MASTER'S DEGREE IN ENGLISH (MEG-14)

Contemporary Indian Literature in English Translation

ASSIGNMENT

Course Code: MEG/MEGOL
Assignment Code: MEG-14/TMA/2026-27
Max.Marks:100

Answer all questions. Each question carries 10 marks.

1. Discuss the idea of Indian literature as a multilingual and plural tradition.
2. Examine Praneshacharya's inner conflict in *Samskara*.
3. How does *Tamas* portray the impact of communal violence on ordinary people?
4. Discuss loneliness and human relationships in Nirmal Verma's *Birds*.
5. Discuss the theme of loss and memory in *The Empty Chest*.
6. Comment on the use of myth in Sitanshu Yashashchandra's*Orpheus*.
7. Examine Muhammad bin Tughlaq as an idealist caught between vision and political reality.
8. Discuss *Karukku* as a narrative of caste, gender and resistance.
9. How does *Prem Chand: His Life and Times* combine biography with literary history?
10. Comment on the use of irony in *The Compromise*.

1. Discuss the idea of Indian literature as a multilingual and plural tradition.

Answer

Indian literature is best understood not as the literature of one language but as a large field made up of many languages, regions, religions, communities and literary forms. India has never had a single literary language that can contain all its cultural experience. Sanskrit, Tamil, Pali, Prakrit, Persian, Urdu and the modern Indian languages have all contributed to different periods of literary history. At the same time, these traditions have never remained completely separate. They have borrowed stories, forms, images and ideas from one another. Therefore, the unity of Indian literature lies in interaction rather than uniformity.

Many languages, connected traditions

The multilingual character of Indian literature can be seen in the way similar themes appear in different languages but acquire distinct local meanings. The Ramayana and the Mahabharata, for example, have travelled across regions in many retellings. A Tamil, Bengali, Assamese, Kannada or Hindi version is not simply a copy of a Sanskrit original. Each version reflects the social world, religious practices, landscape and literary taste of its own region. The same is true of devotional poetry. Bhakti and Sufi traditions developed in several languages, and poets spoke to local audiences in forms that were close to everyday speech. This created a shared cultural conversation without erasing linguistic differences.

Plurality also comes from the coexistence of oral and written traditions. Folk songs, legends, performance traditions, devotional songs, epics and stories have circulated beside written literature. Many works have moved from oral performance to written form and then into translation. Tribal and Dalit traditions, women’s writing and regional forms have further widened the idea of what can be included within Indian literature. A purely elite or Sanskrit-centred view cannot explain this range. Indian literature has to include voices from different social locations and not only texts produced by dominant groups.

Translation as a bridge

Translation is central to this multilingual literary culture. Most Indian readers know many important writers through translation. Translation allows a text rooted in one region to enter another linguistic world and become part of a wider national conversation. It also makes comparison possible. A reader can place a Kannada