



# FACULTY OF JURIDICAL SCIENCES

**COURSE: B.A.LL.B. 1st Semester**

**SUBJECT: HISTORY - I**

**SUBJECT CODE: BAL 102**

**NAME OF FACULTY: Dr. Sadhna Trivedi**

# Lecture-37



## MEDIEVAL INDIA

### Bhakti-Sufi Tradition in relation with the State and Reconfiguration of Identity

#### The Bhakti Traditions

1. The early bhakti tradition evolved and was characterised by remarkable diversity. It accommodated and acknowledged women and the “lower castes”, who were considered ineligible within orthodox Brahmanical framework, while Brahmanas remained important intermediaries between gods and devotees in several forms of bhakti.
2. Historians of religion often classify bhakti traditions into two broad categories: saguna (with attributes) and nirguna (without attributes).
3. **Alvars**: Some of the earliest bhakti movements (sixth century) were led by the Alvars (literally, those who are “immersed” in devotion to Vishnu) and Nayanars (literally, leaders who were devotees of Shiva). They travelled from place to place singing hymns in Tamil in praise of their gods.
4. The Alvars and Nayanars initiated a movement of protest against the caste system and the dominance of Brahmanas or attempted to reform the system.
5. Their compositions were as important as the Vedas. One of the major anthologies of compositions by the Alvars, the Nalayira Divyaprabandham, was frequently described as the Tamil Veda, thus claiming that the text was as significant as the four Vedas in Sanskrit that were cherished by the Brahmanas.
6. Women’s participation could be widely seen through the presence of women devotees like – **Andal**, a woman Alvar who saw herself as the beloved of Vishnu; her verses express her love for the deity; and **Karaikkal Ammaiyar** was a devotee of Shiva who adopted the path of extreme asceticism in order to attain her goal. Their very existence and their compositions posed a challenge to patriarchal norms.
7. From the second half of the first millennium there is evidence for states, including those of the Pallavas and Pandyas (c. sixth to ninth centuries CE). Buddhism and Jainism had been prevalent in this region and received occasional royal patronage.

8. One of the major themes in Tamil bhakti hymns is the poets' opposition to Buddhism and Jainism. The reason behind this hostility was the competition between members of other religious traditions for royal patronage
9. Rulers tried to win their support of Nayanars and Alvars.
10. The **Chola kings** often attempted to claim divine support and proclaim their own power and status by building splendid temples that were adorned with stone and metal sculpture to recreate the visions of these popular saints who sang in the language of the people.
11. These kings also introduced the singing of Tamil Shaiva hymns in the temples under royal patronage.

## MCQ

### **1. Consider the following statements about Alvars and Nayanars:**

- I. Some of the earliest bhakti movements (c. sixth century) were led by the Alvars (literally, those who are “immersed” in devotion to Vishnu) and Nayanars (literally, leaders who were devotees of Shiva).
- II. They travelled from place to place singing hymns in Tamil in praise of their gods.
- III. During their travels the Alvars and Nayanars identified certain shrines as abodes of their chosen deities.

### **Which of the following statement(s) is/are correct?**

- A. Only I
- B. I and II
- C. I and III
- D. All of the above

### **2. Consider the following statements regarding the attitudes of Alvars and Nayanars towards caste system:**

- I. Alvars and Nayanars initiated a movement of protest against the caste system and the dominance of Brahmanas or at least attempted to reform the system.
- II. Alvars and Nayanars always supported the caste system in the society.
- III. The importance of the traditions of the Alvars and Nayanars was sometimes indicated by the claim that their compositions were as important as the Vedas.

### **Which of the following statement(s) is/are correct?**

- A. Only I
- B. I and II
- C. I and III
- D. All of the above

### **3. Which of the following statements is incorrect about Andal?**

- A. Andal was a woman Alvar, the most striking features of her compositions were widely sung (and continue to be sung to date).
- B. Andal was a woman Nayanar, she incorporated the prevailing caste system in the society.
- C. Andal saw herself as the beloved of Vishnu; her verses express her love for the deity.
- D. Andal saw herself as the beloved of Krishna; her verses express her love for the deity.

### **4. Consider the following statements regarding the women devotees of the period:**

- I. Karaikkal Ammaiyar, a devotee of Shiva, adopted the path of extreme asceticism in order to attain her goal.
- II. Andal and Karaikkal Ammaiyar renounced their social obligations, but did not join an alternative order or become nuns.
- III. Their very existence and their compositions posed a challenge to patriarchal norms.

### **Which of the following statement(s) is/are correct?**

- A. Only I
- B. I and II

- C.I and III
- D.All of the above

**5. Consider the following statements regarding the advent of Islam:**

I.Arab merchants, for instance, frequented ports along the western coast in the first millennium CE, while Central Asian peoples settled in the north-western parts of the subcontinent during the same period.

II.From the seventh century, with the advent of Islam, these regions became part of what is often termed the Islamic world.

III.In 711 an Arab general named Muhammad Qasim conquered South India, which became part of the Caliph's domain.

**Which of the following statement(s) is/are correct?**

- A.Only I
- B.I and II
- C.I and III

