7. Changing Cultural Traditions

1. Which elements of Greek and Roman culture were revived in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries?

Answer:

Science, philosophy, art and architecture, law and religion were the elements of Greek and Roman culture revived in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

2. Compare details of Italian architecture of this period with Islamic architecture.

Answer:

Italian architecture:

Italian architecture developed with the revival of the city of Rome in the fifteenth century. The ruins in Rome were carefully excavated by archaeologists. This inspired a 'new' style in architecture, a revival of the imperial Roman style - now called 'classical'.

Islamic architecture:

Religious buildings were the greatest external symbols of the Islamic architecture. Mosques, shrines and tombs from Spain to Central Asia showed the same basic design - arches, domes, minarets and open courtyards - and expressed the spiritual and practical needs of Muslims.

3. Why were Italian towns the first to experience the ideas of humanism?

Answer:

Italian towns were the first to experience the ideas of humanism because the earliest European universities were established there. The universities of Padua and Bologna were major centres for legal studies from the eleventh century.
Law was, therefore, a popular subject of study.

However, there was a shift in it; now, it was studied in the context of earlier Roman culture.

This educational programme suggested that religious teaching alone could not give knowledge, and other fields in society and nature that should be analyzed. This culture was 'humanism'.

4. Compare the Venetian idea of good government with those in contemporary France.

Answer:

There was a democratic government in Venice. The power of the city was exercised by a council represented by all the men of 25 years. In France, there was monarchy that ruled it. The king and his family members ruled.

Answer in a short essay

5. What were the features of humanist thought?

Answer:

1. The humanists were the masters who taught grammar, rhetoric, poetry, history and moral philosophy.
2. They emphasized that law should be studied in the context of the culture of the ancient Greeks and Romans.
3. They taught that individuals themselves could shape their own lives through means other than religion, power and money.
4. Christian humanists like Thomas More in England and Erasmus in Holland criticised the Church and its greedy rituals for extorting money from ordinary people.
5. Some of the humanists believed that more wealth was virtue and criticised Christianity for creating moral guilty against pleasure.
6. They also believed that the study of history leads man to strive for a life of perfection. They used the word 'modern' for the period from the fifteenth century.

6. Write a careful account of how the world appeared different to seventeenth-century Europeans.

Answer:

1. In the seventeenth-century, the world appeared to Europeans without any role of God in the material life of humans.
2. From the sixteenth century onwards, many scientific discoveries were made. For example, Copernicus' heliocentric theory asserted that the earth (also other planets) rotates around the sun and disproved the Bible's notion that the earth was the center of the universe.
3. Johannes Kepler popularised the theory of the earth as part of a sun-centered system, in his book *Cosmographical Mystery.*
4. This revolution in science reached its climax with Isaac Newton's theory of gravitation.
5. The scientists had shown that knowledge of the world can be obtained only through observation and experiments of the material world, and not from the religious texts and faith in God.
6. Consequently, in the minds of skeptics and non believers, God began to be replaced by Nature as the source of creation.
7. Even the religious believers started reviewing their faith in God and started talking about a distant God who does not directly supervise the act of living in the world.