

UNIT

8

The Beginning of the Modern Age



Learning Objectives

The objectives of this lesson are to acquaint ourselves with

- Cultural, religious and economic changes that shaped the modern world
- Humanism as an idea transforming the outlook of the people of the Middle Ages
- Protestant Reformation that emphasised more faith than rituals
- Discovery of America and new sea routes to the East leading to commercial revolution and establishment of colonies



Introduction

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Western Europe underwent dramatic changes in the political, social, cultural, religious and economic spheres. The Italian humanist Petrarch's *Canzoniere*, German theologian Martin Luther's 'Ninety-five Theses' and Portugal Prince Henry's Navigation School heralded the dawn of the modern era. The Holy Roman Empire and the Roman Church became weak and discredited. In their place nation states, new Churches that emphasized individual faith, and a commercial revolution

based on mercantilism emerged. The modern era was characterized by freedom of thought, individualism, rationalism, and economic and scientific progress. In this lesson let us look at the changes ushered in by the **Renaissance, Reformation and Geographical Discoveries.**

8.1 Causative Factors

8.1(a) Growth of Trade and Rise of Towns

With the decline of Feudalism, Europe was gradually moving towards urbanisation. This process started first in Italy because