

Causes of Renaissance in England

The English Renaissance was a cultural and artistic movement in England from the early 16th century to the early 17th century. It is associated with the pan-European Renaissance that is usually regarded as beginning in Italy in the late 14th century. As in most of the rest of northern Europe, England saw little of these developments until more than a century later. Renaissance style and ideas, however, were slow to penetrate England, and the Elizabethan era in the second half of the 16th century is regarded as the height of the English Renaissance. However, many scholars see its beginnings in the early 1500s during the reign of Henry VIII.

'Renaissance' is a French word for 'rebirth' or 'reawakening of learning'. The term 'Renaissance' seems to have been first used by French historian Jules Michelet in his 'Histoire de France' published in 1855. It was immediately taken by other scholars. The Renaissance was a revival of classical learning and a flowering of arts and culture starting in Italy and spreading through out Europe (Germany, Spain, France, the Netherland and England) in the 14th through early 17th century. The English Renaissance is different from the Italian Renaissance in several ways. The dominant art forms of the English Renaissance were literature and music. Visual

arts in the English Renaissance were much less significant than in the Italian Renaissance.

There were many causes behind 'Renaissance'. The fall of Constantinople was its main cause. It was the centre of Learning. Although it was under the clutches of the Christians, many Greek scholars were living there. In 1453, after the invasion of Muhammad II, the Greek intellectuals left Constantinople and entered into different cities of Italy like Venetia, Milan, Naples, Sicily, Rome etc. They taught mathematics, history, geography, philosophy, medicine etc. to the people of Italy. This gave birth to Renaissance.

Secondly the invention of printing machine was responsible for Renaissance. In 145 A.D. John Gutenberg of Germany invented printing machine and letters and printed book. William Caxton brought this machine to England in 1477 A.D. Thus, books could be published very easily with a short span of time. People could easily get books for study and learnt many things. This galvanised Renaissance.

Finally the men with new thoughts paved the way for Renaissance. They advised not to accept anything blindly which is not to accept anything blindly which is not proved properly. Roger Bacon of Oxford university said that nothing should be accepted without proper experiment and observation.

Besides above cause, the revival of interest

in Greek and Roman literature and art and anthropocentric approach of writers also paved the path for Renaissance. Earlier God was in the centre of all activities and man was just a creature waiting for salvation. But in this time of 'Renaissance', people are not accepting the thoughts of church easily. Church has lost its faith among common people.

Thus, we can say that the invention of printing press, growing interest in Greek and Roman literature, spirit of curiosity among common people and declining faith of church are major causes of developing Renaissance in England.