

6. Maratha Empire and Bhakti Literature

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Abstract

India has a long rich inheritance of Bhakti literature but it was on the highest pick point during 13th to 17th century. The Medieval period was specially known for two major things first foundation of Maratha Empire 'Swarajya' by Samrat Chh. Shivaji and second Bhakti movement. Saints like a Dnyaneshwara, Tukarama, Aknatha, Janabai tried to evoke people by their writings. Contemporary Bhatki literature focuses on the need of social, cultural, behavioral changes of Maratha community of that time. The literature is full with spirituality and reality and has great influence on Marathi language.

Key-word: Bhakti Literature, Maratha Empire, Saints, Changes, Spirituality and reality

The Sanskrit word bhakti is derived from the root bhaj, which means "divide, share, partake, participate, to belong to". The word also means "attachment, devotion to, fondness for, homage, faith or love, worship, piety to something as a spiritual, religious principle or means of salvation". The meaning of the term Bhakti is analogous but different than Kama. Kama connotes emotional connection, sometimes with sensual devotion and erotic love. Bhakti, in contrast, is spiritual, a love and devotion to religious concepts or principles, that engages both emotion and intellection. Karen Pechelis states that the word Bhakti should not be understood as uncritical emotion, but as committed engagement. Bhakti movement in Hinduism refers to ideas and engagement that emerged in the medieval era on love and devotion to religious concepts built around one or more gods and goddesses. Bhakti movement preached against the caste system using the local languages so that the message reached the masses. One who practices bhakti is called a bhakta. 1

Bhakti literature during Maratha period bought many social, cultural and religious reforms in the lives of the Marathas and tried to show the people the way of salvation. Bhakti Movement is incomplete without literature because literature is called as a mirror of society so many Saint contributed in the Bhakti movement through the literature in regional languages,