

UPSC IAS Mains: World History- Renaissance in Italy

Renaissance is an important topic for UPSC IAS Mains exam in World History. Here we are giving the important details about Renaissance.

- The term Renaissance means “revival” or “rebirth”.
- It also denotes to the noteworthy modifications that took place in Europe during the transition period between the medieval and modern.
- Growth of science, art, architecture, sculpture, painting, literature, geography and religion were seen in this period.
- Spirit of humanism and individualism has developed.
- Religious makeover was signified by the Reformation.
- These changes that took place in Europe were collectively called “Renaissance”.

Renaissance in Europe UPSC

Renaissance in Italy

- The birthplace of Renaissance is Italy
- Italy is the cradle of the Latin language and ancient civilization.
- The city states in Italy like Venice and Florence patronized literature and art.
- The renaissance movement was ignited in the city of Florence by the publication of ‘Divine Comedy’ by the poet Dante.
- This movement then spread to elsewhere in Europe and reached its zenith in the 16th century.

Revival of Classical Literature

- The most significant contribution of the Renaissance was the resurrection and studying of ancient Latin and Greek literature.
- The pioneering scholar was Petrarch (1304 –1374). He collected and compiled the works of Aristotle and Plato.
- His student Boccaccio also promoted classical learning.
- Many Greek scholars who came from Constantinople spread the ancient Greek literature in Florence.
- Pope Nicholas V founded the Vatican Library in the 15th century.
- Erasmus edited the New Testament in the Greek language.

Role of the printing press

- The invention of the printing press by John Gutenberg had influenced the Renaissance literature.
- The first book published by John Gutenberg was The Bible.
- William Caxton was the first to set up a printing press in England.
- Later many printing presses were set up throughout Europe
- These Printing Presses provided a motivation to the Renaissance movement.

Renaissance Literature

- Geoffrey Chaucer is known as the father of English literature
- He wrote the Canterbury Tales in English.

- Machiavelli wrote History of Florence and The Prince.
- Cervantes authored the famous Don Quixote.
- Utopia was written by Sir Thomas Moore in Latin.
- The Elizabethan era marked the commencement of the English Renaissance.
- The period also seen the rise of William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, Edmund Spenser, Sydney and Ben Johnson etc.
- Montaigne against the authority and the dictatorship of the past and made the title “the first modern man”.
- Martin Luther translated the Bible in the German language.

Renaissance of Art

- Paintings and art in the Middle Ages were dominated by Christianity but in the Renaissance period love of nature and the human body provided muses to this domain.
- Leonardo da Vinci known as the “Renaissance Man”.
- His famous works of art were the ‘Last Supper’ and ‘Mona Lisa’.
- Michelangelo was both a sculptor and painter.
- Some consider his painting “Last Judgement” as one of the best in the world.

Renaissance of Sculpture

- Lorenzo Ghiberti (1378-1455) was the most important renaissance sculpture.
- He created the famous doors at the Baptistery of Florence.
- Michelangelo made the statue of David in Florence.
- Donatello molded the statue of St. Mark at Venice and St. George in Florence.

Development of Science

- Francis Bacon is regarded as the father of modern science.
- The heliocentric theory was given by Nicolaus Copernicus.
- Sir Isaac Newton established that the movements of all celestial bodies were controlled by gravitation.
- Laws of planetary motion were stated by Johannes Kepler.
- Galileo Galilei invented the telescope brought new evidence to support the Copernican theory.
- Cordus made ether from alcohol and sulphuric acid.
- Carbon dioxide was discovered by Helmont.
- Vesalius wrote a treatise on human anatomy.

Results of the Renaissance

- The Renaissance was deemed the symbol of the commencement of the modern age.
- The spirit of inquiry has developed among people.
- The subsequent scientific inventions created significant changes in the life of humanity.
- The invention of the Mariner’s Compass led to several Geographical discoveries.