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CONTRIBUTIONS OF LITERATURE- DURING THE PERIOD OF MOGHAL DYNASTY

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Abstract:

There was tremendous literary activity during the Mughal period, because with the return of a stable and prosperous empire. There was once again patronage for the literary works. Languages like Persian, Sanskrit, Hindi and Urdu saw tremendous creative activity as did many vernacular languages. The Mughal Emperors, themselves interested in literature, encouraged literary contributions. Vast number of works were written during the period of the Mughals.

KEYWORDS–

Contributions of literature , Moghal Dynasty , literary contributions.

LITERATURE OF MUGHAL PERIOD

The Mughal Period was an period of growth of literature in India. The Indian Literature witnessed the golden age during the Mughal Rule.

PERSIAN LITERATURE IN MUGHAL PERIOD

The Persian Literature flourished during Mughal Period. The tolerant and benevolent policy of Mughal Emperor Akbar and his patronage of learning, coupled with internal peace and prosperity and freedom from foreign danger, made possible the conditions in which art and literature flourished. It is no surprise, therefore, that volumes of Persian literature were produced by scholars of outstanding ability. Persian literature may be classified under two heads, namely,

1. Original compositions and
2. Translations.

Under the first category letters and poetry occupied a prominent place. It was a fashion with writers in that age to leave behind collections of letters which were considered to be models of literary style.

Shaikh Abu-al-Fazal-ibn Mubarak, also known as Abul-Fazl, was an extremely talented personality of Literature. His contribution towards literature of Mughal period is outstanding. Abul Fazl's letters known as Insha-i-Abul Fazl, have been printed by the Nawal Kishore Press, Lucknow. They were regarded as models of epistolary composition and were imitated by scholars throughout the Mughal period. Even the puritan emperor Aurangzeb, who condemned Abul Fail as a heretic, commended the latter's style to his sons. Many other collections from the pen of other distinguished essayists have come down to us and some of them are likely to yield material for a cultural history of the period.

Persian poetry occupied the next place. In fact, poetry was, in medieval age, the most popular

vehicle of literary expression and Muslims, both Indian and foreign, were particularly fond of it. It served the Persians and the Mughals as an easy vehicle to give expression to their natural love of beauty. There were many in Akbar's days that practiced it as a regular profession, while others resorted to it as a means of relaxation, or in pursuit of culture. Owing to the patronage extended to poetry, thousands of poets, both Indians and foreigners, flocked to Akbar's court.

The Ain-i-Akbari gives the names of fifty-nine topmost Persian poets who had been patronized by Akbar. There were fifteen others who, too, were supposed to belong to the first category had sent their poems to Akbar from various places in Persia. Abul Fazl gives extracts from the poetic compositions of the fifty-nine best poets of Persia. The most important of them was his own elder brother Abul Faizi. He is supposed to rank with Amir Khusrau and Amir Hasan Dehlvi, and was, thus, one of the three Indian poets of Persian whose works were read outside India.

Indian scholars appreciate the literary works of Mughal Period. The poets of the Mughal period writing in Persian paid more attention to their familiar theme, which, in most cases was love.

Many authors of Persian Literature in India produced a commentary of the Quran. Some of these commentaries possess independent literary value. The most important achievement of the Mughal age was translation into Persian of first-rate works of Sanskrit, Arabic, Turki and Greek. Akbar wanted to bring about a fusion of the Hindu and Muslim cultures and in order to provide a common literature to the intelligentsia of the land, established at his court a translation department in which were employed high-ranking scholars of Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian. The department functioned under his personal supervision.

- The Tuzk-e-Babri, or the memoirs of Babur, were translated into Persian by Mirza Abdul Rahim Khan Khana.
- Abul Fazl translated into Persian many outstanding Sanskrit works, such as, the Kishan Joshi, the Ganga Dhar, the Mahesh, the Mahanand and others.
- The Mahabharata, Ramayana, Atharva Veda, Lilawati, Rajatarangini was translated into Persian.
- Abul Fazl translated the Panch Tantra (Anwar-i-Sahili) and Faizi the story of Nal-Damayanti into Persian.

Among original compositions in Persian, historical literature easily occupied the first place. Akbar's inordinate love of history and patronage of historians became responsible for the production of many chronicles describing not only the events of the reign, but also the past history of the country. Among the notable works may be mentioned

- ✦ Abul Fazl's Akbarnama and the Ain-i-Akbari,
- ✦ Nizam-ud-Din Ahmad's Tabaqat-i-Akbari,
- ✦ Gulbadan Begum's Humayun-Nama and
- ✦ Jauhar's Tazkiratul-Waqiat.

History of 1000 years of Islam was composed and known as the Tarikh-i-Alfi.

HINDU POETRY DURING MUGHAL PERIOD

The Mughal period was the golden period for Hindi Poetry. The influence exercised by his glorious and victorious reign, his well-known preference for Hindu thought and mode of life, together with his policy of complete religious toleration and recognition of merit, combined with peace, both internal and external, engendered a bracing atmosphere for the development of thought and literature. The result was that many first rate Hindu composers such as Tulsi Das, Sur Das, Abdur Rahim Khan Khana, Ras Khan and Birbal.

The first place among the poets of the age, both Hindu and Persian, belongs to Tulsi Das who, however, was not known to Akbar personally. He spent most part of his life at Banaras, and produced twenty-five works of high standard, the most well-known among them being the heroic poem, Ramcharitmanas, popularly known as the Ramayana. The epic is divided into seven books, describing the life of Shri Ram Chandra, the king of Ayodhya, who is looked upon by the Hindus as an incarnation of God. The next important literary work of Tulsi Das is Vinaya Patrika which consists of hymns or songs or prayers. The Ramayana is a masterpiece and that Tulsi Das was a great genius. Tulsi Das's style varies with the subject and his characters, each of whom has a well-defined personality, live and move with all the dignity of a heroic age. Tulsi Das is one of the most important talented figure in the whole of Indian Literature.

The next important Hindi poet was Sur Das who was even more prolific a writer than Tulsi Das. He is particularly known as the author of Sur Sagar and of many songs. No other poet of Hindi, before or after him, had a greater knowledge of child psychology than Sur Das. Some critics looked upon him as even greater than Tulsi Das. Probably he was attached to Akbar's court and was popularly known as the "blind bard of Agra". His father Ram Das was also a court poet of Akbar. Many other Hindi poets graced Akbar's court.

Akbar's reign was also marked by the advent of Muslim poets in the field of Hindi literature and poetry. In fact, some Muslim poets interpreted Indian culture so successfully that if their names were to be omitted from their composition, it would be indistinguishable from that of the Hindu scholars and poets. In this respect the name of Abdul Rahim Khan Khana stands pre-eminent. Besides being a master of Persian, Arabic and Turki he was also a first-rate scholar of Sanskrit and a poet of Hindi and Rajasthani. Several hundred verses from his pen have come down to us and are given an honored place in our poetical selections. In fact, no history of Hindi poetry can be complete without reference to the contribution of that versatile genius. He was a friend of Tulsi Das and had correspondence with him. Another Muslim poet of Hindi was Ras Khan, who was a devotee of Lord Krishna and an author of a large number of first-rate poems which depict Shri Krishna's life in the woods of Vrindaban. Many other courtiers of Akbar, such as, Birbal, Man Singh, Todar Mal and others, were lovers of Hindi poetry. Akbar himself loved Hindi poetry. He is even stated to have composed some verses in that language. It is not, therefore, surprising that Hindi poetry made a remarkable progress during his reign.

The most important feature of the Mughal age was that literary activities were not confined to the court and the nobles. It was essentially a movement of the people, and a large number of scholars and poets of Hindi were found in the countryside and patronized mainly by local landlords and well-to-do public. One has to turn to the pages of Mishra Bandhu Vinod and Ram Chandra Shukla's Hindi Sahitya ka Itihas to appreciate the spirit of the age which was responsible for the golden period of Hindi poetry.

CONCLUSION:

The Persian Literature flourished during Mughal Period. His contribution towards literature of Mughal period is outstanding. Abul Fazl's letters known as Insha-i-Abul Fazl, have been printed by the Nawal Kishore Press, Lucknow. Akbar wanted to bring about a fusion of the Hindu and Muslim cultures and in order to provide a common literature to the intelligensia of the land, established at his court a translation department in which were employed high-ranking scholars of Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian. The first place among the poets of the age, both Hindu and Persian, belongs to Tulsi Das who, however, was not known to Akbar personally.

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