



Philosopher-saint Ramanujacharya

For Prelims: Ramanujacharya, Bhakti movement, Statue of Equality.

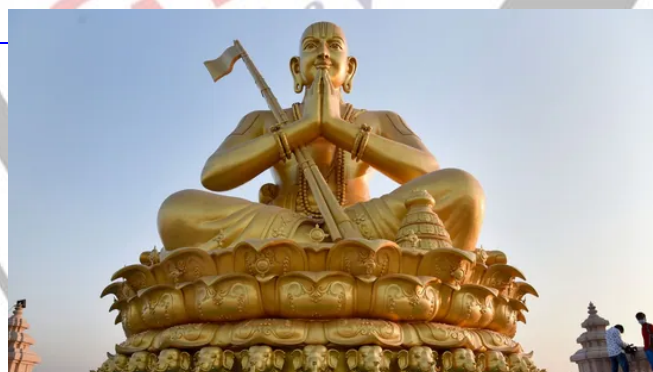
For Mains: Ramanujacharya and his role in Bhakti movement and achieving social equality, Statue of Equality and its Significance.

Why in News ?

The Prime Minister will inaugurate the **Statue of Equality**, a statue of **Ramanujacharya**, on the outskirts of Hyderabad, Telangana.

- India is celebrating his 1,000th birth anniversary as the **'Festival of Equality'**, upholding the view that the world is one family, **'vasudhaiva kutumbakam',**

What Are the Basic Facts About Statue ? //



- It is a 216-foot tall statue, which is made of **'panchaloha', a combination of five metals:** gold, silver, copper, brass, and zinc.
- It is **among one of the tallest metallic statues** in sitting position in the world.
- The statue is mounted on a **54-foot high base building named 'Bhadra Vedi'**. It has floors devoted for **a vedic digital library and research center, ancient Indian texts, a theater, an educational gallery** detailing many works of Sri Ramanujacharya.

Who was Ramanujacharya ?

- Born in 1017 in **Sriperumbudur in Tamil Nadu**, Ramanujacharya is revered as a **Vedic philosopher and social reformer**.
- He was named Lakshmana at the time of his birth. He was also referred to as Ilaya Perumal which means the radiant one.
- He traveled across India, advocating **equality and social justice**.
- He revived the **Bhakti movement**, and his preachings inspired other Bhakti schools of thought. He is considered to be the inspiration for **poets like Annamacharya, Bhakta Ramdas, Thyagaraja, Kabir, and Meerabai**.

- He is famous as the chief proponent of **Vishishtadvaita subschool of Vedānta.**
 - VishishtAdvaita (literally "Advaita with uniqueness; qualifications") is a non-dualistic school of Vedanta philosophy.
 - It is non-dualism of the qualified whole, in **which Brahman alone is seen as the Supreme Reality**, but is characterized by multiplicity.
- He went on **to write nine scriptures known as the navaratnas**, and composed numerous commentaries on Vedic scriptures.
 - Ramanuja's most important writings include his commentary on the **Vedanta Sutras (the Sri Bhasya, or "True Commentary")**, and his commentary on the **Bhagavad-Gita (the Gitabhasya, or "Commentary on the Gita")**.
 - His other writings include the **Vedārtha Samgraha ("Summary of the Meaning of the Veda")**, the Vedantasara ("Essence of Vedanta"), and Vedantadipa ("Lamp of Vedanta").
- He has also **stressed the need of being in tune with nature and not to over-exploit.**

Why is it called the Statue of Equality ?

- Ramanuja was an **advocate of social equality among all sections of people centuries ago**, and encouraged **temples to open their doors to everyone irrespective of caste or position in society** at a time when people of many castes were forbidden from entering them.
- He took education to those **who were deprived of it**. His greatest contribution is the propagation of the **concept of "vasudhaiva kutumbakam", which translates as "all the universe is one family"**.
- He traveled across **India for several decades, propagating his ideas of social equality and universal brotherhood from temple podiums.**
- He embraced the socially marginalized and condemned, and **asked royal courts to treat them as equals.**
- He spoke of universal salvation through devotion to God, compassion, humility, equality, and mutual respect, **which is known as Sri Vaishnavam Sampradaya.**
- Ramanujacharya **liberated millions from social, cultural, gender, educational, and economic discrimination with the foundational conviction that every human is equal** regardless of nationality, gender, race, caste, or creed.

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