

# Indian literature essay sample

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Indian literature is generally believed to be the oldest in the world. With vast cultural diversities, there are around two dozen officially recognized languages in India. Over thousands of years, huge literature has been produced in various languages in India. It is to be noted that a large part of Indian literature revolves around devotion, drama, poetry and songs. Sanskrit language dominated the early Indian literary scene whereas languages like Prakrit and Pali too had fair share as they were the languages of the common people.

It is interesting to note that the Hindu literary traditions have dominated a large part of Indian culture. These traditions are well reflected in great works like Vedas and epics such as Ramayana and Mahabharata. Treatises like Vaastu Shastra (architecture), Arthashastra (political science) and Kamsutra are true reflection of the Indian literary excellence.

Early Hindi literature, in dialects like Avadhi and Brai, began around religious and philosophical poetry in medieval period. Sant Kabir and Tulsidas were the greatest exponents of the Hindi literature during this period. With the passage of time, the Khadi boli (dialect) became more prominent and saw a great upsurge, which continues to this day.

During the medieval period, Muslim literary traditions dominated a large part of Indian literature and saw flourishing of Muslim literature. Muslim rule during the medieval times saw rapid growth and development of Persian and Urdu literature in India. A huge variety of literature spanning across history, culture and politics was written in this period.

With the coming of the British in India, works started to be written in English language. As more and more Indians became well versed with the English language, the number of works in English literature began to grow. During the contemporary times, numerous Indian authors have made their mark on the world English literature scene. Some of the most noted Indian born or Indian writers are R. K. Narayan, Vikram Seth, Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy, Amitav.

## INDIAN LITERATURE

Indian literature is generally believed to be the oldest in the world.

Originating more than 5, 000 years ago, records of the linguistic history of India began with early pictures that transformed into pictorial scripts and engravings and eventually to modern orthographies. With vast cultural diversities, currently there are around two dozen officially recognized languages in India. But broadly Linguistic history of India can be classified into 3 parts: Old Indo Aryan languages whose earliest evidence is from Vedic Sanskrit. Then came Middle Indo Aryan languages, Prakrits, evolved outside the learned sphere of Sanskrit. The oldest attested Prakrits are the Buddhist and Jain canonical languages Pali and Ardha Magadhi, respectively. The Indo-Aryan prakrits also gave rise to languages like Gujarati, Assamese, Bengali, Oriya, Nepali, Marathi, and Punjabi, which are not considered to be Hindi despite being part of the same dialect continuum. Next was New Indo Aryan languages which occurred with the Muslim invasions of India in the 13th-16th centuries. Under the flourishing Mughal empire, Persian became very influential as the language of prestige of the Islamic courts. However, Persian

was soon displaced by Hindi-Urdu. It is to be noted that a large part of Indian literature revolves around devotion, drama, poetry and songs.

### The Creation Hymn of Rig Veda

There was neither non-existence nor existence then.

There was neither the realm of space nor the sky which is beyond. What stirred?

Where?

In whose protection?

Was there water, bottlemlessly deep?

There was neither death nor immortality then.

There was no distinguishing sign of night nor of day.

That One breathed, windless, by its own impulse.

Other than that there was nothing beyond.

Darkness was hidden by darkness in the beginning, with no distinguishing sign, all this was water.

The life force that was covered with emptiness, that One arose through the power of heat.

Desire came upon that One in the beginning, that was the first seed of mind.

Poets seeking in their heart with wisdom found the bond of existence and non-existence.

Their cord was extended across.

Was there below?

Was there above?

There were seed-placers, there were powers.

There was impulse beneath, there was giving forth above.

Who really knows?

Who will here proclaim it?

Whence was it produced?

Whence is this creation?

The gods came afterwards, with the creation of this universe. Who then knows whence it has arisen?

Whence this creation has arisen

– perhaps it formed itself, or perhaps it did not – the One who looks down on it, in the highest heaven, only He knows or perhaps He does not know.

**\*\***The non-dualistic school of Vedanta Philosophy accepts God as the creator of this world. But it holds the view that the world is only an apparent transformation of God. God, using his power of “ magic” (called MAYA) has created this world. This world is real to those who are under the spell of God’s Maya. It is not real to God. From His standpoint he has not really created the world. To us, it only appears to be real to us, who are under the sway of His Maya. Thus, from our point of view, God the Creator also seems to be “ real”. As one would notice, in the last lines of the hymn of creation doubts have been raised about the real creation of this world.

Biography of Sarojini Naidu

Saroji Naidu also known by the sobriquet The Nightingale of India, was a child prodigy, Indian independence activist and poet. Naidu was the first Indian woman to become the President of the Indian National Congress and

the first woman to become the Governor of Uttar Pradesh state. was a great patriot, politician, orator and administrator. of all the famous women of India, Mrs. Sarojinidevi Naidu's name is at the top. Not only that, but she was truly one of the jewels of the world. Being one of the most famous heroines of the 20th century, her birthday is celebrated as " Women's Day"

### Early Life

She was born in Hyderabad. Sarojini Chattopadhyay, later Naidu belonged to a Bengali family of Kulin Brahmins. But her father, Agorenath Chattopadhyay, after receiving a doctor of science degree from Edinburgh University, settled in Hyderabad State, where he founded and administered the Hyderabad College, which later became the Nizam's College in Hyderabad. Sarojini Naidu's mother Barada Sundari Devi was a poetess baji and used to write poetry in Bengali. Sarojini Naidu was the eldest among the eight siblings. One of her brothers Birendranath was a revolutionary and her other brother Harindranath was a poet, dramatist, and actor.

Sarojini Naidu was a brilliant student. She was proficient in Urdu, Telugu, English, Bengali, and Persian. At the age of twelve, Sarojini Naidu attained national fame when she topped the matriculation examination at Madras University. Her father wanted her to become a mathematician or scientist but Sarojini Naidu was interested in poetry. Once she was working on an algebra problem, and when she couldn't find the solution she decided to take a break, and in the same book she wrote her first inspired poetry. She got so enthused by this that she wrote " The Lady of the Lake", a poem 1300 lines long. When her father saw that she was more interested in poetry than

mathematics or science, he decided to encourage her. With her father's support, she wrote the play "Maher Muneer" in the Persian language. Dr. Chattopadhyaya distributed some copies among his friends and sent one copy to the Nawab of Hyderabad. Reading a beautiful play written by a young girl, the Nizam was very impressed. The college gave her a scholarship to study abroad. At the age of 16 she got admitted to King's College of England.

### England

At the age of 16, she traveled to England to study first at King's College London and later at Girton College, Cambridge. There she met famous laureates of her time such as Arthur Symonds and Edmond Gosse. It was Gosse who convinced Sarojini to stick to Indian themes-India's great mountains, rivers, temples, social milieu, to express her poetry. She depicted contemporary Indian life and events. Her collections "The golden threshold (1905)", "The bird of time (1912)", and "The broken wing (1912)" attracted huge Indian and English readership.

### Love and Marry

During her stay in England, Sarojini met Dr. Govindarajulu Naidu, a non-Brahmin and a doctor by profession, and fell in love with him. After finishing her studies at the age of 19, she got married to him during the time when inter-caste marriages were not allowed. Her father was a progressive thinking person, and he did not care what others said. Her marriage was a very happy one.

## Works

Her major contribution was also in the field of poetry. Her poetry had beautiful words that could also be sung. Soon she got recognition as the “Bul Bule Hind” when her collection of poems was published in 1905 under the title Golden Threshold. After that, she published two other collections of poems—The Bird of Time and The Broken Wings. In 1918, Feast of Youth was published. Later, The Magic Tree, The Wizard Mask and A Treasury of Poems were published. Mahashree Arvind, Rabindranath Tagore and Jawaharlal Nehru were among the thousands of admirers of her work. Her poems had English words, but an Indian soul.

## Politics

One day she met Shree Gopal Krishna Gokhale. He said to her to use her poetry and her beautiful words to rejuvenate the spirit of Independence in the hearts of villagers. He asked her to use her talent to free Mother India.

Then in 1916, she met Mahatma Gandhi, and she totally directed her energy to the fight for freedom. She would roam around the country like a general of the army and pour enthusiasm among the hearts of Indians. The independence of India became the heart and soul of her work.

She was responsible for awakening the women of India. She brought them out of the kitchen. She traveled from state to state, city after city and asked for the rights of the women. She re-established self-esteem within the women of India.



In 1925, she chaired the summit of Congress in Kanpur. In 1928, she came to the USA with the message of the non-violence movement from Gandhiji.

When in 1930, Gandhiji was arrested for a protest, she took the helms of his movement. In 1931, she participated in the Round Table Summit, along with Gandhiji and Pundit Malaviyaji. In 1942, she was arrested during the “ Quit India” protest and stayed in jail for 21 months with Gandhiji.

After independence she became the Governor of Uttar Pradesh. She was the first woman governor in India.

#### Sarojini Naidu's Works:

The Golden Threshold, published in the United Kingdom, 1905 The Bird of Time: Songs of Life, Death & the Spring, published in London, 1912 The Broken Wing: Songs of Love, Death and the Spring, including “ The Gift of India” (first read in public in 1915), 1917 Muhammad Jinnah: An Ambassador of Unity, 1916

The Sceptred Flute: Songs of India, Allahabad: Kitabistan, posthumously published, 1943 The Feather of the Dawn, posthumously published, edited by her daughter, Padmaja Naidu, 1961