

**SOCIAL AND CULTURAL HISTORY OF BRITAIN:II**  
**MODULE I-AGE OF TRANSITIONS**  
**ANGLICAN REFORMATION**

**IV SEMESTER**

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# Anglican Reformation



- The history of Britain from the early 16th to the late 17th century was dominated by two processes.
- One was the **cultural, religious, and political transformation of both England and Scotland from Catholicism to Protestantism.**
- The other was the joining of the two nations under a single dynasty ruling the entire British archipelago—the **“kingdom of Great Britain,”** when James VI of Scotland became James I of England after the death of the last Tudor queen, Elizabeth I.

- The Anglican Reformation- a series of events in 16<sup>th</sup> century in England by which the church of England broke away from the authority of the Pope and Roman Catholic church.
- These events were partly associated with the Protestant Reformation of Europe.
- The protestant reformation was the religious, political, intellectual and cultural upheaval took place in the 16<sup>th</sup> century that splintered Catholic Europe.
- Began in Germany by Martin Luther in 1517 who published a “95 Theses” questioning Papacy and abuses of Roman Catholic church, soon it spread to other states like Switzerland, France and England.
- Basically it was a movement to purify catholic church but eventually it brought split in church – Catholic and Protestant

- The Reformation in England arose almost as a unique event.
- The most important monarch in the story of the English Reformation was **Henry VIII** (1491–1547; r. 1509–47).
- Henry's Reformation **began not with an interest in Protestant doctrines**, to which he was resolutely opposed, **but by difficulties with the Catholic Church**.
- Earlier Henry VIII was honoured with the title of “**Defender of Faith**” by Pope when he extended unconditional support to oppose Martin Luther.
- The request of English king to divorce his queen **Catherine of Aragon** and marry his lover **Anne Boleyn** was turned down by **Pope Clement VII**.



- Henry was particularly worried because **Catherine had failed to give birth to the male** heir who would cement the Tudor claim to the English throne. (Catherine gave birth to six children but five died within a few weeks. Only one child - Mary)
- Catherine was a close relative of Spanish king who was a staunch Catholic and useful Supporter of the Pope.
- Frustrated in his attempts to win a divorce, **Henry eventually removed the English church from the pope's jurisdiction** and put it **under his own headship** in the **Act of Supremacy of 1534**.

- Henry further dissolved monasteries and other religious institutions, selling much of their land and adding their wealth to the royal coffers. ○
- There was a vast increase in the activity of the central government associated with the Reformation.
- The Reformation did not openly violate established ideas of the rule of law, nor was it simply carried out by royal decree.
- At every stage, new laws were passed in Parliament.
- The dissolution of the Catholic monasteries and the confiscation of their lands was an enormous windfall for the monarchy, most of which was spent on Henry's court and wars in France and Scotland.
- Then by the order of king, each parish was to own a Bible in English .
- Exactly differed from Protestantism – in 1539 Henry wrote “the 6 articles” adopted by parliament which resolutely condemned Luther's ideas.

- Henry was succeeded by his son **Edward VI** who continued the reform activities and tried to provide certain doctrinal form to the English Reformation
- The preparation of the **Book of Common Prayer** provided the necessary doctrinal form.
- the entire reformation scenario was turned upside down during the period of the next ruler **Mary Tudor**, catholic supporter.
- Persecution of protestants – 300 burnt alive including bishop Thomas Cranmer , archbishop of Canterbury for 20 years.
- Known as bloody Mary
- When she died without an heir in 1558, Elizabeth succeeded her.

- Elizabeth – daughter of Henry VIII and Ann Boleyn.
- Elizabeth re-instituted the Supremacy Act in 1559.
- The Act of Supremacy defined Queen Elizabeth as ‘Supreme Governor rather than ‘Supreme Head’ of the Church.
- The Act of Uniformity revived the Protestant Prayer Book of 1552, with certain alterations acceptable to Catholics
- She appointed new bishops to revise the doctrine of church
- Result was a text called “39 articles” adopted as the official text by Anglicans
- Brought peace in the country and a compromise between opposing sides.
- Established the English National Church- Anglican Church – confirming royal supremacy