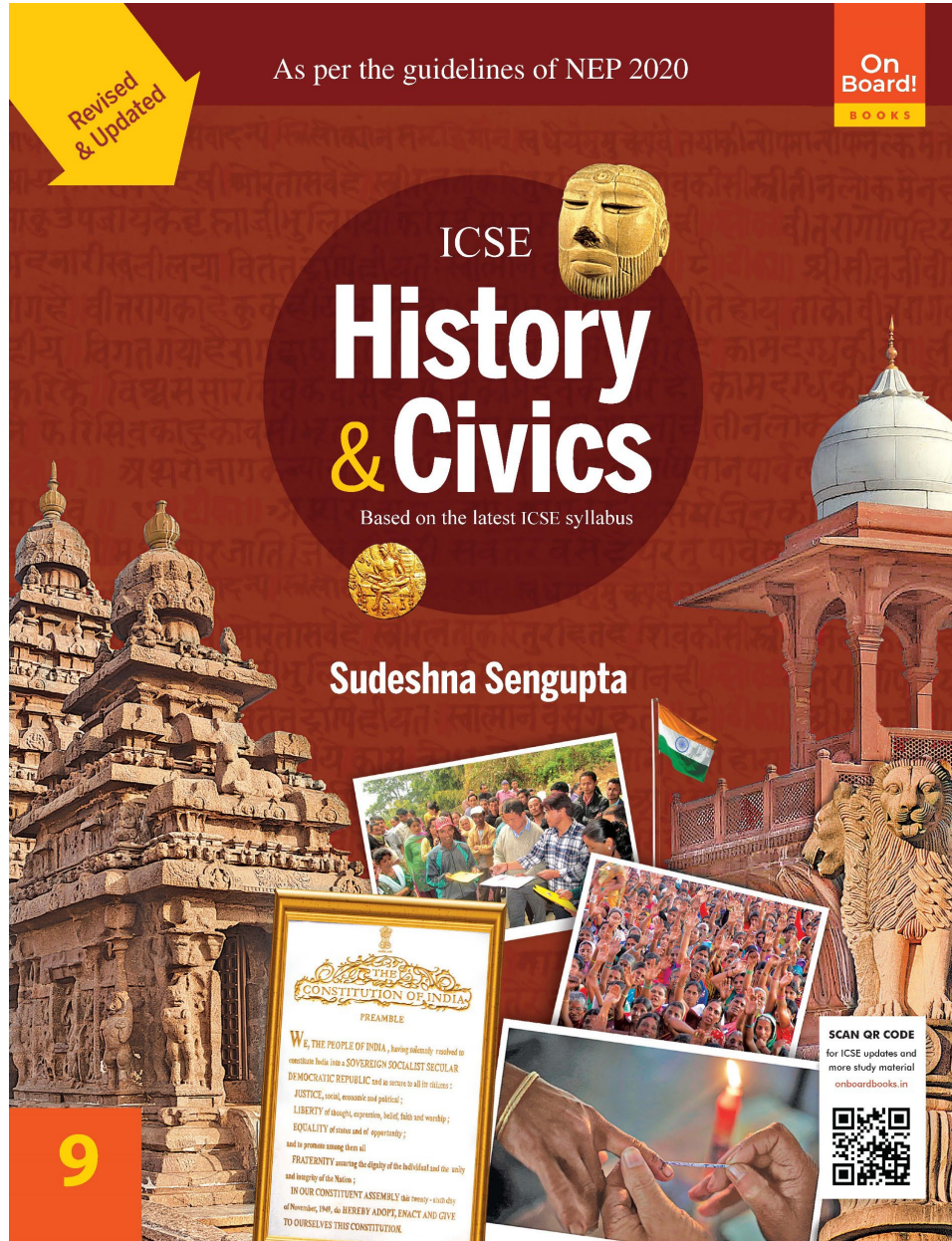


On Board!

B O O K S

History and Civics 9



History 9

Chapter 10: Emergence of a Composite Culture

Inside the Chapter

THE SUFI MOVEMENT

Doctrines of Sufism

The Sufi saints

Impact of Sufism

THE BHAKTI MOVEMENT

Doctrines of the Bhakti Movement

The Bhakti saints

Impact of the Bhakti Movement

Similarities between Bhakti and Sufi saints

CHRISTIANITY

Christianity in India

St Francis Xavier (AD 1506–1552)

Roberto de Nobili (AD 1577–1656)

Impact of Christianity

To Remember

Chapter 10: Emergence of a Composite Culture

During the medieval period, Bhakti and Sufi movements spread across India along with Christianity, which was preached by the Jesuit missionaries. The saints of the Bhakti tradition composed hymns and sang bhajans, glorifying God. The Sufi saints also expressed their devotion through music. The Jesuit missionaries too spread their message through sermons and music. These movements influenced the social and cultural aspects of the society during this period.

THE SUFI MOVEMENT

The Sufi Movement was a liberal reform movement within Islam. It was an endeavour to bridge the differences between the Shia and the Sunni faith. The Sufis preached religious tolerance and oneness of God. Though Sufism represents the mystical dimension of Islam, the Sufi saints transcended all religious and communal distinctions and promoted the interests of humanity at large.

Doctrines of Sufism

- God is supreme and should be worshipped through love and devotion.
- Meditation and chanting of God's name (zikr) is very important.
- Respect all religions. Different religions preach different ways of reaching God.
- Lead a simple life. Keep yourself free from greed.
- Help those in need. Show charity towards the poor.
- Follow a guru (pir) who would show the correct path.

The Sufi Saints

The most renowned of all Sufi saints in India was Hazrat Khwaja Muin-ud-din Chishti, who founded the Chishti Silsilah. Born in AD 1142, he migrated to India and lived in Ajmer till his death. His dargah at Ajmer is an important pilgrimage centre, visited by both Hindus and Muslims. Other prominent Sufi saints of the Chishti Silsilah were Sheikh Qutb-ud-din Bakhtiyar Kaki, Baba Farid, and Hazrat Nizam-ud-din Auliya.

Impact of Sufism

- It led to the growth of Hindu-Muslim unity as toleration towards other religions increased.
- It influenced rulers to become more tolerant in their religious policies.
- As the saints preached in the language of the masses, it enriched the vernacular languages of the day.
- As members across caste and class were welcomed by the Sufi saints, Sufism promoted social cohesion.

THE BHAKTI MOVEMENT

The word bhakti denotes devotion and love for God. The word is derived from bhakta, meaning to serve, honour, revere and love. Bhakti is the attachment or fervent devotion to God. The Bhakti Movement emerged as a reaction to the caste distinction and ritualism so prevalent in the Hindu religion. It began as a reform movement that originated in south India in eighth century AD. The alvar and nayannar saints popularized it.

Doctrines of the Bhakti Movement

- There is only one God and He can be attained through devotion.
- Salvation is possible only through complete devotion.
- As all men are equal, man's actions determine his salvation and not his birth.
- Purity of soul and dignity of life cannot be achieved through meaningless rituals and practices.
- A guru or an enlightened teacher can guide an individual towards realizing the true significance of the Almighty.

The Bhakti Saints

The roots of the Bhakti Movement lay in the revival of Hindu philosophy spearheaded by Adi Shankaracharya.

Sri Ramanujacharya was another prominent Bhakti saint of south India. He raised his voice against the increasing orthodoxy and founded a new school of Vaishnavism based on the gospel of love and devotion. In north India, the Bhakti Movement was popularized by Ramananda.

Sant Kabir Das was a popular Bhakti saint. He believed in the unity of God. God for him was One, the Supreme Reality. Kabir was against idol-worship, performing rituals, bathing in holy rivers, going on pilgrimages and other such forms of worship. He attacked the superstitions of both the brahmans and the qazis. He laid stress on purity of character and conduct, and a life dedicated to bhakti. He also preached ahimsa and asked people not to kill animals for food. Kabir could compose dohas or couplets of extraordinary beauty.

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was an ascetic Hindu monk and social reformer in the late fifteenth century Bengal. He worshipped the Lord in the form of Krishna. He denounced caste distinctions and preached the universal brotherhood of mankind.

Guru Nanak , the first Sikh Guru and founder of Sikhism, was a Bhakti saint and a social reformer. Like Kabir, Nanak emphasized the worship of one God (Ik Onkar).

Guru Nanak insisted on three principles which contain the essence of life. These principles are:

- ‘Naam Japo’ or meditate.
- ‘Kirt Karo’ or work hard and earn by honest deeds.
- ‘Vand Chhako’ or share your earnings with the less fortunate.

Nanak’s teachings are in the form of verses. These have been compiled in the Guru Granth Sahib.

Mirabai was a Bhakti saint from Rajasthan. She was an ardent devotee of Krishna. She believed that one could achieve salvation through complete devotion to Krishna.

Sant Jnaneswar, a thirteenth century Bhakti saint, introduced the movement by denouncing the caste system and idol worship. He popularized the worship of Vithoba, the incarnation of Lord Vishnu.

Tukaram was a sixteenth century Bhakti saint in Maharashtra who composed wonderful verses eulogizing Lord Krishna. He preached against casteism, idol worship, rituals and ceremonies.

The leading light of the Rama cult was the saint-poet Tulsidas. He was a great scholar and had made a profound study of Indian philosophy and literature. His immortal work, Ramacharitamanasa is very popular among the Hindu devotees.

Impact of the Bhakti Movement

- As the Bhakti reformers believed in equality, it helped in forging unity between the Hindus and the Muslims.
- Negation of caste distinctions and meaningless rituals and practices encouraged a liberal outlook amongst the rulers of that age.
- As the reformers preached in the common language of the people, this period witnessed a rich outburst of literary activity.
- The Bhakti reformers are credited with reviving Hinduism.
- The harmony so created between the Hindus and the Muslims stabilized the society and provided opportunities for cultural growth.

Similarities between Bhakti and Sufi saints

- Believed in the unity of God.
- Opposed the prevalent caste system.
- Condemned rituals and idol worship.
- Preached their message in languages spoken by the masses.
- Stressed on the importance of a teacher to guide the devotee's life.

CHRISTIANITY

A major development during the medieval period was the spread of Christianity. It was a religious faith based on the teachings of Jesus Christ. The life and teachings of Jesus Christ are accounted in four short books called the Gospels. The Bible is the holy book of the Christians. It has two parts—the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Christianity in India

Christianity was introduced in India by apostle St Thomas. He preached the message of Jesus Christ. The arrival of Vasco da Gama in AD 1498 opened the doors for the Portuguese missionaries to come to India. In the following years, many Portuguese missionaries arrived in Goa before moving to different parts of the country.

St Francis Xavier (AD 1506–1552)

St Francis Xavier arrived in Goa, on the west coast of India, in AD 1542. Goa was the centre of the Portuguese trade in Asia during this period. After spending some time in Goa, he moved to Cape Comorin. He travelled to other parts of Asia to spread the message of Jesus Christ. He came to be known as the 'Apostle of the Indies'.

Roberto de Nobili (AD 1577–1656)

Roberto de Nobili was a Jesuit missionary who came to Goa in AD 1605. After spending time there, he moved to Madurai, where he lived for a very long time. He spent time learning Tamil and Sanskrit and engaged in discussions with Hindu scholars on their views on Christianity. He even wrote books in Tamil, popularizing the message of Jesus Christ. He continued writing books till the end of his life. Roberto de Nobili faced stiff opposition from the Church as well as from the local people because of his acceptance of local customs and lifestyles.

Impact of Christianity

Akbar, the Mughal emperor, was curious about Christianity. In AD 1579, he sent his ambassador to Goa asking for two learned priests to be sent to his court. Father Rudolph Acquaviva, Father Anthony Monserrate and Brother Francis Henriques reached Fatehpur Sikri. Akbar welcomed them and involved them in religious debates and discussions. The influence of Christianity is seen in architecture too. The Buland Darwaza in Fatehpur Sikri has a verse written on it depicting the Christian faith. It shows Akbar's tolerance and respect for other religions.

To Remember

The Sufi Movement—A liberal reform movement, originated in Persia, was brought to India in the eleventh century AD, Sufism worked for promoting the interests of humanity at large, Doctrines: Devotion important to reach God, to love mankind is to love God, universal brotherhood, equality of all religions, Sufi saints: Hazrat Khwaja Muin-ud-din Chishti, Sheikh Qutb-ud-din Bakhtiyar Kaki, Baba Farid and Hazrat Nizam-ud-din Auliya, Sheikh Baha-ud-din Zakariya of the Suhrawardi Silsilah was equally popular, Impact of Sufism: Growth of Hindu-Muslim unity, influenced the rulers to become more tolerant about their religious policies, vernacular languages flourished, promotion of social cohesion.

The Bhakti Movement—Bhakti meant devotion to God, reaction to caste distinctions, Doctrines: God can be attained through devotion, salvation through complete devotion, all men are equal, man's actions determine his salvation and not his birth, peace of soul and dignity of life emphasized, importance of guru stressed, Bhakti saints: The movement was spearheaded by Shankaracharya, Ramanujacharya, Guru Ramananda, Sant Kabir, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Guru Nanak, Mirabai, Sant Jnaneswar, Tukaram, Impact of Bhakti: Promoted harmony between the Hindus and the Muslims, negation of caste distinctions and meaningless rituals and practices, vernacular literature flourished, revival of Hinduism, stabilized the society and provided opportunities for cultural growth, Similarities between Bhakti and Sufi saints: Believed in the unity of God, preached their message in local languages, opposed idol worship and rituals, stressed the role of a teacher in a devotee's life.

Christianity—Christianity is based on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, *The Bible* is the holy book of the Christians, Christianity introduced in India by St Thomas, St Francis Xavier arrived in Goa in AD 1542, He is also known as the 'Apostle of the Indies', Roberto de Nobili came to India in AD 1605, later moved to Madurai and lived as a Brahmin *sanyasi* wearing ochre-colour robes, sacred thread, wooden shoes, carrying a stick and eating only vegetarian food, wrote books in Tamil, Impact of Christianity: Father Rudolph Acquaviva, Father Anthony Monserrate and Brother Francis Henriques arrived in the court of Akbar in Fatehpur Sikri, Father Jerome Xavier translated the life of Christ in Persian in a book called the *Dastan-i-Masih*, Christianity influenced the traditions of Mughal art and architecture.

Thank You