



মহাশিক্ষা বিভাগ (মাম)

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (S)

Government of Manipur

CHAPTER- 15

POPULAR BELIEFS AND RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENTS

NOTES:

- Human beings worship god and follow different religions and such intense devotion or love of god had developed in India from various Bhakti and Sufi movements that came up in the eighth century AD.

A .BHAKTI MOVEMENT:

- Before the emergence of large kingdoms, different group of people worshipped their own god and goddesses. With time new ideas began to develop and people accepted the idea of birth rebirth, the idea of inequality among human beings etc.
- There was emergence of new religion like that of Buddhism and Jainism and these religions advocated the cycle of rebirth and social difference could be removed through personal efforts.
- The idea of Bhakti became very popular in the early Christian centuries and Bhakti means personal devotion to god, which laid emphasis on the union of the individual with God.
- The idea of Bhakti was first developed in south India by Saiva Nayanars and Vaishnavite Alvars who preached devotion to God as a means of Salvation.
- Some of the important Bhakti saints were Guru Nanak, Kabir, Ramananda, Mirabai etc.

RAMANUJA :

- Ramanuja was a follower of Lord Vishnu and he was from South India.
- He taught his follower that it is only through personal devotion that one could attain salvation and he was perhaps the first to preach the message of love.

RAMANANDA :

- Ramananda a disciple of Ramanuja was born in Allahabad. But unlike his teacher he worshipped Ram and Sita .
- He had followers of all caste and religion and he was the first Bhakti saint to preach in Hindi.

MIRABAI :

- Mirabai was a Rajput princess and was a devotee of Lord Krishna and her devotion was too intense that she considered herself married to Lord Krishna.
- She was one of the famous Bhakti saints .
- After the death of her husband she spent her later days at Vrindavan, worshipping Lord Vishnu for the rest of her life.

CHAITANYA :

- Chaitanya was born in Nadia (Bengal) and he was a great devotee of Lord Krishna.
- He travelled all over India but most of the time stayed at Gaya, from where his life got changed at the age of 22.
- He popularized the musical gathering called kirtan as a special form of worship and his teachings had great influence particularly in the eastern part of India.

B .KABIR (1440-1518): A CASE STUDY

- Kabir was one of the closest disciple of Ramananda and he substituted the worship of Rama instead of Vishnu.
- He believed in one formless God, rejected the Vedas and the Quran and the supremacy of the Brahmanas and Mullahs.
- He preached the unity of God and the path of love and devotion and use to sing, expressing in verses his love and devotion for God and his Dohas (devotions) had a great appeal on common people.

C. GURU NANAK (1469-1539): A CASE STUDY

- Guru Nanak was the founder of Sikhism and he was born in Talwandi (Nanakana) in 1469 AD and he was a mystic and householder in the tradition of the Sants (Holy men) and the Sufi saints.
- He also believed in one formless creator and was against all rituals and idol worship .
- He preached the message of love, equality between men and women.
- He started Langar (common kitchen) where all could dine together and also he advocated a middle path in which spiritual life could be combined with the duties of the householder.
- His liberal approach was the bridge between the Hindus and the Muslims.

D. ISLAM AND SUFISM.

- Islam emphasised on equality and brotherhood and they worshipped only one God and were against Idol worship.
- Later the Muslims got divided into two groups- the Shias and Sunnis .The Shias were more liberal than the Sunnis in their religious views and practices.
- The Sufis were Muslim mystics, which mean one who is pure. They emphasized love and devotion to God and compassion towards all human beings. Also they rejected elaborate rituals and codes of behaviour demanded by religious Muslim scholars.
- The Sufis composed poems to express their feelings and thus, a rich literature developed.
- The Sufis were organized into 12 silsilahs, each led by a prominent mystic and the link between the master (Pir) and disciples (Murids) was the vital part of the Sufi system.
- The prominent Sufi saint Khwaja Muin - ud- Din Chisti came to India in around 1192 and settled at Ajmer, Rajasthan.
- He encouraged devotional music and Qawalis, which are still popular .He died in 1236 and was buried at Ajmer.
- Baba Farid was a disciple of Muin - ud- Din Chisti and he confined his activities to Hausi(Haryana) and Adojan (Punjab) preaching love for God and composed beautiful verses.
- Nizam-ud-Din was a disciple of Baba Farid and the greatest Sufi saint who lived in Delhi during Ala-ud-Din Khalji's time.

E .HINDUISM IN MANIPUR:

- It is not exactly known about when did Hinduism come to Manipur but it is generally agreed that the reign of King Kyamba (1467-1508) was a milestone in the history of Hinduism in Manipur.
- No Manipuri king was formally initiated into Vaishnavism until the time of Charairongba (1697-1709) and he was formally initiated into Vaishnavism in April 1704 by a Brahmana named Krishnacharya from Puri, Orissa.
- Vaishnavism in Manipur reached further height in the time of King Garibniwaz (1709-1748) and he continued to follow the faith of his father Charairongba but later changed to another Vaishnavism called Gaudiya Vaishnavism, and again changed into Ramanandi Vaishnavism and it became the official religion of the land.
- Vaishnavism reached greater height during the reign of King Bhagyachandra(1763-1798) and he followed Gaudiya Vaishnavism.
- The image of Govindajee was installed in Langthabal palace in 1779 by King Bhayachandra and it was he who composed the famous dance drama, Rasa Leela.
- There were three distinct sects of Vaishnavism in Manipur- Nimandi , Ramanandi and Gaudiya.

F. ISLAM IN MANIPUR:

- It was during King Khagemba's time that Muslims came to Manipur. They were prisoners whom Khagemba had defeated along with the Kaccharis in 1606.
- They settled as a separate community in Manipur and their numbers increased as more Muslims came from Sylhet and Assam and they adopted Manipuri as their mother tongue and today they are known as Meitei Pangan .
- A new royal department known as the Pangan Shanglen was established to look after the Muslims.
- The office of Qazi introduced by Khagemba looked after the affairs of the Muslims including the Islamic laws.