

Rise of Jainism and Buddhism

Jainism and Buddhism are two of the ancient Indian religions that have gained significant popularity over the centuries. The rise of these two religions has been attributed to several factors, including the **societal and cultural changes** that took place during their inception.



Figure 4: Rise of Jainism and Buddhism

- The complex rituals and sacrifices advocated in the Later Vedic period were not acceptable to the common people.
- The sacrificial ceremonies were also found to be too expensive.
- The superstitious beliefs and mantras confused the people.
- The teachings of Upanishads, were highly philosophical in nature and therefore not easily understood by all.
- Other than the religious factor, social and economic factors also contributed to the rise of these two religions.
- The rigid caste system prevalent in India generated tensions in the society.
- Higher classes enjoyed certain privileges which were denied to the lower classes. Also, the Kshatriyas had resented the domination of the priestly class.

Therefore, what was needed in the larger interests of the people was a simple, short and intelligible way to salvation for all people. Such religious teaching should also be in a language known to them. This need was fulfilled by the teachings of Buddha and Mahavira.

Rise of Jainism

Jainism, founded by **Lord Mahavira** in the 6th century BCE, emphasizes the importance of non-violence and self-control in all aspects of life. The religion also stresses the importance of knowledge, self-realization, and the pursuit of truth. **Jainism was initially popular among merchants and traders**, who valued its teachings of non-violence and honesty. However, over time, it gained widespread acceptance among the general population.

Rise of Buddhism

Buddhism, founded by **Lord Buddha** in the **5th century BCE**, arose as a response to the societal and cultural issues prevalent at the time, such as poverty, disease, and death. Buddhism emphasizes the importance of following the **Eightfold Path**, which includes right understanding, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. Buddhism gained popularity in India through the support of the royal court and merchants, who valued its teachings of compassion, wisdom, and the path to enlightenment.

In conclusion, the rise of Jainism and Buddhism in India can be attributed to their teachings and values, which resonated with the people of the time and provided them with a sense of purpose and direction. These religions continue to be followed by millions of people around the world today, and their influence can be seen in various aspects of modern-day Indian culture and society.