




## Be Mains Ready

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**Q.** “The Bhakti and Sufi movements not only empowered the Indian society in fundamental ways but also provided the required impetus for the growth of vernacular literature”.  
Comment.

11 Nov 2021 | GS Paper 1 | Indian Heritage & Culture

### Approach

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- Begin your answer with a brief introduction of the Bhakti and Sufi movement and its impact on the society
- Explain the growth of regional language and literature with the spread of these movements
- Conclude with its contribution to Indian society and cultural ethos

### Answer

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Sufi and Bhakti movements were monistic movements that emerged in different parts of India. Both the Sufi and Bhakti movements stressed the mystical union of the individual with God. They laid great emphasis on love as the bond between God and the individual. These movements also cut across religious and sectarian lines promoting humanity and

syncretic thought in society.

In order to make their teachings more accessible to the people, they discarded the use of traditional languages-Sanskrit, Arabic & Persian and favoured local languages, the language of the common people like Hindi, Bangali, Marathi, and Sindhi, etc. The use of the common language by the Bhakti and Sufi saints was, undoubtedly, an important factor in the rise of these languages.

- In eastern Uttar Pradesh Sufi saints, such as Mulla Daud, the author of 'Chandayan', Malik Muhammad Jaisi, the author of 'Padmavati' wrote in Hindi and put forward Sufi concepts in a form which could be easily understood by the common man.
- Amongst the eastern group of languages, Bengali was used by Chaitanya and by the poet Chandidas, who wrote extensively on the theme of the love of Radha and Krishna.
- It was also a Bhakti leader Shankaradeva, who popularized the use of the Assamese in the Brahmaputra valley in the 15th century. He used an entirely new medium to spread his ideas.
- In today's Maharashtra, Marathi reached its apogee at the hands of saints like Eknath and Tukaram.
- Other prominent saints like Kabir, Nanak, and Tulsidas contributed enormously to regional literature and language with their captivating verses and spiritual exposition.
- As a literary movement, it liberated poetry from singing the praises of kings and introduced spiritual themes. From a style point of view, it introduced simple and accessible styles like vachanas (in Kannada), saakhis, dohas and other forms in various languages and ended the hegemony of Sanskrit metrical forms.

The ideas of Bhakti and Sufi saints continued to permeate the cultural ethos of the society through the enormous body of literature left by them. The congruence in their ideas not only saved us from the likely internecine conflicts but also built the spirit of tolerance. To appeal to the common masses, their messages were composed into songs, proverbs, and stories that led to the development of Awadhi, Bhojpuri, Maithili and a number of other languages.