

Magadh Mahila College

Patna University, Patna

HISTORY

B.A. – I

PAPER – II

The Renaissance

Unit – 5

**Topic: - Intellectual Impact of
Renaissance**

By:-

Dr. Amit Raj

Department of History

Magadh Mahila College

Patna University, Patna

Email : amitr286@gmail.com

Mob : 9472811500

Impetus to Development of Vernacular Languages and Literature :

The development of vernacular languages had begun during the Renaissance, when the urge for New Awakening and New Learning gripped the European mind. The invention of printing machine in 1454 further helped the spread of knowledge. Without the large-scale printing of books and their translation into various regional languages, neither the Renaissance nor the Reformation would have been possible. But the role of the Reformation was greater than that of the Renaissance in the development of the vernacular languages and literature. This was because the Reformation was not merely an urban elitist movement, but a populist religious movement involving a vast mass of population in both rural and urban areas. This obviously meant that literature concerning the Reformation had a very wide readership, perhaps ten times more than that of the Renaissance. Moreover, by the year 1517, when the Reformation began, the printing press had spread its wings nearly all over Europe. The printers could bring out the large number the books of copies of the Holy Bible, which was the best seller every year. We must take note here of the fact that it was the Protestant movement that popularised Bible-reading among the common folks. The demand for these books and the Bible tremendously increased because people began to put questions about the Church and traditional Christianity.

The increase in readership and the eagerness among ordinary people to know more of the Reformation and Counter Reformation encouraged the trend of translation of the Bible, other religious texts and the works of the above-mentioned reformers and philosophers into various vernacular languages. The trend began when Luther translated Erasmus's New Testament from Latin to simple German to reach the ordinary folks. Similarly it was translated into other languages. Gradually original writings also began in vernaculars. All these helped the development of vernacular languages and literature.

Attitude of Independent Thinking and Challenge to Authority :

The Reformation basically stands for questioning and challenging the traditional system. What began in religion spread to other spheres of human life and activity. The days of blind acceptance and forcible imposition of truths chuned out by the religious and political authorities were gradually fading out. No doubt, it would take several centuries to end the dominance of traditional authorities. But people now got somewhat the freedom to think and discriminate between the right and the wrong. They began to question several customs and practices in society, politics and economy. The string events instilled in men on both sides a spirit of confidence, an eagerness to know the truth the courage of conviction and an attitude of independent thinking.

Suggested Readings:-

1. Meenakshi Phukan : Rise of Modern West
2. G. Clark : Early Modern Europe
3. Raghubir Dayal : Modern European History
4. Jain and Mathur : World History (1500 – 1950)
5. G.M. Trevelyan : Social History of England
6. Parthsarathi Gupta (ed.) : आधुनिक पश्चिम का उदय
7. लाल बहादुर वर्मा : आधुनिक यूरोप का इतिहास
