CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF ENLIGHTMENT

- The enlightenment movement commenced in France during 18th century.
- The influence of scientific perspective was witnessed in Europe.
- The impact of science and rationale was crystal clear during the period.
- Henceforth also referred to as Intellectual Revolution.
- Reason, tolerance and humanity became the most popular expression.
- Style of literature was analytical.
- Literature was more optimistic.
- Thoughts were creative

Voltaire

- Most dominant French writer of the 18th century
- Born in Paris, 1694
- Real name Francois Marie Arouet
- Influenced by Francis Bacon, Shakespeare, Newton, John Locke
- Captivated at the fort of Bastille, at the age of 21 for writing against Louis-XIV
• His ideology-
• Condemned church
• Condemned the superstations prevailing in church
• Entire literature writing reflected counteraction against Roman Catholic Church.
• Advocated freedom of religion
• Laid emphasis on freedom of speech
• Recognized separation of state and church
• Wrote first poem Oedipus in 1718
• Wrote La Henriade in 1723
• Subject was religious tolerance
• Was an epic poem
• Written completely in French
• Next was Maid of Orleans
• Highly influenced by the writings of Shakespeare he wrote La Mart de Ceaser and letters on the English
• Letters on the English criticized the prevailing religious system and praised England’s constitutional monarchism, freedom of speech, respect for civil rights, civil liberty, religious tolerance, respect for philosophers and scientists
• Its copies were burnt and prohibited in France
• Writings-
• History of Charles-XII
• Age of Louis-XIV
• Essays on Custom and spirit of Nations
• Philosophical Dictionary
• Treatise on Tolerance

Montesquieu

• French Philosopher, historian, idealist
• Born in 1679, a century before the French Revolution
• Also called Charles Louis de Secondat
• Influenced by Aristotle, John Locke, Descartes,
• Famous for the theory of separation of power
• First book publication – The Persian Letters
• Published in 1721
• French name Letters Persanes
• Gained immense popularity
• Therefore had to resign from the position of Judge
• Second book – the Greatness and Decadence of the Romans
• Another book was Spirit of Law
• Published in 1748
• Formed the basis for drafting the Constitution of America
• Condemned the monarchy, appreciated the democratic form of governance
• Laid emphasis on the separation of power – executive, legislative and judiciary
• Spirit of Law was included in the list of Prohibited Books
• Was the most acclaimed book in Britain
• Other books - true History published in 1723
• Essay on Taste - 1757

Rousseau

• French philosopher
• Born in Geneva, June 28, 1712
• Influenced by Voltaire, Montesquieu, John Locke, Plato, Hobbs
• His personal life was complete saturated in poverty therefore the life hardship completely reflected in his thoughts which shaped up with the passage of time
• Criticized modern civilization
• Condemned materialism
• Believer of the fact that hardships only lead to success in moral progress
• Easy life invites laziness and is not connected to any development
• Believer of inequality, which is basically of two types; first natural and second societal inequality
• Maintained expression of thoughts
• Freedom of speech
• Criticized absolute monarchy
• Criticized the concept of divine rights of King
• Strongly believed in democracy
• Came in the forefront after the publication of his first article-Discourse
• Books written-
  • The origin if Inequality- 1755
  • The New Helicus – 1761
  • Emile – 1762
  • Social Contrast – 1762
  • Emilie was completely written on education
• After the publication of Emilie, orders were passed for his imprisonment
• published an article in 1754 entitled, Discourses on Science and art
• Characteristic feature of writings was strong content
• Napoleon stated- “If Rousseau had not taken birth the emergence of French revolution had not taken place
• Deep impact on people’s mind
• Stirred their thoughts, more simulative
• Also regarded as the Messiah of revolutionaries by Leo Gersho