

P.R. GOVERNMENT COLLEGE (A), KAKINADA
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DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

Study Material for students



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TOPIC: Renaissance

Renaissance'

The term 'Renaissance' literally means rebirth. But in the context of European history, it implies several aspects, the most important being rebirth of past, the spirit of enquiry, the spirit of Humanism and a great movement for revival of man's powers.

a) Rebirth of the past:

Here rebirth means the revival of old culture and know-ledge. In the age of Renaissance, Europe was prone to seek reorientation by the study of Greek and Roman literature and arts.

b) The spirit of Enquiry:

Renaissance laid stress on the spirit of enquiry in the system of education. The old Greek ideas in respect of scientific thinking, philosophy and approach were followed. Blind faith and superstitions gave way to reasoning.

c) The spirit of Humanism:

The renaissance broadened the importance of Humanism. There developed a love for the study of humanities, "The natural, the human and the sensual were given precedence over the ascetical the supernatural, and the logical".

d) A great movement:

In the words of Edith Satchel "Renaissance was movement, a revival of man's powers, a reawakening of the consciousness of himself and of the universe-a movement which spread over.

CAUSES RESPONSIBLE FOR RENAISSANCE

There are many causes and forces that helped the growth of renaissance in Europe. The foremost causes are given below.

1) Fall of Constantinople:-

In 1453 A D. Constantinople, the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, fell into the hands of the Ottoman Turks. Until then, it served as the great centre of Greek and Roman cultures. With the fall of Constantinople, the Greek and Roman scholars migrated with their original manuscripts to various towns of Italy.

2) Introduction of printing press

The Renaissance was largely helped by the discovery of the printing press: Owing to the exertions of Jaas Gutenberg and Wilaim Caxton, the Printing Pross was invented and it helped in spreading knowledge easily and quickly to the common man.

3)Contact between the East and the West :-

Due to Crusades, Europe and Asia came to know each other Intimately. Further the brisk trade and commerce between East and West facilitated both sides to come closer.

4) Geographical discoveries:-

The fall of Constantinople necessitated the discovery of new-sea routes. The adventurous discoveries of Vasco da Gama, Columbus, Magellan and Drake widened the vision and outlook off man and promoted the cause of the Renaissance.

5)Patronage of the Wealthy :-)

Kings, nobles and popes besides many wealthy people extended patronage to Greek learning and arts. Thus they ushered the age of Renaissance.

GROWTH AND SPREAD OF RENAISSANCE

Renaissance did not start all of a sudden or simultaneously in all parts of Europe. On the other hand it spread gradually and at different times in different parts of the continent. Renaissance first took root in Italy which was aptly called "the well-spring", and "the school of Europe". It was in Italy where various city states gave shelter to Greek scholars from Constantinople and patronised classical learning.

1) THE RENAISSANCE IN LITERATURE

Naturally the spirit of humanism and secularism were glorified in the Renaissance literature. Moreover Renaissance found expression in regional languages such as Italian, French, German, Spanish and English, thus paving way for popular propagation of lofty ideals.

a) Italian Writers:

b) English Writers:

RENAISSANCE IN ARTS

Architecture:

In the age of Renaissance, the ancient Greek and Roman architectural models were revived and emulated for all sorts of buildings, St. Peter's church in Rome,

Sculpture:

Renaissance sculpture was imbued with the spirit of Humanism and naturalism. The outstanding Sculptors of the age were Ghiberti, Donatello, Robbla and Michelangelo.

c) Painting:

In the field of Painting, the Renaissance period stands unsurpassed. Talented Painters like Giotto, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Especially Leonardo's "Mono Lisa", "The Last Supper" are considered to be the most marvellous masterpieces of art. Likewise the "Last judgement" of Michel Angelo and Raphael's "Sistine Madonna" are also outstanding.

Music:

Spurning the crude instruments of the medieval age, new sweet and melodious instruments were adopted for Music in the age of Renaissance.

Astronomy:

In astronomical studies, the age of Renaissance made great strides. COPERNICUS asserted that the earth and other planets revolve round the sun instead of the Sun and other planets revolving round the earth.

Physics:

The great physicist GILBERT proved magnetic properties and paved way for the study of electricity. Stevin discovered the law of the parallelogram of forces. (Galileo invented the air thermometer, the hysteric balance and an astronomical clock.

Chemistry:

In the age of Renaissance, Alchemy was replaced by Chemistry. Cordus made Ethel from Sulphuric Acid and Alcohol Helmond discovered Carbon dioxide.

Medicine:

VASILIOUS wrote a treatise on Anatomy. WILLIAM HARVEY discovered that blood circulates from the heart to the arteries, and from arteries the blood passes to the veins and flows back to the heart.

Mathematics:

Kepler devised different kinds of equations. Desargues gluted modern geometry.

EFFECTS OF RENAISSANCE

The Renaissance had lasting effects upon the society and culture of Europe and that of World in the long run.

Development of inquisitiveness:

In the Words of Swain, "The effect of Renaissance was manifested in an interest in the past and a desire for understanding the present.

The new approach to life:

Renaissance brought a radical change in the attitude of the average intelligent man towards life and religion. The old and traditional outlook was changed in favour of a more rational and scientific one.

Weakening of church authority:

The spirit of humanism and enquiry fostered by Renaissance turned the people against the oppressing authority of Church.

Growth of middle class:

Renaissance helped the growth of powerful Middle Class by posing a serious challenge to feudalism. This Middle class played an important role in many revolutions in the Modern Age.

Study of humanities!

Renaissance created a love for the study of humanities in-finding the Ancient Greek and Roman Classes.

Paving way for reformation:

Renaissance prepared a fertile soil for the growth of the Protestant Reformation movement by encouraging rational attitude towards religion.

Upheaval of regional languages:

Intellectuals resorted to regional languages as mass media to disseminate knowledge. Latin began to be discarded and the vernaculars like English, French, Spanish, Italian and German etc. were encouraged.

Geographical discoveries and colonization:

During this period many geographical discoveries were made. These discoveries encouraged Commerce and ultimately Colonization.

Department of History