

## The Magnificence of Indian Renaissance

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*The Indian Renaissance is a significant aspect of nineteenth-century India which gave a new vitality and a driving force to flourish. This research about historical Indian Renaissance prioritizes contemporary records of the times of Indian Renaissance and also is based on consultation and interviews with the profound historians of present time. Not only did the Indian Renaissance give birth to many social and religious movements in India, but it also had a significant impact on every element of Indian citizens. The dawn of empowered religiousness, strengthening of societies, intellectuality, ancient Indian history discovery, revelation of ancient literature, regional language, growth of fine-arts, cultural heritage, rise of middle class, and the birth of nationalism have been shaped by the Renaissance. The arena of life got enriched because of the progress brought about by the Renaissance. The enactment of social and traditional reforms has a positive and everlasting ripple in the development and economic prosperity of India.*

[**Keywords** : Renaissance, National awakening, Intellectuality, Nationalism, Cultural significance]

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## **1. Background**

The Indian Renaissance is a significant aspect of nineteenth-century India. By the turn of the nineteenth century, Indian culture had utterly lost its morale in the face of western culture (Majumdar et al., 1957 : 943). The educated Indians lost faith in their own culture and looked to the west for inspiration. They blindly mimicked western clothes, manners, literature, ideas, and everything else associated with the west, but at the same time, a new thought entered the Indians' brains, inspiring them in every aspect of their lives, including society, religion, literature, fine arts, politics, and so on (Vaidya, personal communication, November 16, 2021).

The new notion sparked a rush of inspiration and emotion, and the subsequent effects were dubbed the Indian Renaissance (Smith, 1958 : 813). The Indian Renaissance, like the European Renaissance in the sixteenth century, influenced every aspect of Indian life and resulted in substantial changes. It gave Indian culture a new lease of life and a new sense of purpose (De Smet, 1968). It was influenced by western ideas like as reason, equality, and liberty. It enthralled the Indians and remedied their cultural flaws. It was therefore given new vitality and a driving force to flourish. The Indians believed that Indian culture is wonderful and that it had the potential to evolve and tackle the challenges of Western civilization. As a result, they worked to restore the splendor of Indian culture, reform Indian society and religion, and improve every aspect of life (Smith, 1958 : 817). There was no aspect of Indian life that was spared from the impact of the Indian Renaissance. Present times in India is beautifully shaped by Indian ethos and past events that have been a road map to the future as well (Bhattacharya & Bhattacharya, 2014).

## **2. Material/Methodology**

The study is based on primary and secondary data collection methods. This research about historical incidents of Indian Renaissance prioritizes contemporary records of the times of Indian Renaissance and also is based on consultation and interviews with the profound historians of present time. The article scrutinizes historical relevance based on discerning the facts and analyzing the information present in historical records. The findings have been compiled referring to the past events and validating by complementing interviews. Then, the data are interpreted into the

article. E-library, documents, semi-structured interviews have contributed to the making of the manuscript. The interpretation of the data as well as its analysis is research-oriented and effort has been put to maintain and preserve authenticity, credibility, reliability and evidentiality for the research community. The views and arguments of multiple writers of this sector have been considered and given due respect in demonstrating research analysis.

### **3. Research Findings**

Not only did the Indian Renaissance give birth to many social and religious movements in India, but it also had a profound impact on every element of Indian life. It motivated Indians to improve their policy, economy, literature, and fine arts, among other things (Majumdar et al., 1957 : 817). Its impact was felt not only in the nineteenth century, but also in the twentieth century, and it aided Indian progress in all aspects.

#### **3.1 Dawn of Empowered Religion**

The Indians' religious life improved as a result of the Renaissance. Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Parsis, and other religious communities in India strove to modernize and simplify their religion (Raghubansi, 1973 : 12-15). The Hindus made the most successful attempt. The Brahma samaj, the Arya samaj, the Ramkrishna mission, the Theosophical society, and other societies strove to enhance Hinduism and bring it back to its former glory. They instilled among Hindus a sense of self-assurance and pride in their religion, enabling them to face the onslaught of Islam and Christianity on their religion and society. Foreign intellectuals like Max Muller, Sir William Jones, Charles Wilkins, and others contributed to the revival of India's ancient grandeur (Smith, 1958, p. 818). They translated various Hindu holy scriptures and demonstrated that they were among the world's best religious treaties. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was inspired by them and founded Brahma samaj to combat the Hindu religion's evils. Swami Dayananda went on to say that the Vedas contain the absolute and only truth. Swami Vivekananda elevated Hinduism to a new level of spirituality (Chaudhari, 1993 : 292).

These religious reformers strove to reform Hinduism, establishing faith among Hindus and spreading the Hindu message and spirituality throughout the world. It boosted Hinduism's

popularity. The Aligarh Movement did the same thing for Muslims (Chaudhari, 1993 : 298).

### **3-2 Strengthened Societies**

Religious reforms were not the only focus of 19th-century religious movements. Each of them made a concerted effort to rid society of its ills, including among Hindus. Many societal problems were justified as religious activities so that the average man would not dare to oppose them, despite the fact that none of them had anything to do with religion. All of them had infiltrated Hindu culture due to a naïve faith in traditions. This century's religious reformers waged a fight against these social ills. They informed the people that none of these societal ills had anything to do with religion, and that eliminating them would not be an irreligious act, but rather a positive religious and moral act because doing so would eventually strengthen them (Subedi, personal communication, December 2, 2021).

As a result, the Brahma samaj, Arya samaj, Ram Krishna Paramhansa mission, Theosophical organization, and others preached against caste system, child marriages, sati, female infanticide, untouchability, weddings with minor girls, and the Purdha system (Chhabra, 1984 : 209). There were no societal problems that these religious societies did not openly condemn, and their leaders took proactive attempts to combat them. They promoted inter-caste marriages and inter-dining, organized widows' marriages, established girls' schools, emphasized gender equality and the Arya Samaj, and even continued the Suddhi movement, bringing back a huge number of converted Muslims and Christians into the Hindu fold. Most of the social ills that Hindu society has rejected and that the government has now deemed unlawful were challenged by social and religious reformers in the nineteenth century. As a result, they were the forerunners in this sector (Chhabra, 1984 : 657).

### **3-3 Advancement in Reasoning Attitude**

The development of a rational mind-set was both a cause and an outcome of the Indian Renaissance. The Indians were mostly traditionalists who lived by faith alone. One of the fundamental causes of their inaction and backwardness was that they were fatalists. The majority of Indians, particularly Hindus, suffered the

most as a result of them (Grober, 1997 : 683). As a result, in the nineteenth century, the Indians were left with nothing but blind confidence in their community and religion. Intellectualism, reason, right and evil, and justice had all but vanished from their minds. Such a civilization could never develop since western education and culture destroyed the Indians' naïve faith. Finally, educated Indians began to think rationally and distinguish between right and wrong in matters of religion, society, politics, and the economy, among other things (Jones, 1994 : 187). Reason and intellectualism aided them in pursuing the correct course of action in all aspects of life, resulting in their overall advancement. The adduction and investigation of contemporary Indian parlance guides intellectualism and leadership till date (Bharati, 1970).

### **3.4 Discovery of ancient Indian History**

The Indians had lost touch with their cultural and historical legacy and had no way of recovering it. In this field, foreign scholars have made a start. Scholars like Dr. Fuller and James Fergusson. Dr. Slust, Percy Brown, and John Marshall discovered historical movements, paintings, sculptures, and literature, among other things. These, in various locations in India and overseas, demonstrated that India has a rich cultural past (Jones, 1994 : 194). Then the Indians were interested in this topic, and offers to learn about old Indian history were made. The Indians were sure that they had a magnificent history because of the knowledge they gained through historical sources.

The findings of the Harappa civilization, the vedic culture, the history of various Hindu dynasties, the spread of Indian culture in foreign countries, the frescoes, the beautiful pieces of sculpture in the form of idols of gods and goddesses, men and women, temples and forts, etc. convinced the Indians that they had attained a far superior culture than the west in ancient times and that they did not need to be ashamed of their country and culture (Jones, 1994 : 198). They should, on the contrary, be proven of them and join in the job of renewing their culture and way of life. Many foreigners and Indians collaborated in this effort, and the past Indian history and culture were discovered (Mittal, 1998 : 286-90). The Bhandarkar Oriental Institute, the Indian Archaeological Survey, and a number of other similar organizations have all contributed to the discovery of Indian history and culture. It has not only restored India's previous

greatness, but it has also aided in the reconstruction of modern India (Mahajan, 1990 : 319).

### **3-5 The Revelation of Ancient Literature**

The Indian Renaissance also aided in the discovery of India's ancient literature in Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit, and other Indian languages. The Indians had lost all ties to their old literature, and many texts were not available in their own language. In this discipline, western scholars once again assumed the lead. Scholars such as Charles Wilkins, Sir William Jones, Colebrook, Wilson Williams, Max Muller, and others discovered old literature and obtained many manuscripts from other nations, which they translated and published. Wilkins compiled Manu Smriti, Shakuntala, and many other texts, while Jones translated Gita (Jones, 1994 : 196). Hitopadesh and Panini's grammar were collated by Colebrook, while the Vedas were translated into English by Max Muller. Several western scholars did similar work, and the Indians later picked up the thread and worked tirelessly in this field (Basham, 1954 : 233). This resulted in the recovery of Indian wisdom from the past, elevating their stature in the world and giving them confidence in their religion, community, and culture.

### **3-6 Growth of Regional Language**

The Indian Renaissance ushered in the advancement of literature in India's various regional languages, such as Hindi, Gujrati, Bengali, Urdu, Marathi, Telegu, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, and others. Most of these languages possessed just a little amount of literature in the form of folklore, religious prayers and stories, descriptions of heroic deeds, and so on, and their written literature was almost non-existent. Furthermore, there was a scarcity of text materials for youngsters to learn these languages. Christian missionaries who translated the Bible into many regional languages established the prose style in them first (Allam et al., 1961 : 779). Then, in this field, newspapers, magazines, and the press in various regional languages performed a constructive purpose. After that, numerous experts published works in their regional languages, and each language's literature grew throughout time.

### **3-7 Development of Scientific Mind-set**

As a result of their exposure to western culture and English education, the Indians developed a scientific mindset. The British



established a number of science education institutes as well as research laboratories. The Indians took full advantage of the opportunity and contributed to the advancement of scientific knowledge in a variety of fields (Gupta, 1983 : 126). It instilled in Indians a scientific and research mind-set, allowing them to advance in other sectors as well.

### **3-8 Industrialization Direction**

The Indians were also educated as well as enlightened by the Renaissance in terms of their economic situation. They realized that their economy had been ruined by British domination. It had devastated their cottage industries, putting agricultural pressure on them, and the only solution was to industrialize. Despite all of their disadvantages, some of them were able to develop a few industries. The First World War provided more opportunities for industrial development, and India progressed down its industrial development path, albeit slowly and painfully (Jones, 1994 : 198).

### **3-9 The Growth of Fine Arts**

The Renaissance influenced the growth of fine arts; individuals such as sister Nivedta and Havell recognized the soul of Indian painting and restored the old art of India. The Indians also contributed to this field (Chhabra, 1984 : 21). The Indian Society of Orient Art was founded by Avanindra Nath. Surrendra Ganguly, Nanda Lal Bose, and Ajit Kumar Haldhar, their students, also contributed to the realm of Indian painting. The paintings of Abdur Rahman Chaytai, Amrita Shergil, Rabindranath Tagore, and Dr. Kumar Swamy also contributed significantly. Shanti Niketan and the Art Schools of Bombay, Shimla, Baroda, Calcutta, and other cities contribute to the education and development of Indian painting today (Basham, 1954 : 237).

Large spectrum of sculpture practices and discourses are influenced by what constituted in the field of art in the past (Guha-Thakurta, 2002). In addition, the Indians began working in the fields of sculpture and architecture. They drew influence from old Indian art in this subject and also picked up some tips from the western style.

India made significant development in the field of music and dance in ancient times, which motivated them in modern times as well, and institutions were founded to educate Indians in music and

dance at various locations such as the School of Music Gwalior (Mittal, 1998 : 291).

### **3-10 The Rise of Middle Class**

India's success in several fields spawned the Indian middle class, which in turn aided India's progress in all aspects of life. The Indian middle class consisted of teachers, doctors, attorneys, scientists, and journalists, among others. India's middle class produced social reformers, national leaders, philosophers, and others who enriched Indian life in several sectors (Natraj, 1972 : 97). Even India's independence was largely the consequence of the Indian middle class's efforts.

### **3-11 The birth of Indian Nationalism**

The Indian Renaissance aided in the development of national consciousness and the independence movement in India. It encouraged national patriotism by celebrating the national in various fields of life (Majumdar, 1972 : 97). All of India's renaissance leaders, whether they were social and religious reformers, literary personalities, artists, scholars, or scientists (Gautam, personal communication, October 23, 2021), were patriots who loved their country and strived to improve it. As a result, they all campaigned for national unity and, eventually, national independence (Majumdar, 1972 : 307).

## **4. Conclusion**

Indian Renaissance is a glorious influence in the spheres of Indian life as well as lifestyle. The arena of life got enriched because of the progress brought about by the Renaissance. It helped India evolve into the country that it has become today. Renaissance is a time of rebirth and rejuvenation. In a country as old as India, there have been countless renewals and reawakening. As typically as the word Renaissance symbolizes rebirth, the revival that has been fostered by the historical events have shaped and bolstered today's India ranging from smaller to larger areas of security and development. Social, regional, cultural, educational, industrial, economical, moral, artistic benefits brought about by those periods of time have made a strong foundation of India. Due to this, India is a strong country which has revived knowledge and science into the doings of modern times. The story of India's awakening is significant



and has resurged vitality. The enactment of social and traditional reforms has a positive and everlasting ripple in the development of India.

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## **Interviews**

Gautam, B. N., (October 23, 2021). Personal communication [Personal interview]

Prof. Dr. Gautam is a historian, writer and an expert of democratic movement of Nepal and has specialization in Modern Indian History.

Vaidya, T. R., (November 16, 2021). Personal communication [Personal interview]

Prof. Dr. Vaidya (former vice-chancellor of Lumbini Bouddha University) is a renowned historian and writer of Nepal.

Subedi, R. R., (December 2, 2021). Personal communication [Personal interview]

Prof. Dr. Subedi is a writer and historian of Nepal. He is former Head of the Department of Central Department of History, Tribhuvan University. ★