Hindi Literature

• Literature is an integral part of culture
• Provides unparalleled aesthetic pleasure
• Preserver of cultural heritage
• Mirror of contemporary times
• Yardstick of cultural development
• Scholars are divided in their opinion regarding the exact beginning of literary writings in Hindi language. Following opinions are available in this regard.

1. According to Acharya Ramachandra Shukla, 1050 A.D can be taken as the beginning of Hindi literature.

2. Rahul Sankrityayan has considered the literary creations in Apbhransh as the creations in Hindi language and according to him; Swayambhu [8th century] was the first poet in Hindi.

3. Dr. Kashi Prasad Jaisval considered Siddha Sarhapa as the first major writer in Hindi.
Age Division in Hindi Literature

According to Ramchandra Shukla, age divisions are:

- Aadikaal (Veergatha Kaal) 1050A.D-1375A.D
- Early Medieval Period (Bhakti Kaal) 1375A.D-1700
- Later Medieval Period (Reeti Kaal) 1700A.D-1900
- Adhunik Kaal (Gadya Kaal) 1900-till date
History of Hindi Poetry

Four main ages in the history of Hindi poetry

• Aadikaal – Middle of the 7th century – Middle of the 14th century
• Bhakti Kaal -1343A.D-1643A.D
• Reeti Kaal 1643A.D-1868A.D
• Adhunik Kaal -1868-till date
Aadi Kaal

• Literary writings based on themes of war and heroism
• Sarhapa, the first poet of Hindi poetry
• If Vidyapati is to be included in this age, then this age ends in 1418 A.D.

Political Condition:
• Period marked by internal strife, conflicts and political disorder.
• Decline of Hindu power and rise of Muslim power
• Constant wars between Prithviraj Chauhan and Jaichand. Western and Central India severely affected.
Religious Condition:

- Decline of Buddhism and constant conflict between Shaiva and Jain religion. Entry of Islam into India.
- Hinduism subdivided into Shaiva, Vaishnava and Shakta sects.
- Ramanujacharya, Sankaracharya and Nimbark etc. worked for the upliftment of Vedic religion

Social Conditions:

- The social condition was very deplorable. Caste system and superstitions had gained a strong foothold.
- Kshatriyas the most respected people as they protected the people four foreign invasions but the condition of the Dalit (Shudras) was pitiable.
Aadi Kaal

- Women were not given much importance, but the Swayamvar tradition (girl selecting her own husband) was prevalent.
- Most of the kings were licentious and spent their time in gambling, hunting and music concerts.
- Two prominent classes – (i) rich class of king and his courtiers (ii) poor and exploited people.

**Cultural conditions:**
- Fusion of Hindu and Muslim cultures.
- Magnificent temples of Puri, Bhuvaneswar, Khajuraho, Somanath, Vellore, Kanchi, Tanjore and Abu are fine examples of contemporary art.
- Muslim influence clearly reflected in festivals, fairs, marriage and dress of the people.
Aadi Kaal

Literary Aspect:

- Three main streams in the literature of Aadi kaal.
- First stream related to Sanskrit. Second stream related to Prakrit and Apbhransh and the third one concerned itself with the literature written in Hindi language.
- Literature of the Aadi Kaal can be divided into following groups:

  1. Siddha literature
  2. Jain literature
  3. Nath literature
  4. Raso literature
  5. Laukik literature
Aadi Kaal

Siddha literature:
• Siddha literature written in language of the common people in order to propagate the Vajrayan sect in Buddhism.
• Sarhapa, Shabrapa, louipa, Dommipa, Kanhapa and Kukkuripa are the famous Siddha poets.

Jain literature:
• In the western regions, Jain monks propagated their religion through the medium of Hindi poetry. ’Rupraas’ is the chief text of Jain literature. The style developed by Jain monks is known as ‘Raas’. Devsen’s Shravakachar, Muni Jinvijayas’ Bharateshvar Bahubali Raas, Suri’s Revantagiri Raas are famous literary creations.
Nath literature:

- This literature came into existence with the aim of improving upon the deformities in Siddha literature. Gorakhnath is considered as the chief exponent of this literature. Followers of Nath mode stressed upon the mode of salvation. Gorakhnath’s works focus on detachment, praise of the guru, Kundalini awakening and Samadhi.
Aadi Kaal

Raso literature:
• Raso is an important poetic form in the literature of Aadi Kaal. Poetry written in Raso tradition is chiefly based on heroic episodes. Dalpatvijaya’s Khuman Raso, Chandbardai’s Prithviraj Raso, Jagnik’s Parmal Raso and Sharangdhar’s Hammir Raso are famous Raso texts. Prithviraj Raso is considered to be the best epic and it comprises 68 cantos. It is written in Braj language which has a touch of Rajasthani. Apbhransh and Prakrit words are used here and there.

Laukik (wordly) Literature:
• This literature is written in Dingal, the language of the state. Khusro’s Paheliyan (riddles) and Kushalraivachak’s Dhola Maru Ka Duha are very famous creations. Muktak chhand were also written and these are compiled in Hemchandra’s Prabandh Chintamani
Bhakti Kaal

• An important period in the history of Hindi literature. The period in which religion was chiefly propagated which, in turn, gave birth to Bhakti (Religious) movement, has been termed as Bhakti Kal. Acharya Ramachandra Shukla has fixed the time period of this age as between 1318 A.D. - 1643 A.D.

Political condition:

• Bhakti Kaal began during the reign of Mohammad –Bin – Tuglaq, the Sultan of Delhi (1325A.D-1351A.D). Akbar made successful attempts at amalgamating Hindu and Muslim cultures. Military power of the country had gradually declined. Heroic literature had lost its significance.
Bhakti Kaal

Social condition:
• The society divided into two groups – one the rich group leading luxurious life and the other comprising the poor struggling for basic sustenance. Polygamy and Parda system prevalent and the society was marked by superstitious, dogmas and many ill customs.

Religious condition:
• Communalism and superstitions had gained strong foothold during this time. Corruption and hypocrisy was prevalent in the name of religion; as a result of which the religious faith of the Hindus was being shaken up. Moreover, the Hindu and Muslim religious leaders were focusing and stressing upon the difference in the two cultures. People were in need of a harmonious and rational philosophy of life and this need was fulfilled by the various religious movements.
**Bhakti Kaal**

**Religious Movement:**

- Bhakti Kaal the golden period of Hindi literature. Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Islam and Judaism were the chief religions of the medieval period. Out of these Hinduism and Islam were more significant. The element of love was the chief tenet in Sufism, a subdivision of Islam; whereas, Vaishnava religion focused more on devotion. So some religions worshipped God in nirgun form and some in sagun form. Whatever the case may be, the corpus of religious poetry witnessed tremendous growth. Nirgun form of worship was further subdivided into two streams – Gyanashrayi Shakha and Premashrayi Shakha. Similarly, Sagun form of worship comprised two streams- Krishna-margi Bhaktidhara and Rammargi –Bhaktidhara.
Bhakti Kaal

Nirgun-Bhaktidhara-Gyanashrayi Shakha:

- Poetry based on worship, love and knowledge. Focus on divine communion and intense love and devotion towards God. The saints demolished the various rituals, dogmas and superstitions rampant in the society. They did not believe in the incarnations of God as according to them, God was intangible and without any specific form. Kabir opposed ostentations, fast, Namaz, Roja and pilgrimage. Raidas, Nanakdev, Jambhnath, Haridas, Seenga, Laldas, Dadu dayal, Malukdas, Sunderdas, Dharamdas, Rajjab etc are considered as notable saint poets.
Bhakti Kaal

Premashrayi Shakha:

• Focus on feelings of communion of love.
• The chief objective and contribution of these poems the propagation of the principle of purity of emancipated love.
• The poets emphasise upon the spiritualism inherent in earthly love and its attainment through the medium of Yoga philosophy.
• Profusion of Rasa and Alankara in these poems. The subject matter of Premashrayi poems is a mingling of folk stories, history and imagination. According to Acharya Ramchandra Shukla, the composing style of Premashrayi followers is Masnavi. The important poets are Jayasi, Manjhan and Kutuban etc and the important texts are Padmavat, Akhravat and Madhumalati. Awadhi is the language used by most of these poets but many poets have used Brajbhasa with touches of Rajathani.
Bhakti Kaal

Sagun-Bhaktidhara:

• In Nirgun form philosophy of life was comparatively unidimensional, as a result of which, it could not emerge as a comprehensive philosophy Due to these reasons, Sagun form of worship came into existence and this was chiefly propagated through two streams – Krishna poetry and Ram poetry Krishna worship encompasses the common feelings and emotions of life like affection, love and friendliness. On the other hand, Tulsidas, a devotee of lord Ram gave a new vision to Hindu way of life, based on Vedic religion. He devised the religious principles and a code of conduct to be followed in different circumstances.
**Bhakti Kaal**

**Krisna Bhaktidhara:**

- Vivid portrayal of the various activities related to Krishna.
- Vidyapati is regarded as the first poet of this school. Vallabh, Nimbark, Haridasi and Chaitanya have also penned songs in praise of Krishna.
- Vastalya Rasa prominent in the description of activities of Krishna as a child. Surdas’ description of Krishna as a child in *Sursagar* is unparalleled. Besides, portraying childhood activities of Krishna, Surdas has also depicted Krishna’s relationship with Gopis – their meeting and separation.
- Brajbhasha and pada form has been more frequently employed. Simile, metaphors and other figures of speech have been frequently used.

Surdas
Bhakti Kaal

Ram Bhakti dhara:
• Focus on the character of Maryada Purushottam Ram as this was the only medium through which the message of religion, principled way of life and devotion to duty could be conveyed to people.
• Goswami Tulsidas is the most important poet of this school and he has employed both Awadhi as well as Braj languages.
• Important texts written by Tulsidas are ShriRamcharitmanas, Geetavali, Vinayapatrika and Kavitavali. From the point of view of Bhava, Anubhava, Rasa and Alankar, poetry has made the greatest contribution to Hindi literature.
Bhakti Kaal

Chief tendencies / features of Bhakti kaal:

• Gyanashrayi poets worshipped an intangible God and stressed upon the importance of Guru (Leader) and opposed superstitions, dogmas and ostentatious forms of worship. Chief metrical forms were doha and pada.

• Premashrayi poets also gave importance to Guru but their basic subject matter was love. The subject matter was drawn from popular folktales and historical love – stories. Language used was Awadhi and couplets and quatrains were main chhand.

• Sagun form of worship incorporated the worship of Sri Krishna and Maryada Purushottam Ram into its poetic subject matter. Surdas depicted Krishna’s childhood activities in Braj language Tulsidas has written in Awadhi and Braj languages and made use of doha, quatrains sortha, barwai and Savaiyya, form of chhand.
Bhakti Kaal

Contribution of Bhakti Kaal:

• It is called the golden period of Hindi literature. The saint-poets saved Indian culture from complete extinction. If on one hand, Kabir and other saints established the importance of guru then on the other hand, poets like Jayasi propagated the feeling of love. Though these poets worked on ‘two inches of ivory’ yet they made immense contribution. The creations of this period were excellent even from the prosodic point of view.
Reeti Kaal

- Period from seventeenth century to the middle of the nineteenth century.
- The age was given the name as the subject matter followed a specific form. Stylistic aspect gained prominence over thematic aspect.

**Political Condition:**
- The reigns of Akbar and Jahangir stood for tolerance and Hindu-Muslim unity.
- Rajputs had accepted the supremacy of Mughal rule and became loyal courtiers. But this state of affairs did not continue for a long time as Aurangzeb was a fanatic ruler and there was strong opposition from the Hindu kings and land owners due to his policy of religious intolerance. Aurangzeb’s sons proved to be failures, as a result of which Mughal Empire weakened. After the Revolt of 1857, the British established their complete supremacy. It was an age of disorder and turmoil.
Reeti Kaal

Social Condition:
• The social condition was deplorable. There were two divisions – the ruler and the ruled. Women were treated as objects of pleasure and entertainment. Ill customs as child marriage, Parda system and mismatched alliances had reached their zenith.

Cultural condition:
• The liberal policies of Akbar, Jahangir and Shahjahan had received a fatal blow due to the fanaticism of Aurangzeb. The effort of the saints and Sufis to bring about an amalgamation of Hindu and Muslim cultures had been laid waste. Temples had been converted into centres of licentiousness. At this time, religion and morality had parted ways.
**Condition of literature and arts:**

- It was a prosperous period from the point of view of literature. Mughal emperors and Hindu kings had become patrons of art and literature. The poets did not have freedom of composition as they had to write in accordance with the wish of their patrons. Stylistic aspect was given more significance than the thematic aspect. Doha and Savaiyya were mere popular meters and poetry was written in Braj language. Besides Shringar Rasa, prominence was also given to Veer, Karuna, Bhayanak and Shanta Rasa. Besides poetry, painting, architecture, music and dance forms also flourished. Nanddas’ *Rasmanjari* is the first creation in Reeti tradition. Keshvadas has written *Kavipriya* and *Rasikpriya*. Entire literature of this period can be classified into two forms—‘Reeti baddha’ and ‘Reetimukta’.
Reetibaddha Poetry:

- Those poetic creations which were composed to exemplify poetic elements, were included in this category and the objective was to provide knowledge related to poetic principles. Important poets were Chintamani, Acharya Kulpati Mishra, Bhikhari Das, Gwal and Dev etc. Rasvilas, Chhand Vichar, Pingal Shringar Manjari, Kavikul Kalpataru are significant works of Chintamani. These poets have elaborated upon features and spirit of poetry, word power, Vakrokti, figures of speech and stanza form etc. Navras have been beautifully explicated by Acharya Padmakar, and Sayyad Ghulam Nabi ‘Rasleen’. Bihari is regarded as the most significant poet of ReetiKal. His Satsai doha are compendiums of knowledge.
Reeti Kaal

Reetimukta Poetry:

• The poets of this school of poetry neither accepted the patronage of the kings nor followed the set literary principles. They dwelt upon the purity and sacredness of heart. This is characterized by sentiments, emotions, subjectivity, freedom from literary rules and imagination. Ghananad, Alam, Bodha, Thakur and Dvijdeva are important poets.
Reeti Kaal

Chief tendencies / features of Reeti Kaal:

• **Reeti Exemplification:** Reeti texts were created from three different points of view. First, Jaswant Singh’s Bhasabhusan, Yakub Khan’s Rasbhushan, Dalpatirai Vansidhar’s Alankar Ratnakar etc. works were written with the sole objective of exemplifying, specific poetic elements. In the second category were those texts in which there was an amalgamation of Reetikarma and Kavya karma and the exponents were Matiram, Bhushan, Dev, Patmakar etc. Poets like Bihari are included in the third category and they created their works according to poetic tradition.

• **Sensuousness:** Radha – Krishna were presented as hero-heroine. The love presented could not touch sublimity as the aim was only to create sensuous depiction of the physical love.

• **Eulogy of kings:** Most of the texts were written in praise of the patrons, where the patrons’ bravery and magnanimity were highlighted.

• **Element of religiosity and morality:**

• **Veer Rasa:** Besides Shringar Rasa, Veer Rasa was also significantly employed in Bhusan’s depiction of bravery of Shivaji.
Contribution of Reeti Kaal:

- Though the age was marked by political decline, social exploitation and disharmony, the poets established a kind of harmony in the social life through their poems. Reeti Kaal literature made a significant contribution to Hindi literature by way of the development of Braj bhasha, concept of Indian poetics, and demonstration of the use of various figures of speech and metrical forms.
Aadhunik Kaal

• Aadhunik Kaal in Hindi poetry is said to have begun with the establishment of the British rule. Scientific spirit developed and the age was marked by the spirit of realism. The literature of this period not only had scientific perspective out also celebrated the life of common man. The age can be subdivided into the following ages-

• 1. Punarjagran Kaal- (Age of Bhartendu)-1868A.D-1900A.D
• 2. Jagran Sudhar Kaal (Age of Dwivedi)-1900-1922
• 3. Age of Chhayavad-1919-1938
• 4. Post- Chhayavad period
•  a). Pragativad (Progressivism), Prayogvad (Experimentation)-1938- 1943A.D
•  b). Nai Kavita yug-1943 till present time.
Punarjagran kaal: (Age of Bhartendu)

Bhartendu established ‘Kavitavardhini Sabha’ whose aim was to revive and reinvigorate Hindi poetry.

He also published a magazine named ‘Kavi-Vachan Sudha’

Bhartendu’s works are marked by twin tendencies.

Poems based on Shringar Rasa and notable creations are Bhartendu’s Prem - Sarovar, Prem –Madhuri, Prem-Tarang; Badrinarayan Chaudhari’s Varsha-Bindu, Ambikadutt Vyas ‘Pawas-Pachasa.

Bhartendu’s contemporaries were Pratapnarain Mishra, Ambikadutt Vyas. Badrinarain Chaudhari ‘Premghan’ and Thakur Jagmohan Singh.
Aadhunik Kaal

Jagran – Sudhar Kaal (Age of Dwivedi):

• This age commences with the publication of ‘Saraswati’ magazine in 1900 A.D. In the age of Bharatendu, prose works were written in Khariboli but poetic works were written in Braj bhasha.

• Acharya Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi completely revamped Hindi language and literature. So the period from 1900 - 1922 is termed as the age of the Dwivedi.

• Acharya Dwivedi refined Khariboli, made it grammatically sound, enriched Hindi vocabulary, made it a powerful medium capable of giving expression to the subjects related to different branches of learning.
Aadhunik Kaal

Jagran –Sudhar Kaal (Age of Dwivedi):

• Encouraged Hindi poets to discard Brajbhasha and adopt Khariboli as the new medium of expression, opposed the traditional poetic forms and introduced new forms in poetry. Maithili Saran Gupt’s Kisan and Siyaram Saran Gupt’s Anath have a humanist perspective. Both Dwivedi and Maithili Saran Gupt presented both emotional and rational aspects in their work. It was only Ratnakar who wrote on medieval subject matter in medieval poetic language. Upadhyaya gave an intellectual and rational perspective to the story of Radha and Krishna and later on presented the episode of ‘Vaidehi-Vanvas’ in the same rational vein.
Age of Chhayavad:
The literary period of Prasad begins with the publication of ‘Indu’ Magazine in 1909. The literature of the age had an element of protest in it. The writers were free to write according to their interests and they also protested against traditions and dogmas. Feelings, emotions and imagination held high place. The writers were basically lovers of beauty be it in the human form, nature or divine experience. There was newness in the poetic expression as it was suffused with imagination and freedom of expression. The poetry of this age reflects both the traditional as well as contemporary tendencies of Indian life. The poetry of this period was influenced by spiritual leaders like Ramakrishna Paramhans, Vivekanand, Ramtirth and Tagore. The mystic element can be clearly seen in the writings of Prasad, Nirala, Pant and Mahadevi Verma.
Age of Chhayavad:
• Due to the British oppression, Prasad, Nirala and Pant gave up highly imaginative form of writing and composed works based on social reality. The pain and suffering of the common man and the desire to abolish malpractices and ill customs prevalent all around became the only matter of their poetry. Human personality was getting disintegrated due to the conflicting tendencies. Karl Marx’s philosophy of ‘Dialectical Materialism’ was adopted in order to explore the external reality and Freud’s Psychoanalytical theory was adopted to reveal them suppressed desires of human mind. In Hindi literature, Marx’s Dialectical Materialism was termed Pragativaad [Progressivism] and Freud’s Psychoanalysis was termed ‘Prayogvaad’ [Experimentation].
Pragativaad and Prayogyaad:

• Pragativaad developed in Hindi poetry under the influence of the philosophy of Marx. India was also undergoing industrialization like the European nations, as a result of which, labour unions and farmer unions were formed. In 1936 ‘Pragatisheel Lekhak Sangh was formed. Premchand was deeply influenced by Gandhian philosophy and was the chairperson of the first convention of this organization. ’Pragativaad’ movement in Hindi literature may have been influenced more by Marxism but in the initial stages it was nurtured by Gandhians and Leftist wing of the Congress. Narendra Sharma’s poetry gradually drifted from the earlier phase of expressions of love and nature towards Gandhian philosophy and ‘Pragativaad’. 
Pragativaad and Prayogyaad:

- Pragativaad movement in modern poetry began with the writings of ‘Nirala’, Pant and Balakrishnan ‘Naveen’. The writings of Gajanan Madhav ‘Mukti bodh’ forced the people to reflect seriously over the problems related to their own selves, their society, and nation. Ramdhari Singh ‘Dinkar’ made the writings more revolutionary in nature and this aspect was further developed by Shivmangal Singh ‘Suman’, Dr. Rambilas Sharma and Rameshwar Shukla ‘Anchal’. The poets have adopted the style of folksongs and developed a new rhythm. Poetry in the vein of Prayogyaad developed under the guidance of Sacchidanand Hiranand Vatsyayan ‘Agyeya’. The poets were initially influenced by Freud’s Psychoanalytical theory. In 1943, Agyeya with the collaboration of six contemporary poets published Tarsaptak.
Nai Kavita Yug

• New poetry is making intense efforts to detach itself completely from the poetry written earlier. This new trend in poetry began with the publication of the poetic collection named Nai Kavita edited by Dr. Jagdish Gupt and Dr. Ramswaroop Chaturvedi. Magazines like Kalpana, Gyanodaya have given impetus to new poetry. Sumitranandan Pant’s Kala Aur Boora Chand and Dinkar’s Chakravaal are written in the trend of new poetry. New poetry deals with the different phases of reality of human life, using new language and novel poetic constructions. Since this poetry differed greatly from the earlier form of poetry so this is being given the term ‘Akavita’ or non-poetry. New poetry is also suffused with many features of Prayogavaad.