughal elite nor his translators study Sanskrit. Sanskrit readers often briefed the translators in Hindawi the Sanskrit texts than the Persian translators used to translate that content into Persian. Thus the verbal reiteration of the Sanskrit texts was the common feature of the Mughal cultural world and vernaculars, particularly Brajbhasha served as the link.

Mughals themselves were not acquainted with Sanskrit. Nonetheless, Sanskrit texts were often presented to the Mughal emperors. However, the production seems largely for gifting purposes than for actual readings at the Mughal court.

Sanskrit scholars, both Jains and Brahmans, were active participants of Mughal court culture. Under Akbar, Jains were prominent participants (1560-1610), though their fortunes declined after Akbar; while Brahmans' presence (1560-1660) continued till Shah Jahan's period. Jain presence was exclusively the result of the Mughal occupation of Gujarat (1572-73) and predominantly scholars who received Mughal patronage were from the region of Gujarat. However, Brahmans' presence in the Mughal court was from across much wider geographical zones 6 from Bengal to down south.

The first recorded Sanskrit intellectual receiving the Mughal patronage was Mahapatra Krishnadasa of Odisha (1565) who composed *Gitaprankasha* followed by Narasimha, both originally hailed from the Gajapati court. Pundarikavithala joined Akbar's court through the patronage of Kachhawaha rulers Man Singh and Madho Singh; similarly, Govinda Bhatta, who was known as 'Akbar's Kalidas', entered Akbar's court from the court of Ramchandra of Rewa. Interestingly, Sanskrit

texts produced under Mughal patronage were not meant for the readership of the Mughal emperors as such. In 1569 under Akbar's patronage Padmasundara, a Jain scholar, composed *Akbarasahishringaradarpana* (Mirror of Erotic Passion for Shah Akbar). Another Jain intellectual associated with Akbar's court was Hiravijaya, who joined Akbar at Sikri in 1583. At Akbar's instructions Vihari Krishnadas composed the first Sanskrit-Persian dictionary, *Parasiprakasha* in the late sixteenth century thus attempted to establish a relationship between Sanskrit, Persian, and the Mughal empire. Krishnadasa projects Akbar as a 'very ethical' monarch.

Brahmans who entered Akbar's court were largely employed as translators of Sanskrit texts so also as astrologers. Akbar instituted a post of *jyotisharaja* (royal astrologer). Nilakantha held the position of *jyotisharaja* under Akbar.

Sanskrit received liberal patronage from the Rajput elites as well. Kachhawahas of Amber were great patrons. Raja Man Singh commissioned Sanskrit biographical work *Manprakasha* composed by Murari Das; while Harinath penned down commentaries of Dandin and Bhoja, *Kavyadarsha-marjana* and *Sarasvatikanthabharana-marjana*.

18.5 PATRONAGE TO INDIC LITERARY TRADITION

During the sixteenth century, vernacular literary tradition received liberal patronage at the court. However, these poets were performing multifaceted roles; they were not just the panegyrists, writing in praise of their patrons but they serve chiefly as counsels, were sent on diplomatic missions, performed liaison roles between various conflicting and local groups vis-à-vis the state. These poets and scholars not necessarily been the officials; many times they just served as counsel/courtier (*nadim*). Afif, was never been a noble in Firuz Shah Tughlaq's court, he was a *nadim*, a scholar counsellor. Keshavdas was not just the poet laureate of Orchha but also a friend, advisor, and *guru* to Orchha kings. Lahori and Kamboh refer to Sundar Kaviraj not as Braj poet but as a courtier and diplomat who was sent by Shahjahan to negotiate with recalcitrant Bundella chiefs Jujhar Singh and Bir Singh Deo. Khafi Khan records that during the war of succession Aurangzeb sent 'Kab' to negotiate with Maharaja Jaswant Singh of Marwar.

Here we would be confining our discussion to the sixteenth century. Though a number of nobles-cum-scholar-poets adorned the courts of Jahangir, Shahjahan, and regional courts. Sundar Kaviraj was a poet laureate in the court of Shahjahan. However, all this would form part of a discussion in our next course **BHIC-112**.

In the process of expansion and consolidation, Mughal court facilitated the exchange of ideas and cultures across regions. 'Poets and poems regularly moved between regional courts and the imperial capitals, fostering a shared Mughal and Rajput [regional] courtly ethos' (Busch 2014: 193). Further, one of the important reasons for the growth of Indic literature was 'acculturation' of Mughal rulers to Indian milieu. Mughal court gradually became more and more Indianised, particularly from Akbar's period onwards who was more interested in the local environment, unlike his father and grandfather who situated themselves more in the Central Asian environment.

Being born to Rajput mothers, Hindawi was literally the mother tongue of both Jahangir and Shahjahan. Thus knowledge of Hindawi of the Mughal emperors is beyond doubt. It is reported that Keshav himself had presented his poems to Jahangir. Jahangir mentions his brother Daniyal as a lover of Indian singing and composed poems in the 'language of the people'. *Bhramargita* popularised by Surdas and Nanddas during Akbar's period received much appreciation of Jahangir.

18.5.1 Patronage at the Mughal Court

Mughals shared a 'multi-lingual and multi-literary realm'. Courts were not just the centres of political activities but cultural activities also centred around them. Braj texts developed under the Mughal patronage hardly survive. There is also almost complete silence of Persian writers on the presence of Braj poets at the Mughal courts. Thus to glean information on the presence and importance of Braj in the Mughal court we have to rely on stray references. It is said that Humayun did sponsor the sons of the Hindawi musicians. Even Islam Shah Sur's court was adorned with a number of vernacular poets including the Braj poet Narhari, who later reported to have joined Akbar's court. Avadhi poets Manjhan of *Madhumalati* (1545) fame and Afghan noble Muhammad Farmuli who composed in Avadhi, adorned Islam Shah Sur's court. However, Avadhi showed decline towards the end of the sixteenth century giving way to Braj.

Akbar (1556-1605) was a great patron of literati transcending religious and linguistic boundaries. Abul Fazl in Book 4 of his *Ain-i Akbari* dedicates one full section on *Danish-i Hindustan* (Learning of India). Abul Fazl intended that Persianate culture should incorporate and integrate Sanskrit knowledge systems thus aimed to alter the nature of the Indo-Persian knowledge system. The chief aim of inducting Sanskrit ideas to Persian intellectuals was to expose Persian literati to Sanskritic traditions. Akbar encouraged Sanskrit-based astronomy and calculations. He even created a separate post of *vyotishacharya* (Indian astrologer) and reported to have relied upon Indian horoscopes.

Akbar is reported to have sponsored a number of rhetorics in Braj. Abul Fazl's comment that 'The inspired nature of His Majesty is strongly drawn to composing poetry in Hindi and Persian, and he exhibits a subtle understanding of the finest points of literary conceits' (Busch 135), clearly suggests Akbar's knowledge of Braj and inclination towards Hindawi poetry, even his own compositions. We do not find any surviving works commissioned by Akbar. The only Akbar commissioned work survived to date is Jain Padmasundara's *Akbarshahishringaradarpana* (1569), a Sanskrit work on Indian poetics. However, *riti* poetry written in Braj was mainly court poetry. Braj received new heights under the Mughal court patronage under Akbar (1556-1605). A faint hint of it one can find in Abul Fazl's discussion. Braj *riti* poetry was largely written in *nayikabheda* in *shringara rasa*. Abul Fazl in his section on literature in the *Ain-i Akbari* mentions *nayikabheda*; which faintly suggests, could be attributed to Braj influence. Busch looks emergence of *riti* literature as 'vernacular revival of Sanskrit *kavya* tradition'. Akbar was an ardent lover of *dhrupad*, which were basically composed in Braj and in Akbar's court Tansen was its greatest exponent. We hear of Vrind and Sundar but hardly anything about them survive. *Chaurasi Vaishnavan ki Varta*, a Braj text composed around 1584, mentions Akbar's visit to Surdas in Mathura and his cold response. Without going into the 'truth' of the story, it does suggest that there seems great receptivity of Brajbhasha at the Mughal court and their resistance to being enamoured by Mughal grandeur. *Riti* texts of Karnes, *Karnabharan*, *Shrutibhushan*, and *Bhupbhushan*, though do not survive but are frequently mentioned in Hindawi literature. Another Braj poet of Akbar's court was Manohar Kachhawaha about whom Jahangir refers but unfortunately we know only his Persian compositions. Among the Hindawi poets, Gang (Braj poet) is mentioned by Bhikharidas among one of the two *sardars* (stalwarts) Hindawi poets, other named by him was Tulsi (Avadhi). We do not know anything about Gang's antecedents. Strangely, he was in close contact with the Mughal court. None of the Persian text mentions him. Gang interestingly did not compose *prabandhas* instead wrote *muktak* poems which are the combination of bhakti,

shringara, and *nayaikabheda* during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

Thus distinctly, though there is an almost complete absence of information on Mughal court patronage to vernacular literary traditions, there are strong stray references of the presence of Braj poetry in the Mughal court.

There was cultural transmission as a result of vernacular interactions with the Imperial court and Persianate cultural traditions. One can look similarities between the chroniclers' accounts and the Indic *charitas*. Similarly, Braj *dhrupad* and Persian *rubai* both shared almost similar lyrical *genres*. Similarly, Persian *sarapa* (head to toe) and *nakhashikh* (head to toe) descriptions shared much in common. Rahim's *Nagarshobha* was inspired by the Persian genre of *Shahrashob*; it was analogous to *nagara varnana* (description of a city) of Sanskrit and Indic tradition (Busch 2014: 195-196).

18.5.2 Patronage at the Sub-Imperial Level

Vernaculars received special patronage at the hands of the Mughal nobility. In this endeavour, Akbar's step-son and leading noble Abdul Rahim Khan-i Khanan stands out, who not only patronised 'Hindawi' but also himself composed verses both in Avadhi and Brajbhasha and was a writer of great repute in 'Hindawi'. He wrote largely in *muktak* genre like Gang. Bhikharidas in his *Kavinirnay* (1746) claims Rahim as an established poet of Brajbhasha. Rahim primarily chose to write in *doha* and *barvai* formats. Khan-i Khanan was a literary genius and an ardent lover of books collection. He was a scholar of repute of just not Persian but also of Arabic, Sanskrit and Hindawi; even at the request of Akbar, he did learn Portuguese. He is reported to have possessed the biggest library at the sub-regional level. He himself wrote in Hindawi with the pen name 'Rahim' evince his genius. His court in the Deccan not only attracted scholars from across India but also from central Asia and Persia. *Maasir-i Rahimi* informs that he patronised a number of Hindawi poets: Alaqli, Ban, Gang, Harinath, Jada, Lakshminarayana, Mandan, Mukund, Narhari, Prasiddh, Santa Kavi, and Tara. Keshavdas and Gang eulogised Khan-i Khanan in their poems. Keshavdas has compared Khan-i Khanan with Hanuman; as Hanuman was dutiful to Rama so was Khan-i Khanan towards Akbar. Gang equally praised Khan-i Khanan's qualities of alms-giving. Gang also seems to have received the patronage of Khan-i Khanan. He composed a number of eulogies (*prashastis*) in Rahim's honour. Khan-i Khanan's son Shahnawaz Iraj Khan also seems to be a great patron of Brajbhasha poets. The famous historical work of Keshavdas *Jahangirjaschandrika* was probably patronised by Iraj Khan.

Among other prominent courtiers of Akbar who themselves composed verses/prose in Brajbhasha were Birbal (d. 1586) and Tansen (d. 1586? 1589?). Birbal wrote with *takhallus* (pen name) 'Brahma' and it is reported that Akbar adorned Birbal (d. 1586) with the title *Kaviraj* for his Brajbhasha compositions. Abul Fazl's brother Faizi and Todar Mal are also reported to have composed in Brajbhasha. Shahnawaz Khan mentions Zain Khan Koka's (d. 1601) love for Hindawi *ragas* and *kavitts* (*riti* metres) suggests Mughal noble's inclination for vernacular literature during Akbar's period.

Similarly, Akho (Akha Bhagat; circa 1615 to 1674 or 1600 to 1655), who was the mint master under Jahangir, studied Vedanta at Banaras and wrote a simplified version of the Vedantic philosophy in the language of the people. Bihari Lal, was another great poet of 'Hindawi' who enjoyed the patronage of Mirza Raja Jai Singh, a Kachhawaha Rajput, noble of Shahjahan and Aurangzeb. A detailed account of them is

provided in our Course **BHIC 112**. Thus, a large number of Mughal nobles were not only themselves poets of repute, but also great patrons of poets and writers.

Check Your Progress-3

- 1) Do you agree that unlike the common beliefs Mughals provided liberal patronage to Sanskrit literary tradition?

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- 2) Discuss the nature of patronage received by vernacular literary traditions at sub-Imperial level.

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18.6 VERNACULAR LITERARY TRADITION

During the medieval period, main dialects of Hindawi (modern Hindi) were: Avadhi (*Khari Boli*), Brajbhasha, Rajasthani, Maithili, Bhojpuri, Malwai, etc. The origin of Hindawi can be seen in the evolution of Apabhramsha during the 7-10th centuries. Linguists divide the earliest period of the development of Hindawi as *Virgatha Kala* (age of heroic poetry). The earliest of such works, as we have discussed in **BHIC 107** is *raso* literature: *Prithviraja Raso*, *Hammira Raso*, etc. It was followed by *Bhakti Kala* (age of bhakti poetry) which lasted up to 16-17th centuries, followed by *Riti Kala* (age of poetry of high style/method) which began in the 16th century and reached its peak in the seventeenth century.

18.6.1 Vernacular Literary Tradition: Awadhi

Khari Boli/Avadhi/Magadhi-Prakrit developed during the 15-16th centuries. Awadhi first arose into prominence under the patronage of sufis who composed *premakhyan* literature (in Persian script and Avadhi language) in Avadhi. The earliest of this in this series (tradition goes up to the early nineteenth century) is Mulla Daud’s *Chandayan* (1379), followed by *Mrigavati* (Qutban; 1503), *Padmavat* (Jayasi; 1540), *Madhumalati* (Shaikh Manjhan; 1545), etc. Phukan has commented that ‘Indeed, one explanation for the popularity of Awadhi texts among the Mughal elite is that they were a medium for intense emotional experience and thus prized for their ability to embody Sufi values like *zawq* (taste/epiphany), *maʿrifat* (spiritual insight), *jazb* (emotion), and *%aʿiqat* (truth perception)’ (Phukan in Busch 2014: 202).

While bhakti poetry is written in Awadhi largely carried the Rama bhakti tradition, Brajbhasha compositions mainly centred around Krishna bhakti. Both, the poet-laureates, Tulsi and Surdas, in a sense translated the *Ramayana* (Tulsi; in Awadhi) and *Bhagavata Purana* (Surdas; in Brajbhasha).

The greatest exponent of Avadhi was Gosvami Tulsidas (1532?-1623?). He composed his masterpiece *Ramacharitanamasa* in 1574. Tulsidas, a *Smarta*

Vaishnavite, evoked Rama bhakti tradition. Around Lord Rama, he weaved and idealized kingship and human qualities (*ramarajya*, *dharma*, and *niti*) which Lord Rama embodied. He popularized the Rama bhakti tradition among the ‘common’ masses. Mahatma Gandhi calls it the ‘greatest book of all devotional literature’. Philip Lutgendorf applauds it as the ‘living sum of Indian culture’. The popularity of *Ramacharitamansa* was the prime factor in pushing back the popularity of the Krishna cult in north India. Tulsidas is reported to have written eleven other works: *Vinaya Patrika*, *Kavitavali*, *Krishna Gitavali*, *Janakimangal*, *Parvatimangal*, *Barvai Ramayana*, etc. Tulsi’s writings inspired many later writers, particularly, Agradas and Nabhadras who composed *Bhaktamala*, a biographical account of the Vaishnava saints.

In the seventeenth century, ‘Brajbhasha does begin to eclipse Awadhi as a literary language by late in Akbar’s Period’. ‘Perhaps the Mughals were deliberately turning away from Awadhi, the earlier Indo-Muslim literary vernacular, because it had been so assiduously cultivated at the courts of their Afghan rivals and thus was too readily associated with a competing political formation’, argues Busch (2014: 187).

18.6.2 Vernacular Literary Tradition: Brajbhasha

Mirza Khan (late 17th century) praises Brajbhasha as *afshah-yi zabanha* (most eloquent of all languages) and Faqirullah calls it *afshatarin zaban* (most eloquent language). Bhakti saints exploited Brajbhasha as the vehicle of transmission. Besides, Brajbhasha received liberal patronage at the sub-regional levels under the aegis of Rajputs and other Hindu Jain elites and also at various mercantile centres. The popularity of Brajbhasha created a ‘new reading public’ beyond the bounds of ‘Imperial’ ‘Persian’ and ‘Sanskritic’ traditions.

In the sixteenth century, one finds dramatic rise of Braj Krishna bhakta poets in and around Mathura and Vrindavan – Hit Harivansha, Swami Haridas, Hariram Vyas, and Surdas. Among the Brajbhasha tradition, poet laureate Surdas is the towering figure. A disciple of Vallabhacharya, Surdas (c.1503-1563) was one of the jewels of *ashtachhap* poets. Surdas, a Krishna bhakt, wrote independent of the royal patronage. Vaishnava *Vartas* of Vallabha *Sampradaya* mention Akbar’s fondness for Surdas. Gokulnath in his *Chaurasi Vaishnavan ki Varta* (c. 1640) narrates the meeting of Akbar with Surdas at Mathura. Surdas is reported to have refused Akbar’s invitation to join his court entourage. In the list of singers given in the *Ain-i Akbari* by Abul Fazl Sur’s name appears. His celebrated work is *Sursagar*. The earliest recession of the text belongs to as early as 1582 from the Jaipur collection which contains 297 *padas* which swells to 5000 by the twentieth century. Among his various styles, *Bhramaragit* (bee-messenger) style of Sur’s *padas* stands out.

Clearly, the Mughal elites shared distinct charm with Braj poetry. By the seventeenth century, Braj practically replaced Sanskrit and served as a link language while translating the Sanskrit texts, what Truschkey calls it a ‘spoken vernacular in the Mughal Imperium’. Even the Mughal ruling elite, including the Mughal emperors from Akbar’s period onwards, were conversant in Hindawi (Braj).

Orchha and the Patronage of the Vernacular Literary Tradition

The Bundela kingdom of Orchha emerged as a prominent centre of vernacular literary tradition, particularly that of the Brajbhasha. Brajbhasha flourished particularly under

the courtly patronage of Orchha rulers. Kriparam and Hariram Vyas enjoyed the patronage of the Bundela rulers. Kriparam's *Hittarangini* (1541) is considered to be the earliest *ritigranth*. It is written in *nayikabheda* genre and evokes Vaishnava ethos. Hariram Vyas received the patronage of Orchha ruler Madhukar Shah. It received a new height under the court poet Keshavdas (1555-1717) in the court of Bundela rulers of Orchha. Keshavdas's compositions mark the zenith of Brajbhasha poetry tradition. The importance of Keshavdas can be gauged from the fact that Keshavdas shared the stage among the prominent poetical Sanskrit legendary scholars Dhananjaya, Mammala, and Bhanudatta. The 'riti' poetry of which Keshavdas was one of the most prominent poets was basically 'court poetry'. Keshavdas belonged to a distinguished family of Pandits whose ancestors served Tomar and Gwalior kings and his grandfather enjoyed the patronage of the founder of the Orchha kingdom Rudra Pratap (1501-31); while his father served Madhukar Shah (1554-1592) of Orchha. Keshavdas composed eight works (*prabandhas*). His early work *Ratnabavani* was a historical treatise. However, during 1591-1602 Keshavdas emerged more as a literary theorist. During this phase Raja Indrajit, the fifth son of Madhukar Shah and his brother Bir Singh Deo Bundela were Keshav's patrons. Keshav's *Kavipriya* was written in praise of Raja Indrajit. Indrajit himself wrote Braj commentary on Bhartrihari. He is reported to have composed poems under the pen name Chap or 'Dhiraj Narind'. His *Rasikpriya* (1591; Handbook of Poetry), *Kavipriya* (1601; handbook of Poets); and *Chhandamala* (1602; Guide to Meters) were *ritigrantha* (books of methods) that marks a new trend of handbook and rhetoric tradition in vernacular and sets in the defining features of *riti* literature.

Braj Beyond Braj

Braj widened its wings what Allison Busch calls 'Braj Beyond Braj'. Vaishnava saints through their vast travels not only attempted to spread their doctrines and ideas and achieved a popular base across regions, this in turn enriched the vernaculars in which they spread their ideas. This helped vernaculars crossing local boundaries and acquiring a wider base. *Adi Granth*, the Sikh scripture, compiled in 1604 by Guru Arjan contains a number of Braj poetic compositions of Vaishnava saints.

As we have mentioned above that the idea of *kavikul* was very much present among the poet community. What 'Braj *kavikul*' shared was: biographies of patrons; Radha-Krishna love; *Alankara Shastra* (literary theory; *nayikabheda*, etc.). As they were aware of their contemporary peers so were also in touch with their Sanskrit forefathers.

Braj received patronage and extended its wings in Rajasthan (Galta and Fatehpur). Nizam Shahis of Ahmadnagar were equally patrons of Indic literary tradition. Bhanudatta's *Rasamanjari* (c. 1550) was commissioned by Nizam Shah of Ahmadnagar.

18.6.3 Other Indic Literary Traditions

Gujarati

Under the influence of Vaishnav bhakti movement, particularly Krishna bhakti sect of Sri Chaitnya, Gujarati literature also flourished. Vallabhacharya's son Vitthala got settled down in Gujarat and spread Krishna bhakti in Gujarat. Gopaldas, grandson of Vallabhacharya wrote *Vallabhakhyan* in Gujarati in c. 1570.

The towering figure during our period was Narsimha (Narsi) Mehta (c. 1500-1580) who is considered the father of Gujarati poetry (*Adi Kavi*). Narsimha Mehta

exercised influence on almost all later Gujarati poets. He wrote in *akhyān* (pioneer among them is *Sudamācharita*, written in *Jhulna* metre) and *prabhātiya* (morning devotional songs) genres. His major compositions are: *Govinda Gamana*, *Surata Sangrama*, *Shringaramala*. The earliest manuscript of his compositions is dated 1612. His compositions are compiled in *Rasa-Sahasta-padi* and *Chaturis* (depicted *lilas* of Krishna) are basically couched in *Shringara rasa*. Mandana brought out in Gujarati *Prabodha Battisi*, *Ramayana*, and *Rukamangada Katha*. Bhalana (1434-1514) brought out Bana's *Kadambari* in Gujarati. He is known for his *akhyān* style. He also composed *Dasam Skandha*, *Nalakhyaṇa*, *Ramabala Charita*, and *Chandi Akhyān*.

Sufi writer Khub Muhammad Chishti's (1539-1615) *Chhanda Chhandan* and *Bhavo-Bhed* texts (generally touches *vatsalya* and *madhurya bhav*) were composed in Gujarati in quasi-*riti* genre.

Bengali

Bengali language and literature flourished with Sri Chaitanya. Brindabandas wrote *Chaitanya Bhagavata/Chaitanya Mangal* in Bengali. *Chaitanya Charitamrita* of Krishnadas Kaviraj laid the philosophical foundation of Gaudiya Vaishnavism. Other works of importance composed in Bengali are *Gouranga Vijaya* by Chudamanidas and Jayananda and Lochandas' *Chaitanya Mangal*. Lochandas introduced new genre *dhamali* dealing exclusively on Krishna-gopi *lilas*. *Padavalis* incorporated *rasa* genre of Sanskrit and were based on Radha-Krishna *rasa-lilas* in *Vrindaban Lila*.

In Bengal another genre of *Mangal Kavya* emerged during this period which largely propagated the local cult deities 6 Chandi, Manasa, Dharma and also *Puranic* Gods Shiva and Vishnu. *Mangal Kavyas* largely derived their narratives from *Puranas*. In *Dharma-Mangala* merged the Buddhist *dharma* with the *Puranic* Narayana and Muslim *Pir* emerged as Satyapir or Satyanarayana.

A number of Muslim compositions in Bengal were penned down. Notable among them was Daulat Qazi of Arakan who composed *Laur-Chandani* or *Mayna Sati*. It is said that *Laur-Chandani* was completed later by Alaol, son of a Muslim governor of Lower Bengal. He also rendered Bengali version of *Padmavat*, *Saifulmulkbanduijjamal* and also two works of Nizami. Sabire wrote a version of the *Vidya Sundar* while Saiyyid Sultan composed *Resularjay* which included some Hindu gods as well. His two disciples composed *Satya Kali Vivadsambad*.

Assamese

In Assam Vaishnavism flourished under the influence of Shankardeva (1449-1560). His disciple Madhavadas composed *Bhakti Ratnavali* which consists of a number of *baragits* depicting the life of Krishna in Vrindavan and his childhood. Rama Rarasvati translated *Mahabharata* into Assamese for his patron king of Cooch Bihar. Similarly, based on *Bhagavata* and *Vishnu Puranas* Gopal Chandra Dvija composed the narrative of Krishna in Assamese.

Oriya

During the sixteenth century Oriya literature was still heavily influenced by Sanskrit. *Kavyas* were composed on *Puranic* themes. Oriya literature of our period was greatly influenced by Vaishnava movement of Sri Chaitanya. In the 16th century Dharanidhara

Mishra, Brindavan Das (*Rasabharidhi*) and Trilochan Das (*Govinda Gita*) translated Jayadeva's *Gita Govinda* into Oriya.

Check Your Progress-4

- 1) Examine the growth of Awadhi during the sixteenth century.

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- 2) Write briefly the patronage provided by the Orchha rulers to brajbhasha.

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- 3) Explain the relationship between the rise of the Chaitanya sect and the growth of Bengali literature.

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18.7 SUMMARY

Sheldon Pollock argues that by the turn of the millennium there was a definite decline of the 'cosmopolitan' Sanskrit and the period is marked by the vernacularisation of the literary culture. However, Audrey Truschke argues that not only Sanskrit continued to flourish and received Imperial and sub-Imperial patronage till the seventeenth century, when ultimately Braj assumed the 'cosmopolitan' character and a link language for the Persian literati. Allison Busch's work on Brajbhasha literature suggests that the Brajbhasha started emerging into prominence during the sixteenth century and soon it developed in the form of a vernacular 'cosmopolis' and assumed the status of a 'literary language'.

The boundaries of the vernacular literary traditions were often porous and circulated across the confined borders. The vernacular scholars attempted not only the translation of the Sanskrit texts instead they attempted at the vernacularisation of the Sanskrit texts and in that effort succeeded in establishing their distinct *genres*. Awadhi and Brajbhasha were among the most prominent of the vernacular languages that succeeded in developing their distinct styles and thus assumed the status of a 'cosmopolitan' literary tradition.

18.8 KEYWORDS

Akhyan

Lit. tell/narrate. These are religious instructions in a story form that combines the singing and acting; popularised by poet laureate Narsimha Mehta in Gujarat

Aalkara Shastra

A manual of rhetoric

<i>Bargits/Borgeet</i>	Lit. 'song celestial'. It is predominantly a collection of lyrical songs composed by Shankardeva and Madhavadeva
<i>Charitas</i>	Biographies
<i>Kavikul</i>	Poetic community having shared/common heritage and <i>genre</i>
<i>Muktak</i>	Freestanding poems; a <i>muktak</i> is generally not part of a larger narrative
<i>Nagara Shobha/ Nagara Varnana</i>	Description of a city
<i>Nayikabheda</i>	Catalogue of female characters
<i>Padavali</i>	Literally 'foot'; versified compositions, eulogising the Lord; associated with bhakti literature
<i>Prabhatiya</i>	Morning devotional songs
<i>Raso</i>	Heroic ballads
<i>Riti (Kavya)</i>	Literally poetry of method; poetry in which primary concepts are defined and explained from the Sanskrit rhetoric (<i>rasa</i> [emotion]), <i>nayikabheda</i> (categories of female characters), <i>alankara</i> (figures of speech). Poets attempted to transform Sanskrit poetic <i>genres</i> into vernacular literary culture. In <i>riti</i> poetry there is emphatic emphasis on <i>shringara</i> (erotic poetry)
<i>Shaharashob</i>	Literally a poem of a ruined city; satirical poem narrating the description of the city exposing the social and political malaise of the period
<i>Shringara Rasa</i>	Erotic emotions/aestheticized love
<i>Smarta</i>	Orthodox vaishnavites; its members were composed of twice born (initiated upper class)
<i>Watan-jagirs</i>	<i>Jagirs</i> assigned to respective chieftains in their homeland

18.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress-1

1. See Sub-section 18.2.1
2. See Sub-section 18.2.2
3. See Sub-section 18.2.3

Check Your Progress-2

1. See Section 18.3
2. See Sub-section 18.3.2
3. See Sub-section 18.3.3
4. See Sub-section 18.3.5

Check Your Progress-3

1. See Section 18.5.1
2. See Sub-section 18.5.2

Check Your Progress-4

1. See Section 18.6.1
2. See Sub-section 18.6.2
3. See Sub-section 18.6.3

18.10 SUGGESTED READINGS

Bruijn, Thomas de and Allison Busch, (ed.) (2014) *Culture and Circulation Literature in Motion in Early Modern India* (Leiden: Brill).

Busch, Allison, (2014) 'Poetry in Motion: Literary Circulation in Mughal India', in Bruijn, Thomas de and Allison Busch, (ed.) (2014) *Culture and Circulation Literature in Motion in Early Modern India* (Leiden: Brill).

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Pollock, Sheldon, (February, 1998) 'The Cosmopolitan Vernacular', *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 57, No. 1, pp. 6-37.

Truschkey, Audery, (2016) *Culture of Encounters: Sanskrit at the Mughal Court* (Gurgaon: Penguin Books).

18.11 INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEO RECOMMENDATIONS

Language and Literature Under The Mughals - I
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qa8L7LrgcRo>

Language and Literature Under The Mughals - II

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4OdO3XDxqlk>

Patronage of Literary
Culture

Role of Hindustani and Its Literary Version: Rekhta Under the Mughals

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eG4YxRh0k40>

