

CHAPTER 2

Religious and Social Reform Movements

GENESIS OF THE AWAKENING

The dawn of the nineteenth century witnessed the birth of a new vision—a modern vision among some enlightened sections of the Indian society. This enlightened vision was to shape the course of events for decades to come and even beyond. This process of reawakening, sometimes, but not with full justification, defined as the 'Renaissance', did not always follow the intended line and gave rise to some undesirable by-products as well, which have become as much a part of daily existence in the whole of the Indian subcontinent as have the fruits of these reform movements.

The presence of a colonial government on Indian soil played a complex, yet decisive role in this crucial phase of modern Indian history. The impact of British rule on Indian society and culture was widely different from what India had known before. Most of the earlier intruders who came to India had settled within her frontiers, were absorbed by her superior culture and had become part of the land and its people. However, the British conquest was different. It came at a time when India, in contrast to an enlightened Europe of the eighteenth century affected in every aspect by science and scientific outlook, presented the picture of a stagnant civilisation and a static and decadent society.

Indian society in the nineteenth century was caught in a vicious web created by religious superstitions and social obscurantism. Hinduism had become a compound of magic, animism and superstition. The priests exercised an overwhelming and, indeed, unhealthy influence on the minds of the people. Idolatry and polytheism helped to reinforce

their position, and their monopoly of scriptural knowledge imparted a deceptive character to all religious systems. There was nothing that religious ideology could not persuade people to do.

Social conditions were equally depressing. The most distressing was the position of women. The birth of a girl was unwelcome, her marriage, a burden and her widowhood inauspicious. Attempts to kill female infants at birth were not unusual. Several women hardly had a married life worth the name, yet when their husbands died they were expected to commit sati which Raja Ram mohan Roy described as a 'murder according to every shastra. If they succeeded in overcoming this social coercion, they were condemned as widows to life-long misery, neglect and humiliation.

Another debilitating factor was caste. It sought to maintain a system of segregation, hierarchically ordained on the basis of ritual status. At the bottom of the ladder came the untouchables or scheduled castes, as they came to be called later, who formed about twenty per cent of the Hindu population. The untouchables suffered from numerous and severe disabilities and restrictions. The system splintered people into numerous groups. In modern times it became a major obstacle in the growth of a united national feeling and the spread of democracy. It may also be noted that caste consciousness, particularly with regard to marriage, prevailed also among Muslims, Christians and Sikhs who practised untouchability, though in a less virulent form. The rules and regulations of caste hampered social mobility, fostered social divisions and sapped individual initiative. Above all, the humiliation of untouchability militated against human dignity.

The establishment of colonial rule in India was followed by a systematic attempt to disseminate colonial culture and ideology as the dominant cultural current. Faced with the challenge of the intrusion of colonial culture and ideology, an attempt to reinvigorate traditional institutions and to realise the potential of traditional culture developed during the nineteenth century.

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The impact of modern Western culture and consciousness of defeat by a foreign power gave birth to a new awakening. There was an awareness that a vast country like India had been colonised by a handful of foreigners because of internal weaknesses within the Indian social structure and culture. For some time it seemed that India had lagged behind in the race of civilisation. This produced diverse reactions. Some English educated Bengali youth developed a revulsion for Hindu religion and culture, gave up old religious ideas and traditions and deliberately adopted practices most offensive to Hindu sentiments, such as drinking wine and eating beef. The response, indeed, was varied but the need to reform social and religious life was a commonly shared conviction.

During the last decades of the nineteenth century, the rising tide of nationalism and democracy also found expression in movements to reform and democratise the social institutions and religious outlook of, the Indian people. Factors such as growth of nationalist sentiments,

emergence of new economic forces, spread of education, impact of modern Western ideas and culture and increased awareness of the world strengthened the resolve to reform.

The socio-cultural regeneration of the India of the nineteenth century was occasioned by the colonial presence, but not created by it.

Social Base

The social base of this quest was the newly emerging middle class and traditionally as well as western educated intellectuals, but there was a significant contrast between the broadly bourgeois ideals derived from a. growing awareness of contemporary developments in the West, and a predominantly non-bourgeois social base. nineteenth century intelligentsia searched for its model in the European 'middle class', which, as it learnt through western education, had brought about the great transformation in the West from medieval to modern times through movements like the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Enlightenment and democratic revolution, or reform. Yet its own social roots lay not in industry or trade, increasingly

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controlled by British managing agency firms and their Marwari subordinates, but in government service or the professions of law, education, journalism or medicine—with which was very often combined some connection with land in the shape of the intermediate tenures.

Ideological Base

The important intellectual criteria which gave these reform movements an ideological unity were rationalism, religious universalism and humanism. Social relevance was judged by a rationalist critique. Raja Rammohan Roy upheld the principle of causality linking the whole phenomenal universe and demonstrability as the sole criterion of truth. Akshay Kumar Dutt, while proclaiming that 'rationalism is our only preceptor', held that all natural and social phenomena could be analysed and understood by purely mechanical processes. This perspective enabled them to adopt a rational approach to tradition and evaluate the contemporary socio-religious practices from the standpoint of social utility and to replace faith with rationality. For instance, in the Brahmo Samaj the repudiation of the infallibility of the Vedas was the result, while the Aligarh movement emphasised reconciliation of Islamic teachings with the needs of the modern age. Syed Ahmed Khan went to the extent of emphasising that religious tenets were not immutable.

Many of the intellectuals abandoned, though in varying degrees, the principle of authority in religion and evaluated truth in any religion by the criteria of logic; reason or science. Swami Vivekananda held that the same method of investigation which applies to other sciences should form the basis on which religion is to justify itself. Although, some reformers tended to appeal to faith and ancient authority to bolster their appeal, overall a rational and secular outlook was very much evident in posing an alternative to prevalent social practices. For instance, Akshat cited medical against child marriage. to the past was

to be used only as an aid and an instrument. Neither a revival of the past nor a total break with tradition was envisaged.

Though the reformers tried to reform their religions,

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their religious perspective was universalistic. Raja Rammohan Jeligiari² embodied the universalist perspective. He was a defender of the basic and universal principles of religions—such as the monotheism of the Vedas and—while attacking polytheism and trinitarianism of Christianity said that all had the same 'din (faith)'. Even Keshub Chandra Sen held that: our position is not that truths are to be found in all religions, but that all establishes the universalist perspective. This was an attempt on the part of social reformers to contend with the influence of religious identity on the social and political outlook of the people which was indeed strong. However, under the onslaught of colonial culture and ideology, instead of providing the basis for the development of a secular ethos, universalism retreated into religious particularism towards the second half of the nineteenth century.

The social reform movements were also an embodiment of a new humanitarian morality which included the notion that humanity can progress and has progressed, and that moral values are ultimately those which favour human progress. An emphasis on the individual's right to interpret religious scriptures in the light of human reason and human welfare and a general attack on priestly domination of religious practices underlined the humanist aspect of religious reform movements.

Religious reformation was the major but not the exclusive concern of these movements. Instead of other-worldliness and salvation, attention was focussed on worldly existence. Because of the strong religious coefficient of social practices and the fact that religion was the dominant ideology of the times, it was not possible to undertake any social action without coming to grips with it.

These movements embraced the entire cultural existence, the way of life and all significant practices like language,

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religion, art and philosophy. The evolution of an alternative cultural-ideological system and the generation of traditions emerged as twin movements, which sought to reconstruct traditional knowledge, cultivation of vernacular languages, creation of an alternate system of education, defence of religion, efforts to regenerate Indian art and literature, emphasis on Indian dress and food, attempts to revitalise the Indian systems of medicine and to probe the potentialities of pre-colonial technology.

These reform movements could broadly be classified in two categories—reformist movements like the Brahmo Samaj, the Prarthana Samaj, the Aligarh movement, and the revivalist movements like Arya Samaj and the

Deoband movement. Both the reformist and revivalist movements depended, with varying degrees, on an appeal to the lost, purity of the religion they sought to reform. The only difference between one reform movement and the other lay in the degree to which it relied on tradition or on reason and conscience.

SOCIAL REFORM

The humanistic ideals of social equality and the equal worth of all individuals which inspired the newly educated middle class had a major impact on the field of social reform. This enlightened section of society was disgusted with the prevailing social ills and inhuman social practices. The social reform movements formed an integral part of the religious reforms primarily because nearly all the effort towards social ills like untouchability and gender-based inequity derived legitimacy from religion in one way or the other. In later years though, the social reform movement gradually dissociated itself from religion and, adopted a secular approach. Also, earlier the reform movements had a rather narrow social base—they were limited to the upper and middle classes and upper castes who tried to adjust their modernised views with respect to the existing social conditions. But later on, the social reform movements penetrated the lower strata of society to revolutionise and reconstruct the social sphere.

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In the beginning, organisations such as the Social Conference, Servants of India Society and the Christian missionaries were instrumental in social reform along with many enlightened individuals like Jyotiba Phule, Gopalhari Deshmukh, K.T. Telang, B.M. Malabari, D.K. Karve, Sri Narayana Guru, E.V. Ramaswami Naicker and B.R. Ambedkar. In later years, especially with the onset of the twentieth century, the national movement provided the leadership and organisation for social reform. To reach the masses, propaganda in Indian languages was the modus operandi of the reformers who used a variety of media such as novels, dramas, poetry, short stories, the press and, in the 1930s and later on, the cinema to spread their views. Broadly, the social reform movements had a two-joint-fight for betterment of status of to remove disability arising out of untouchability.

Fight for Betterment of Position of Women The reformers had to work against great odds. Women were generally accorded a low status, and were considered to be inferior adjuncts to men, with no identity of their own. Their desire to give expression to their talents and energies were further suppressed by practices such as purdah, early marriage, ban on widow-remarriage, sati, etc. Both Hindu and Muslim women were economically and socially dependent, while education was generally denied to them. The Hindu women had no right to inherit property or to terminate an undesirable marriage. The Muslim women could inherit but only half as much as men could, while in matters of divorce there was no equality between men and women. Polygamy was prevalent among Hindus as well as Muslims.

Their glorification as wives and mothers was the only way in which the society recognised the contribution of women as members of society. The struggle for the improvement of the status of women in the society was considered to be vital, since a radical change in the domestic sphere—where initial socialisation of the individual takes place

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and where a crucial role is played by women—was the need of the hour. There was a clear understanding that this change would translate into reformed homes and reformed men, and that no country whose females were sunk in ignorance could ever make significant progress in civilisation.

The social reform movements, the freedom struggle, movements led by enlightened women themselves and, later, free India's Constitution have done much for the emancipation of women.

The reformers basically appealed to the doctrines of individualism and equality, and argued, to bolster their appeal, that true religion did not sanction an inferior status to women. They raised their voice against degrading customs such as polygamy, purdah, child marriage, restrictions on widow remarriage, and worked relentlessly to establish educational facilities for women, to persuade the Government to enact favourable legislations for women and in general to propagate giving up of medieval, feudal attitudes.

Because of the indefatigable efforts of the reformers, a number of administrative measures were adopted by the Government to improve the condition of women.

Abolition of Sati

Influenced by the frontal attack launched by the enlightened Indian reformers led by Raja Rammohan Roy, the Government declared the practice of sad or the burning alive of widows illegal and punishable by criminal courts as culpable homicide. The regulation of 1829 was applicable in the first instance to Bengal Presidency alone, but was extended in slightly modified forms to Madras and Bombay Presidencies in 1830.

Female Infanticide

The practice of murdering female infants immediately after birth was common among upper class Bengalis and Rajputs who considered females to be an economic burden. The Bengal regulations of 1795 and 1804 declared infanticide illegal and equivalent to murder, while an Act passed in 1870 made, it compulsory for parents to register the birth of all babies and provided for verification of female

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children for some years after birth, particularly in areas where the custom was resorted to in utmost privacy.

Widow Remarriage

The Brahmo Samaj had the issue of widow remarriage high on its agenda and did much to popularise it. But it was mainly due to the efforts of Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820-91), the principal of Sanskrit College, Calcutta, that the Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act, 1856, which legalised marriage of widows and declared issues from such marriages as legitimate, was passed by the Government. Vidyasagar cited Vedic texts to prove that the Hindu religion sanctioned widow remarriage.

Jagannath Shankar Seth and Bhau Daji were among the active promoters of girls' schools in Maharashtra. Vishnu Shastri Pandit founded the Widow Remarriage Association in the 1850s. Another prominent worker in this field was Karsondas Mulji who started the Satya Prakash in Gujarati in 1852 to advocate widow remarriage.

Similar efforts were made by Professor D.K. Karve in western India and by Veerasalingarn Pantulu in Madras. Karve himself married a widow in 1893. He dedicated his life to the upliftment of Hindu widows and became the secretary of the Widow Remarriage Association. He opened a widows' home in Poona to give the high caste widows an interest in life by providing them with facilities for vocational training. He crowned his work by setting up an Indian Women's University at Bombay in 1916. The right of widows to remarriage was also advocated by B.M. Malabari, Narmad, Justice Govind Mahadeo Ranade and K. Natarajan among others.

Child Marriage

The Native Marriage Act (or Civil Marriage Act) signified the coming of legislative action in prohibiting child marriage in 1872. It had a limited impact as the Act was not applicable to Hindus, Muslims and other recognised faiths. The relentless efforts of a Parsi reformer, B.M. Malabari, were rewarded, by the enactment of the Age of Consent Act (1891) which forbade the marriage of girls below the age of 12. The Sarda Act (1930) further pushed up

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the marriage age to 18 and 14 for boys and girls respectively. In free India, the Child Marriage Restraint (Amendment) Act, 1978 raised the age of marriage for girls from 15 to 18 years and for boys from 18 to 21.

Education of Women

The Christian missionaries were the first to set up the Calcutta Female Juvenile Society in 1819. The Bethune School, founded by J.E.D. Bethune, president of the Council of Education in Calcutta in 1849 was the first fruit of the powerful movement for women's education that arose in the 1840s and 1850s. Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar was associated with no less than 35 girls' schools in Bengal and is considered one of the pioneers of women's education. Charles Wood's Despatch on Education (1854) laid great stress on the need for female education. In 1914, the Women's Medical Service did a lot of work in training nurses and midwives. The Indian Women's University started by Professor Karve in 1916 was one of the outstanding institutions imparting education to women. In the same year Lady Hardinge Medical College was opened in Delhi.

Health facilities began to be provided to women with the opening of Dufferin Hospitals in the 1880s.

Participation in the swadeshi and anti-partition and the Home Rule movements during the opening decades of the twentieth century was a major liberating experience for the otherwise home-centred Indian women. After 1918, they faced lathis and bullets and were jailed during political processions, picketing, etc. They actively participated in trade union and kisan movements, or revolutionary movements. They voted in, stood for and got elected to various legislatures and local bodies. Sarojini Naidu went on to become the president of the Indian National Congress (1925) and later the governor of the United Provinces (1947-49).

After 1920, aware and self-confident women led a women's movement. Many organisations and institutions such as the All India Women's Conference (established in 1927) came up.

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Legislative Measures in Free India

Free India's Constitution provides legal equality to women and prohibits any discrimination by the state on the basis of gender (Articles 14 and 15). The Specially marriageAs1125 permits intercaste and interreligious marriage. The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 abolished bigamy and permitted dissolution of marriage on specific grounds. The Hindu Succession Act 1956 made the daughter equal co-heir with son, thus abolishing discrimination with respect to inheritance laws. The Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act enhanced the status of women in matters of adoption. was amended in April 1976 to cover women who do not fall within the purview of the Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948. The Directive Principles of State Policy provide for equal pay for equal work for both men and women. provided for equal remuneration to men and women workers and prevention of discrimination against women in matters of employment. The Factories Act 1976 provided for establishment of creches where 30 women (as against 50 previously) are employed. The Criminal bills passed by Parliament 83 amended the Indian Penal Code, Indian Evidence Act and Criminal Procedure Code to make laws against rape and other such crimes against women much more stringent and also to add a new provision in the Indian Penal Code to make cruelty against a woman by her husband and other relations punishable. Traffic was amended and retitled as Immoral Trafficking Act 1986 to cover all persons—male or female—who are sexually exploited for commercial purposes. The Dowry Prohibition Act 1986 made the giving and taking of dowry an offence. In 1987, an Act was passed making the glorification of sati a cognisable offence.

Struggle Against Caste-Based Exploitation

The original four-fold division of Hindu society got further sub-divided into numerous castes (jatis) and sub-castes due to racial admixture, geographical expansion and diversification of crafts which gave rise to new vocations.

According to concept of Hindu chaturvarnashrama, the caste of a person determined the status and relative purity of different sections of population. Caste, determined who could get education or ownership of landed property, the kind of profession one should pursue, whom one could dine with or marry, etc. In general, the caste of a person decided his/ her social loyalties even before birth. The dress, food, place of residence, sources of water for drinking and irrigation, entry into temples—all these were regulated by the caste coefficient.

The worst-hit by the discriminatory institution' of caste were the untouchables or the scheduled castes, as they came to be called later on. The disabilities imposed on the lower castes were humiliating, inhuman and based on the antidemocratic principle of inequality by birth.

Factors which Undermined Caste Rigidities

The pressure of British rule in India unleashed certain forces, sometimes through direct administrative measures and sometimes indirectly by creating favourable circumstances. For instance, the creation of private property in land and free sale of land upset caste equations. A close interlink between caste and vocation could hardly continue in a state of destruction of village autarchy. Besides, modern commerce and industry gave birth to several economic avenues while growing urbanisation and modern means of transport added to the mobility of populations. The British administration introduced the concept of equality before law in a., uniformly applied system of law which dealt a severe blow to social and legal inequalities, while the judicial functions of caste panchayats were taken away. The administrative services were made open to all castes and the new education system was on totally secular lines.

The social reform movements also strove to undermine caste-based exploitation. From the mid-19th century onwards, numerous, organisations and groups such as the Brahmo Samaj, Prarthana Samaj, Arya Samaj, Ramakrishna Mission, the Theosophists, the Social Conference and individuals

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worked to spread education among the untouchables and remove restrictions imposed on them from entering temples or using ponds, tanks, etc. Although many of them defended the chaturvarna system, they criticised the caste system, especially untouchability. The social reformers attacked the rigid hereditary basis of caste distinctions and the law of karma which formed the basis of the religio-philosophic defence of the undemocratic authoritarian caste institution. They called on people to work for betterment in the real world in which they lived, rather than strive for salvation after death. For instance, the Arya Samaj while crusading against disintegration of Hindu society into myriad sub-castes, aimed at reconstructing it on the original four-fold division and upholding the right of even, the lowest castes to study the scriptures.

The national movement with its thrust against the forces which tended to divide the society took inspiration from the principles of liberty and

equality. The national leaders and organisations opposed caste privileges, fought for equal civic rights and free development of the individual. The caste divisions were diluted, although in a limited 'manner, because of mass participation in demonstrations, meetings and satyagraha struggles. The Congress governments in various provinces after 1937 did some useful work for the upliftment of the depressed classes; for instance, free education for Harijans (untouchables) was introduced in some provinces. The rulers of states like Travancore, Indore and Devas themselves took the initiative in opening all state temples by proclamation.

Gandhi always had in mind the objective of eradicating untouchability by root and branch. His ideas were based on the grounds of humanism and reason. He argued that the Shastras did not sanction untouchability and even if they did, they should be ignored since truth cannot be confined within the covers of a book. In 1932, he founded the All India Harijan Sangh.

With increasing opportunities of education and general

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awakening, there were stirrings among the lower castes themselves which gradually developed into a powerful movement in defence of their rights and against upper caste oppression. In Maharashtra, Jyotiba Phule, born in a low caste Mali family, led a movement against the brahminical domination of Hindu society. He accorded the highest priority to education of lower castes, especially girls for whom he opened several schools. Babasaheb Ambedkar, who had experienced the worst form of casteist discrimination during his childhood, fought against upper caste tyranny throughout his life. He organized the All India Scheduled Castes Federation, while several other leaders of the depressed classes founded the All India Depressed Classes Association. Ambedkar condemned the hierarchical and insular caste system and advocated the annihilation of the institution of caste for the real progress of the nation. The struggle of the depressed classes was rewarded with special representation for these classes in the Government of India Act, 1935.

Others in the 1900s, the Maharaja of Kolhapur encouraged the non-brahmin movement which spread to the southern states in the first decade of the twentieth century and was joined by the Kammas, Reddis, Vellalas, (the powerful intermediate castes) and the Muslims.

During the 1920s in South India, the non-brahmins organized the Self-Respect Movement led by E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker. There were numerous other movements demanding lifting of ban on entry of lower castes into temples; for instance Sri Narayana Guru in Kerala led a lifelong struggle against upper caste domination. He coined the slogan "one religion, one caste, one God, for mankind", which his disciple Sahadaran Ayyapan changed into "no religion, no caste, no God for mankind".

But the struggle against caste could not be successful during the British rule. The foreign government had its limitations—it could not afford to invite hostile reaction from the orthodox sections by taking

up any radical measures. Also, no social uplift was possible without economic and political

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upliftment. All this could be realised only under the government of a free India. The Constitution of free India abolishes untouchability and declares the endorsement of any disability arising out of untouchability as unlawful. It also forbids any restriction on access to wells, tanks, bathing ghats, hotels, cinemas, clubs, etc. In one of the Directive Principles, the Constitution has laid down that "the state shall strive to promote the welfare of the people by, securing and protecting as effectively as it may a social order in which justice—social, economic and political—shall inform all the institutions of the national life".

A GENERAL SURVEY OF SOCIO-CULTURAL REFORM MOVEMENTS AND THEIR LEADERS Raja Rammohan Roy and Brahmo Samaj

Raja Rammohan Roy, the father of Indian Renaissance, was a man of versatile genius. The Brahmo Samaj established by him was the earliest reform movement of the modern type greatly influenced by modern western ideas.

As a reformist ideologue, Roy believed in the modern scientific approach and principles of human dignity and social equality. He put his faith in monotheism. He wrote *Gift to Monotheists* (1809) and translated into Bengali the Vedas and the five Upanishads to prove his conviction that ancient Hindu texts support monotheism. In 1814, he set up Atmiya Sabha in Calcutta to campaign against idolatry, caste rigidities, meaningless rituals and other social ills. Strongly influenced by rationalist ideas, he declared that the Vedanta is based on reason and that, if reason demanded it, even a departure from the scriptures is justified. He said the principles of rationalism applied to other sects also, particularly to the elements of blind faith in them. In *Precepts of Jesus* (1820), he tried to separate the moral and philosophical message of the New Testament, which he praised, from its miracle stories. He earned the wrath of missionaries over his advocacy to incorporate the message of Christ in Hinduism. He stood for a creative and intellectual process of selecting the best from eastern and western

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cultures, over which, again, he faced orthodox reaction. He founded the Brahmo Sabha (later Brahmo Samaj) in order to institutionalise his ideas and mission. His ideas and activities were aimed at political uplift of the masses through social reform and to that extent can be said to have had nationalist undertones.

Roy was a determined crusader against the inhuman practice of sati. He started his anti-sati struggle in 1818 and he cited sacred texts to prove his contention that no religion sanctioned the burning alive of widows, besides appealing to humanity, reason and compassion. He also visited the cremation grounds, organized vigilance groups and filed counter petitions to the Government during his struggle against sati. His efforts were rewarded by the Government Regulation in 1829 which

declared the practice of sati a crime. As a campaigner for women's rights, Roy condemned the general subjugation of women and opposed prevailing misconceptions which formed the basis of according an inferior social status to women. Roy attacked polygamy and the degraded state of widows and demanded the right of inheritance and property for women.

Rammohan Roy did much to disseminate the benefits of modern education to his countrymen. He supported David Hare's efforts to found the Hindu College in 1817, while Roy's English school taught mechanics and Voltaire's philosophy. In 1825, he established a Vedanta college where courses in both Indian learning and Western social and physical sciences were offered. He also helped enrich the Bengali language by compiling a Bengali grammar book and evolving a modern elegant prose style.

Roy was a gifted linguist. He knew more than a dozen languages including Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic, English, French, Latin, Greek and Hebrew. A knowledge of different languages helped him broaden his range of study. As a pioneer in Indian journalism, Roy brought out journals in Bengali, Hindi, English, Persian to educate and inform the public and represent their grievances before the Government. A social activist,

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Roy condemned oppressive practices of Bengali zamindars and demanded fixation of maximum rents. He also demanded abolition of taxes on tax-free lands. He called for a reduction of export duties on goods abroad and abolition of the East India Company's trading rights. He demanded the executive from the hands of Europeans and that trials be held

Roy was an internationalist with a vision beyond his times. He stood for cooperation of thought and activity and brotherhood among nations. His understanding of the international character of the principles of liberty, equality and justice indicated that he well understood the significance of the modern age. He supported the revolutions of Naples and Spanish America and condemned the oppression of Ireland by absentee English landlordism and threatened emigration from the empire if the reform bill was not passed.

Roy had David Hare, Alexander Duff, Debendranath Tagore, P.K. Tagore, Chandrashekhar Deb and Tarachand Chakraborty as his associates.

Raja Rammohan Roy founded the Brahmo Sabha in August 1828; it was later renamed, Brahmo Samaj. The Samaj, was committed to "the most rational the Eternal, Unsearchable, Immutable Being who is the Author, Preserver of the Universe". Prayers, meditation of the Upanishads were to be the forms of worship and no graven image, statue or sculpture, carving, painting, picture, portrait etc, were to be allowed in the Samaj buildings, thus underlining the Samaj's opposition to idolatry and meaningless rituals. The long-term agenda of the Brahmo Samaj—to purify Hinduism and to preach monotheism—was based on the twin pillars of reason and the Vedas and Upanishads. The Samaj also tried to incorporate teachings of other religions and kept its emphasis on human dignity, opposition to idolatry and criticism of social evils such as sati.

Roy did not want to establish a new religion. He only wanted to purify Hinduism of the evil practices which had

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crept into it. Roy's progressive ideas met with strong opposition from orthodox elements like Raja Radhakant Deb who organized the Dharma Sabha to counter Brahmo Samaj propaganda. Roy's death in 1833 was a setback for the Samaj's mission.

Maharishi Debendranath Tagore (1817-1905), father of Rabindranath Tagore and a product of the best traditional Indian learning and western thought, gave a new life to Brahma Samaj and a definite form and shape to the theist movement, when he joined the Samaj in 1842. Earlier, Tagore headed the Tattvabodhini Sabha (founded in 1839) which, along with its organ Tattvabodhini Pat fika in Bengali, was devoted to the systematic study of India's past with a rational outlook and to the propagation of Roy's ideas. A new vitality and strength of membership came to be associated with the Brahmo Samaj due to the informal association of the two sabhas. Gradually, the Brahmo Samaj came to include prominent followers of Roy, the Derozians and independent thinkers such as Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Ashwini Kumar Datta. worked on two the Brahmo movement- outside it resolutely oosed the Christian missionaries for their criticism of the Hinduism and their attempts at conversion. Thei-evitalised Samaj supporiea-Wi-d-ow remarriarrTeiys education, abolition of improvement in ryots' conditions and temperence.

The Bramho Samaj experienced another phase of energy, vigour and eloquence when Keshub Chandra Sen was made the acharyct by Debendranath Tagore soon after the former joined the Samaj in 1858. Keshub was instrumental in popularising the movement, and branches of the Samaj were opened outside Bengal in the United Provinces, Punjab, Bombay, Madras and other towns. Unfortunately, Debendranath did not like some of . Sen's ideas which he found too radical, such as cosmopolitanisation of the Samaj's meetings by inclusion of teachings from all religions and his strong views against the caste system, even open support to inter-caste marriages. Keshub Chandra Sen was dismissed from the office of acharya in 1865. Keshub and his followers founded the Brahmo Samaj of India in 1866, while Debendranath Tagore's Sarnaj came to be known as the Adi Brahmo Samaj.

In 1878, Keshub's inexplicable act of getting his thirteenyear-old daughter married with the minor Hindu Maharaja of Cooch-Behar with all, the orthodox Hindu rituals caused another split in Keshub's Brahma Samaj of India. Earlier, Keshub had begun to be considered as an incarnation by some of his followers, much to the dislike of his progressive followers. Further, Keshub had begun to be accused of authoritarianism. After 1878, the disgusted followers of Keshub set up a new organisation, the Sadharan Brahma Samaj.

A number of Brahmo centres were opened in Madras state. In Punjab, the Dayal Singh Trust sought to implant Brahmo ideas by, the opening of Dayal Singh College at Lahore in 1910.

According to H.C.E. Zacharias, "Raja Rammohan Roy and his Brahmo Samaj form the starting point for all the various reform movements—whether in Hindu religion, society or politics—which have agitated modern India." The overall contribution of Brahmo Samaj may be summed thus—

- (i) it denounced polytheism and idol worship;
- (ii) it discarded faith in divine avatars (incarnations);
- (iii) it denied that any scripture could enjoy the status of ultimate authority transcending human reason and conscience;
- (iv) it took no definite stand on the doctrine of; karma and transmigration of soul and left it to individual Brahmos to believe either way;
- (iv) it criticised the caste system. In matters of social reform, the Samaj attacked many dogmas and superstitions. It condemned the prevailing Hindu prejudice against going abroad. It worked for a respectable status for women in society—condemned sati, worked for abolition, of purdah system, discouraged child marriages and polygamy, crusaded for widow remarriage and for provisions

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of educational facilities, etc. It also attacked casteism and untouchability though in these matters it attained only limited success.

Prarthana Samaj In 1863, Keshub Chandra Seri helped found the Prarthana Samaj in Bombay. Earlier, the Brahmo ideas spread in Maharashtra where the Paramhansa Sabha was founded in 1849. Here the emphasis was on monotheism, on 'works' rather than on faith. They relied on education and persuasion and not on confrontation with Hindu orthodoxy. There was a four-point social agenda also: (i) disapproval of caste system, (ii) women's education, (iii) widow remarriage, and (iv) raising the age of marriage for both males and females. The Prarthana Samaj had as its prominent leaders Mahadeo Govind Ranade (1842-1901), R.G. Bhandarkar (1837-1925) and N.G. Chandavarkar (1855-1923).

Young Bengal Movement and Henry Vivian Derozio (1809-31) During the late 1820s and early 1830s, there emerged a radical, intellectual trend among the youth in Bengal, which came to be known as the 'Young Bengal Movement'. A young Anglo-Indian, Henry Vivian Derozio, who taught at the Hindu College from 1826 to 1831, was the leader and inspirer of this progressive trend. Drawing inspiration from the great French Revolution, Derozio inspired his pupils to think freely and rationally, question all authority, love liberty, equality and freedom, and oppose decadent customs and traditions. The Derozians also supported women's rights and education. Also, Derozio was perhaps the first nationalist poet of modern India.

The Derozians, however, failed to have a long-term impact. Derozio was removed from the Hindu College in 1831 because of his radicalism. The

main reason for their limited success was the prevailing social conditions at that time, which were not ripe for the adoption of radical ideas. Further, support from any other social group or class was absent. The Derozians lacked any real link with the masses; for instance, they failed to take up the peasants' cause. In fact, their radicalism was bookish in character. But, despite their

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limitations, the Derozians carried forward Roy's tradition of public education on social, economic and political questions. For instance, they demanded induction of Indians in higher grades of services, protection of ryots from oppressive zamindars, better treatment to Indian labour abroad in British colonies, revision of the Company's charter, freedom of press and trial by jury.

Later, Surendranath Banerjee was to describe the Derozians as "the pioneers of the modern civilisation of Bengal, the conscript fathers of our race whose virtues will excite veneration and whose failings will be treated with gentlest consideration".

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar The great scholar and reformer, Vidyasagar's ideas were a happy blend of Indian and western thought. He believed in high moral values, was a deep humanist and was generous to the poor. In 1850, he became the principal of Sanskrit College. He was determined to break the priestly monopoly of scriptural knowledge, and for this he opened the Sanskrit College to non-brahmins. He introduced western thought in Sanskrit College to break the self-imposed isolation of Sanskrit learning. Also, as an academician, he evolved a new methodology to teach Sanskrit. He also devised a new Bengali primer and evolved a new prose style.

Vidyasagar started a movement in support of widow remarriage which resulted in legalisation of widow remarriage. He was also a crusader against child marriage and polygamy. He did much for the cause of women's education. As government inspector of schools, he helped organize thirtyfive girls' schools many of which he ran at his own expense. As secretary of Bethune School (established in 1849), he was one of the pioneers of higher education for women in India.

The Bethune School, founded in Calcutta, was the first fruit of the powerful movement for women's education that arose in the 1840s and 1850s. The movement had to face great difficulties. The young students were shouted at and abused and sometimes even their parents subjected to social boycott.

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Many believed that girls who had received western education would make slaves of their husbands.

Bal Shastri Jambekar One of the pioneers in Bombay, he attacked brahminical orthodoxy and tried to reform popular Hinduism He started the weekly Darpan in 1832,

Students' Literary and Scientific Societies Also called the Gyan Prasarak Mandalis they had two branches—Marathi and Gujarati—and were formed by some educated young men in 1848. These Mandalis organized lectures on popular sciences and social questions. One of their aims was to start schools for girls.

Paramhansa Mandalis Founded in 1849 in Maharashtra, the founders of these Mandalis believed in one God. They were primarily interested in breaking caste rules. At their meetings food cooked by lower caste people was taken by the members. These Mandalis also advocated widow remarriage and women's education. Branches of Paramhansa Mandalis existed in Poona, Satara and other towns of Maharashtra.

Satyashodhak Samaj and Jyotiba Phule

Jyotiba Phule belonged to the Mali (gardener) community and organized a powerful movement against upper caste domination and brahminical supremacy. Phule founded the Satyashodhak Samaj (Truth Seekers' Society) in 1873, with the leadership of the Samaj coming from the backward classes, Malis, Telis, Kunbis, Saris and Dhangars. The main aims of the movement were (i) social service, and (ii) spread of education among women and lower caste people. Phule's works, Sarvajanik Satyadharma and Gulamgin, became sources of inspiration for the common masses. Phule used the symbol of Rajah Bali as opposed to the, brahmins' symbol of Rama. Phule aimed at the complete abolition of the caste system and socio-economic inequalities; he was against Sanskrit Hinduism. This movement gave a sense of identity to the depressed communities as a class against the brahmins, who were seen as the exploiters. Phule opened, with the help of his wife, a girls' school at Poona and was a pioneer of, widow remarriage movement in Maharashtra.

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Gopalhari Deshmukh Lokahitawadi, He advocated a reorganisation of Indian society on rational principles and modern, humanistic, secular values. He attacked Hindu orthodoxy and supported social and religious equality. He said, "If religion does not sanction social reform, then change religion."

Gopal Ganesh Agarkar A strong advocate of the power of human reason, he criticised from the blind dependence on tradition and false glorification of the past.

The Servants of India Society Gopal Krishna Gokhale, the liberal leader of Indian National Congress, founded the Servants of India Society in 1905. The aim of the society was to train national missionaries for the service of India; to promote, by all constitutional means, the, true interests of the Indian people; and to prepare a cadre of selfless workers who were to devote their lives to the cause of the country in a religious spirit. After Gokhale's death (1915), Srinivasa Shastri took over as president:

Social Service League Another Gokhale follower Narayan Malhar Joshi founded the Social Service League in Bombay with an aim to secure for

the masses better and reasonable conditions of life and work. They organized many schools, libraries, reading rooms, day nurseries and cooperative societies. Their activities also included police court agents' work, legal aid and advice to the poor and illiterate, excursions for slum dwellers, facilities for gymnasia and theatrical performances, sanitary work, medical relief and boys' clubs and scout corps. Joshi also founded the All India Trade Union (1920).

The Ramakrishna Movement The didactic nationalism of the Brahma Samaj appealed more to the intellectual elite in Bengal, while the average Bengali found more emotional satisfaction in the cult of bhakti and yoga. The teachings of Ramakrishna Paramhansa (1834-86), a poor priest at the Kali temple in Dakshineswar, Calcutta, formed the basis of the Ramakrishna Movement. Two objectives of the movement were—(i) to bring into existence a band of monks dedicated

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to a life of renunciation and practical spirituality, from among whom teachers and workers would be sent out to spread the universal message of Vedanta as illustrated in the life of Ramakrishna, and (ii) in conjunction with lay disciples to carry on preaching, philanthropic and charitable works, looking upon all men, women and children, irrespective of caste, creed or colour, as veritable manifestations of the Divine. Paramhansa himself founded the Ramakrishna Math with his young monastic disciples as a nucleus to fulfil the first objective. The second objective was taken up by Swami Vivekananda after Ramakrishna's death when he founded the Ramakrishna Mission in 1897. The headquarters of the Mission are at Belur near Calcutta.

Paramhansa sought salvation through traditional ways of renunciation, meditation and bhakti amidst increasing westernisation and modernisation. He recognised the fundamental oneness of all religions and emphasised that Krishna, Hari, Ram, Christ, Allah are different names for the same God, and that there are many ways to God and salvation. Paramhansa's spirituality and compassion for the suffering humanity inspired those who listened to him. He used to say, "Service of man is the service of God."

Narendranath Datta (1862-1902), who later came to be known as Swami Vivekananda spread Ramakrishna's message and tried to reconcile it to the needs of contemporary Indian society. He emerged as the preacher of neo-Hinduism. Certain spiritual experiences of Ramakrishna, the teachings of the Upanishads and the Gita and the examples, of the Buddha and Jesus are the basis of Vivekananda's message to the world about human values. He subscribed to the Vedanta which he considered a fully rational system with a superior approach. His mission was to bridge the gulf between ararnartha (service) and vyavahara (behaviour), and between spirituality believed in the fundamental oneness of God and said, "For our own motherland a junction of the two great systems, Hinduism and Islam, is the only hope." Emphasising social action, he declared that knowledge without

action is useless. He lamented the isolationist tendencies and the touch-me-not attitude of Hindus in religious matters. He frowned at religion's tacit approval of the oppression of the poor by the rich. He believed that it was an insult to God and humanity to teach religion to a starving man. He called upon his countrymen to imbibe a spirit of liberty, equality and free thinking.

Vivekananda was a great humanist and used the Ramakrishna Mission for humanitarian relief and social work. The Mission stands for religious and social reform. Vivekananda advocated the doctrine of service—the service of all beings.

is itself is religion. service, the Divine exists within man. Vivekananda was for using technology and modern science in the service of mankind. Ever since its inception, the Mission has been running a number of societies. It offers help to the affected of calamities like famines, floods and epidemics. a worldwide organisation. It is a deeply religious body, but it is not a proselytising body. It does not consider itself to be a sect of Hinduism. In fact, this is one of the strong reasons for the success of the Mission. Unlike the Arya Samaj, the Mission recognises the utility and value of image worship in developing spiritual fervour and worship of the eternal omnipotent God, although it emphasises the essential spirit and not the symbols or rituals. It believes that the philosophy of Vedanta will make a Christian a better Christian, and a Hindu a better Hindu.

At the Parliament of Religions held at Chicago in 1893, Swami Vivekananda made a great impression on people by his learned interpretations. The keynote of his opening address was the need for a healthy balance between spiritualism and materialism. Envisaging a new culture for the whole world, he called for a blend of the materialism of the West and the spiritualism of the East into a new harmony to produce happiness for mankind.

Vivekananda never gave a political message; still, he

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infused into the new generation a sense of pride in India's past, a new faith in India's culture, and a rare sense of confidence in India's future. His emphasis was not only on personal salvation, but also on social, good and reform. About his place in modern Indian history, Subhash Bose wrote: "So far as Bengal is concerned Vivekananda may be regarded as the spiritual father of the modern nationalist movement."

Dayanand Saraswati and Arya Samaj

The Arya Samaj Movement, revivalist in form though not in content, was the result of a reaction to western influences. Its founder, Dayanand. Saraswati (or Mulshankar, 1824-83) was born in the old Morvi state in

Gujarat in a brahmin family. He wandered as an ascetic for fifteen years (1845-60) in search of truth. The first Arya Samaj unit was formally set up by him at Bombay in 1875 and later the headquarters of the Samaj were established at Lahore.

Dayanand's views were published in his famous work, *Satyarth Prakash* (The True Exposition). Dayanand's vision of India included a classless and casteless society, a united India (religiously, socially and nationally), and an India free from foreign rule, with Aryan religion being the common religion of all. He took inspiration from the Vedas and considered them to be "India's Rock of Ages", the infallible and the true original seed of Hinduism. He gave the slogan "Back to the Vedas". He had received education on Vedanta from a blind teacher named Swami Virajananda in Mathura. Along with his emphasis on Vedic authority, he stressed the significance of individual interpretation of the scriptures and said that every person has the right of access to God. He criticised later Hindu scriptures such as the Puranas and the ignorant priests for perverting Hinduism. Dayanand launched a frontal attack on Hindu orthodoxy, caste rigidities, untouchability, idolatry, polytheism, belief in magic, charms and animal sacrifices, taboo on sea voyages, feeding the dead through shraddhas, etc. Dayanand subscribed to the Vedic notion of chaturvarna system in which a person was not born in any caste but was identified as a brahmin, kshatriya, vaishya or shudra according to the occupation the person followed.

The Samaj fixed the minimum marriageable age at twenty-five years for boys and sixteen years for girls. Swami once lamented the Hindu race as "the children of children". Intercaste marriages and widow remarriages were also encouraged. Equal status for women was the demand of the Samaj, both in letter and in spirit. The Samaj also helped the people in crises like floods, famines and earthquakes. It attempted to give a new direction to education. The nucleus for this movement was provided by the Dayanand AngloVedic (D.A.V.) schools, established first at Lahore in 1886, which sought to emphasise the importance of western education. Swami Shraddhanand started the Gurukul at Hardwar in 1902 to impart education in the traditional framework.

Dayanand strongly criticised the escapist Hindu belief in *maya* (illusion) as the running theme of all physical existence and the aim of human life as a struggle to attain *moksha* (salvation) through escape from this evil world to seek union with God. Instead, he advocated that God, soul and matter (*prakriti*) were distinct and every individual

is the owner of his own eternal principles. He overthrew the human coffin and attacked the prevalent popular belief that every individual contributed and got back from the society according to the principles of *niyati* (destiny) and *karma* (deeds). He held the world to be a battlefield where every individual has to

salvage his own soul. It should be clearly understood that Dayanand's slogan of 'Back to the Vedas' was a call for a revival of Vedic learning and Vedic purity of religion and not a revival of Vedic times. He accepted modernity and displayed a patriotic attitude to national problems.

The ten guiding principles of the Arya Samaj are—

- (i) God is the primary source of all true knowledge;
- (ii) God, as all-truth, all-knowledge, almighty, immortal, creator of Universe, is alone worthy of worship;
- (iii) the Vedas are the right guides, and that human beings are controlled by

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books of true knowledge;

- (iv) an Arya should always be ready to accept truth and abandon untruth;
- (v) dharma, that is, due consideration of right and wrong, should be the guiding principle of all actions;
- (vi) the principal aim of the Samaj is to promote world's well-being in the material, spiritual and social sense;
- (vii) everybody should be treated with love and justice;
- (viii) ignorance is to be dispelled and knowledge increased;
- (ix) one's own progress should depend on uplift of all others;
- (x) social well-being of mankind is to be placed above an individual's well-being.

The Arya Samaj's social ideals comprise, among others, the fatherhood of God and brotherhood of Man, equality of all sexes, absolute justice and fairplay between man and man and nation and nation. Dayanand also met other reformers of the time, Keshub Chandra Sen, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Ranade, Deshmukh, etc. The work of the Swami after his death was carried forward by Lala Hansraj, Pandit Gurudutt, Lala Lajpat Rai and Swami Shraddhanand, among others.

The Arya Samaj was able to give self-respect and selfconfidence to the Hindus which helped to undermine the myth of superiority of whites and the western culture. In its zeal to protect the Hindu society from the onslaught of Christianity and Islam, the Samaj started the shuddhi (purification) movement to reconvert to Hindu fold the converts to Christianity and Islam. This led to increasing communalisation of social life during the 1920s and later snowballed into communal political consciousness.

Seva Sadan

A Parsi social reformer, M. Malabari, founded the Seva Sadan in 1885. The organisation specialised in taking care of those women who were exploited and then discarded by society. It catered to all castes and women with education, medical and welfare services.

Deva Samaj Founded in 1887 at Lahore by Shiv Narain Agnihotri, this sect emphasised of the soul, the supremacy of the guru, and the need for good action. It

called for an ideal social behaviour such as not accepting bribes, avoiding intoxicants and non-vegetarian and keeping away from violent actions. Its teachings were corn fed

Dharma Sabha

Radhakant Deb founded this sabha in 1830. An orthodox society, it stood for the preservation of the status quo in socio-religious matters, opposing even the abolition of sati. However, it favoured introduction of western education, even for girls.

Bharat Dharma

Mahamandala An all-India organisation of the orthodox educated Hindus, it stood for a defence of orthodox Hinduism against the teachings of the Arya Samaj, the Theosophists, and the Ramakrishna Mission. Other organisations created to defend orthodox Hinduism were the Sanatana Dharma Sabha (1895), the Dharma Maha Parishad in South India, and. Dharma Mahamandali in Bengal. These organisations combined in 1902 to form the single organisation of Bharat Dharma Mahamandala, with headquarters at Varanasi. This organisation sought to introduce proper management of Hindu religious institutions, open Hindu educational institutions, etc. Pandit Madan -Mohan Malaviya was a prominent figure in this movement.

Radhaswami Movement

Tulsi Ram, a banker from Agra, also known as Shiv DayalSaheb, founded this movement in 1861. The R. d. i , one supreme being supremacy of the Spiritual attainment, they believe does not call for renunciation of the worldly life. They consider all religions to be true. While the sect has no belief in temples, shrines and sacred places, it considers as necessary duties, works of faith and charity, service and prayer.

Sri Narayana Guru Dharma Paripalana (SNDP) Movement This movement was an example of a regional movement born out of conflict between the depressed, classes and upper non-Brahmin castes. It was started by. Sri Narayana, Guru Swamy among the Ezhavas of Kerala, who were a caste

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of toddy-tappers and were considered to be untouchables. The Ezhavas were the single largest caste group in Kerala constituting 26 per cent of the total population. Sri Narayana Guru initiated a programme of action—the Sri Narayana Guru Dharma Paripalana (SNDP) Yogan—in 1902. The SNDP took of admission to public schools uitment to :government services, (iii) access to roads and entriliesz. The movement as a whole brought transformative structural changes such as upward social mobility, shift in traditional distribution of power and a federation of 'backward castes' into a large conglomeration.

Vokkaliga Sangha

This Sangha in Mysore launched an anti-brahmin movement in 1905.

Justice Movement

This movement in Madras Presidency was started by C.N. Mudaliar, T.M. Nair and P. Tyagaraja to secure jobs and representation for the non-

brahmins in the legislature In 1917, Madras Presidency Association was formed which demanded separate representation for the lower castes in the legislature.

Self-Respect Movement

This movement was started by E.V. Ramaswamiyar, a Balija Naidu, in the mid-1920s. The movement aimed at nothing short of a rejection of the brahmanical religion and culture which Naicker felt was the prime instrument of exploitation of the lower castes. He sought to undermine the position of brahmin priests by formalising weddings without brahmin priests.

Aravippuram Movement

On the occasion of Sivarathri in 1888, Sri Narayana Guru, despite belonging to a lower caste, installed an idol of Siva at Aravippuram in Kerala in his effort to show that the consecration of a god's image was not a monopoly of the brahmins. On the wall of the temple he got inscribed the words, "Devoid of dividing walls of caste or race, or hatred of rival faith, we all live here in brotherhood." The event inspired several socio-religious reform movements in the South, especially the Temple Entry Movement.

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Temple Entry Movement

Significant work in this direction had already been done by reformers and intellectuals like Sri Narayana Guru, N. Kumaran Asan, T.K. Madhavan etc. In 1924, Vaikom Satyagraha led by K.P. Kesava, was launched in Kerala demanding the throwing open of Hindu temples and roads to the untouchables. The satyagraha was reinforced by jathas from Punjab and Madurai. Gandhi undertook a tour of Kerala in support of the movement.

Again in 1931 when the Civil Disobedience Movement was suspended, temple entry movement was organized in Kerala. Inspired by K. Kelappan, poet Subramaniam Tirurnambu (the 'singing sword of Kerala') led a group of sixteen volunteers to Guruvayur. Leaders like P. Krishna Pillai and A.K. Gopalan were among the satyagrahis. Finally, in 1936 the Maharaja of Travancore issued a proclamation throwing open all government-controlled temples to all Hindus. A similar step was taken by the C. Rajagopalachari administration in Madras in 1938.

Indian Social Conference Founded by M.G. Ranade and Raghunath Rao, the conference met annually from its first session in Madras in 1887 at the same time and venue as the Indian National Congress. It focussed attention on the social issues of importance; it could be called the social reform cell of the Indian National Congress, in fact. The conference advocated inter-caste marriages, opposed polygamy and kulinism. It launched the "Pledge Movement" to inspire people to take a pledge against child marriage.

Wahabi/Walliullah Movement Shah Waliullah (1702-62) inspired this essentially revivalist response to western influences and the degeneration which had set in among Indian Muslims. He was the first Indian Muslim leader of the 18th century to organize Muslims around the

two-fold ideals of this movement: (i) desirability of harmony among the four schools of Muslim jurisprudence which had divided the Indian Muslims (he sought to integrate the best elements of the four schools); (ii) recognition of the role of individual conscience in religion

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where conflicting interpretations were derived from the Quran and the Hadis.

The teachings of Walliullah were further popularised by Shah Abdul Aziz and Syed Ahmed Bareilvi who also gave them a political perspective. India was considered to be dar-ul-Harb (land of the kafirs) and it needed to be converted to dar-ul-Islam (land of Islam). Initially the movement was directed at Sikhs in Punjab but after the British annexation of Punjab (1849), the movement was directed against the British. The movement fizzled out in the face of British military might in the 1870s.

Titu Mir's Movement

Mir Nithar Ali, popularly known as Titu Mir, was a disciple of Sayyid Ahmed Raebareilvi, the founder of the Wahabi Movement. Titu Mir organized the Muslim peasants of Bengal against the Hindu landlords and the British indigo planters. The movement was not as militant as the British records made it out to be; only in the last year of Titu's life was there a confrontation between him and the British police. He was killed in action in 1831.

Faraizi Movement

The movement, also called the Fara'idi Movement because of its emphasis on the Islamic pillars of faith, was founded by Haji Shariat-Allah. Its scene of action was East Bengal, and it aimed at the eradication of social innovations current among the Muslims of the region. Under the leadership of Haji's son, Dudu Mian, the movement became revolutionary from 1840 onwards. He gave the movement an organisational system from the village to the provincial level with a khalifa or authorised deputy at every level. The Fara'idis organized a paramilitary forces armed with clubs to fight the Hindu landlords and even the police. Dudu Mian was arrested several times, and his arrest in 1847 finally weakened the movement. The movement survived merely as a religious movement without political overtones after the death of Dudu Mian in 1862.

Ahmadiya Movement

This movement was founded by Mirza Ghulam Ahmed in 1889. It was based on liberal

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principles. It described itself as the standard-bearer of Mohammedan Renaissance, and based itself, like the Brahmo Samaj, on the principles of universal religion of all humanity, opposing jihad (sacred war against non-Muslims). The movement spread western liberal education among the Indian Muslims. However, the Ahmadiya Movement, like Baha'ism which flourished in the West Asian countries, suffered from mysticism.

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and the Aligarh Movement

The official view on the revolt of 1857 held the Muslims to be the main conspirators. This view was further strengthened by the activities of the Wahabis. But later, an opinion got currency among the rulers that the Muslims could be used as allies against a rising tide of nationalist political activity represented, among others, by the foundation of the Indian National Congress. This was to be achieved through offers of thoughtful concessions to the Muslims. A section of Muslims led by Syed Ahmed Khan was ready to allow the official patronage to stimulate a process of growth among Indian Muslims through better education and employment opportunities.

Syed Ahmed Khan, born in 1817 in a respectable Muslim family, was a loyalist member of the judicial service of the Government. After retirement in 1876, he became a member of the Imperial Legislative Council in 1878. His loyalty earned him a knighthood in 1888. He wanted to reconcile western scientific education with the teachings of the Quran to be interpreted in the light of contemporary rationalism and science even though he also held the Quran to be the ultimate. He said that religion, should be adaptable with time or else it would become fossilised, and that religious tenets were not immutable. He advocated a critical approach and freedom of thought and no dependence on tradition or custom. He was also a zealous educationist—as an official, he opened schools in towns, got books translated into Urdu and started the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh in 1875. He also struggled to bring about an improvement in the position of women through better education by

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opposing purdah and polygamy, advocating easy divorce, and condemning the system of piri and murid. He believed in the fundamental underlying unity of religions or 'practical morality'. He also preached the basic commonality of Hindu and Muslim interests.

He argued that Muslims should first concentrate on education and jobs and try to catch up with their Hindu counterparts who had gained the advantage of an early start. Active participation in politics at that point, he felt, would invite hostility of the Government towards the Muslim masses. Therefore, he opposed political activity by the Muslims. Unfortunately, in his enthusiasm to promote the educational and employment interests of the Muslims, he allowed himself to be used by the colonial government in its obnoxious policy of divide and rule and, in later years, started propagating divergence of interests of Hindus and Muslims.

Syed's progressive social ideas were propagated through his magazine Tandhib-ul-Akhlaq (Improvement of Manners and Morals).

The Aligarh Movement emerged as a liberal, modern trend among the Muslim intelligentsia based in Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh. It aimed at spreading (i) modern education among Indian Muslims without weakening their allegiance to Islam; (ii) social reforms among Muslims

relating to purdah, polygamy, widow remarriage, women's education, slavery, divorce, etc. The ideology of the followers of the movement was based on a liberal interpretation of the Quran and they sought to harmonise Islam with modern liberal culture. They wanted to impart a distinct socio-cultural identity to Muslims on modern lines. Soon, Aligarh became the centre of religious and cultural revival of the Muslim community.

The Deoband School

The Deoband Movement was organized by the orthodox section among the Muslim ulema as a revivalist movement with the twin objectives of propagating pure teachings of the Quran and Hadis among Muslims and keeping alive the spirit of jiliad against the foreign rulers.

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The Deoband Movement was established in Deoband in Saharanpur district (United Provinces) in 1866 by Mohammad Qasim Nanotavi (1832-80) and Rashid Ahmed, cangohi (1828-1905) to train religious leaciers tor tne iviusum conununuy.

contrast to> the Ahgarn ivievemenr, 4 L al of Muslim& through western education and support of the British Government, the aim of the Deoband Movement was moral and religious regeneration of the Muslim community. The instruction imparted at Deoband was in original Islamic religion.

On the political front, the Deoband school welcomed the formation of the Indian National Congress and in 1888 issued a fatwa (religious decree) against Syed Ahmed Khan's organisations, The United Patriotic Association and the 1Vlohammaden Anglo-Oriental Association. Some critics attribute Deoband's support to the nationalists more to its determined opposition to Syed Ahmed Khan than to any positive political philosophy.

Mahmud-ul-,Flasan, the new Deoband leader, gave a political and intellectual content to the religious ideas of the school. He worked 'out a synthesis of Islamic principles and nationalist aspirations. The Jamiat-ul-Ulema gave a concrete shape to Hasan's ideas of protection of the religious and political rights of the Muslims in the overall context of Indian unity and national objectives.

Shibli Numani, a supporter of the Deoband, school, favoured the inclusion of English language and European sciences in the system of education. He founded the Nadwatal Ulama and DarI hum in Lucknow in 1894-96. He believed in the idealism of the Congress and cooperation between the Muslims Hindus of Iriaia to create a state in which both could live amicably.

Parsi Reform Movements

The Rahnumai Mazdayasnan Sabha (Religious Reform Association) was founded in 1851 by a group of English-educated Parsis for the "regeneration of the social conditions of the Parsis and the restoration of the Zoroastrian religion to its pristine purity". The movement had

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Naoroji Furdonji, Dadabhai Naoroji, K.R. Carna and S.S. Bengalee as its leaders. The message of reform was spread by the newspaper Rast Goftar (Truth-Teller). Parsi religious rituals and practices were reformed and the Parsi creed redefined. In the social sphere, attempts were made to uplift the status of Parsi women through removal of the purdah system, raising the age of marriage and education. Gradually, the Parsis emerged as the most westernised section of the Indian society.

Sikh Reform Movements

The Sikh community could not remain untouched by the rising tide of rationalist and progressive ideas of the nineteenth century. The Singh Sabha Movement was founded at Amritsar in 1873 with a two-fold objective--(i) to make available modern western education to the Sikhs, and (ii) to counter the proselytising activities of Christian missionaries as well as Hindu revivalists. For the first objective, a network of Khalsa schools was established by the Sabha throughout Punjab. The Akali movement was an offshoot of the Singh Sabha Movement. It aimed at liberating the Sikh gurudwaras from the control of corrupt Udasi Mahants who were a loyalist and reactionary lot, enjoying government patronage. The Government tried its repressive policies against the non-violent non-cooperation satyagraha launched by the Akalis in 1921, but had to bow before popular demands and passed the Sikh Gurudwaras Act in 1922 (amended in 1925) which gave the control of gurudwaras to the Sikh masses to be administered through Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) as the apex body.

The Akali Movement was a regional movement but not a communal one. The Akali leaders played a notable role in the national liberation struggle though some dissenting voices were heard occasionally.

The Theosophical Movement

A group of westerners led by Madame H.P. Blavatsky (1831-1891) and Colonel M.S. who were inspired by Indian thought and culture, founded the Theosophical Society in United States in 1875.

In 1882, they shifted their headquarters to Adayar, on the outskirts of Madras. The society believed that a special relationship could be established between a person's soul and Gay contemplation, Ri-ayer, revelation, etc. It accepted the Hindu beliefs in reincarnation and karma, and drew inspiration from the philosophy of the Upanishads and samkhya, yoga and Vedanta schools of thought. It aimed to work for universal brotherhood of humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour. The society also sought to investigate the unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in man. The

Theosophical Movement came to be allied with the Hindu renaissance. In India, the movement became somewhat popular with the election of Annie Besant (1847-1933) as its president after the death of Olcott in 1907. Annie Besant had come to India in 1893. She laid the foundation of the Central Hindu College in Benaras in 1898 where both Hindu religion and

western scientific subjects were taught. The college became the nucleus for the formation of Benaras Hindu University in 1916. Annie Besant also did much for the cause of the education of women.

The Theosophical Society provided a common denominator for the various sects and fulfilled the urge of educated Hindus. However, to an average Indian the Theosophist philosophy seemed to be vague and lacking a positive programme; to that extent its impact was limited to a small segment of the westernised class. As religious revivalists, the Theosophists did not attain much success, but as a movement of westerners glorifying Indian religious and philosophical traditions they gave much needed self-respect to the Indians fighting British colonial rule. Viewed from another angle, the Theosophists also had the effect of giving a false sense of pride to the Indians in their outdated and sometimes backwardlooking traditions and philosophy.

POSITIVE CONTRIBUTIONS

OF REFORM MOVEMENTS The orthodox sections of society could not accept the scientific ideological onslaught of the socio-religious rebels. As a result

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of this, the reformers were subjected to abuse, persecution, issuing of fatwas and even assassination attempts by the reactionaries.

However, in spite of opposition, these movements contributed towards liberation of the individual from the conformity born out of fear and from uncritical submission to exploitation by the priests. The translation of religious texts into vernacular languages, emphasis on an individual's right to interpret, the scriptural simplification of rituals experience. The movement emphasised the human intellect's capacity to think and reason. It eliminated corrupt elements, religious leaders and praesides,

the reformers enabled their followers to meet the official taunt that their religion was ancient and inflexible. It gave the rising middle classes the much needed to cling to, and served the purpose of reducing the sense of humiliation which the conquest by a foreign power had produced.

A realisation of the special needs of modern times, especially in terms of scientific knowledge, and thus promoting a modern, this-worldly, secular and rational outlook was a major contribution of these reform movements. Socially, this attitude reflected in a basic change in the notions of 'pollution and purity'. Although traditional values and customs were a prominent target of attack from the reformers, yet the reformers aimed at modernisation rather than outright westernisation based on blind imitation of alien western cultural values. In fact, the reform movements sought to create a favourable social climate for modernisation. To that extent, these movements ended India's cultural and intellectual isolation from the rest of the world. The reformers argued that modern ideas and culture could be best imbibed by integrating them into Indian cultural streams.

The underlying concern of these reformist efforts was revival of the native cultural personality which had got distorted by colonial domination. This cultural ideological struggle was to prove to be an important instrument of

evolution of national consciousness and a part of Indian national resolve to resist colonial cultural and ideological hegemony. However, not all these progressive, nationalist tendencies were able to outgrow the sectarian and obscurantist outlook. This was, possibly due to divergent duality of cultural and political struggles, resulting in cultural backwardness despite political advancement.

NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF REFORM MOVEMENTS

One of the major limitations of these religious reform movements was that they had a narrow social base, namely the educated and urban middle classes, while the needs of vast masses of peasantry and the urban poor were ignored.

The tendency of reformers to appeal to the greatness of the past and, to rely on scriptural authority encouraged mysticism in new garbs and fostered pseudo-scientific thinking while exercising a check on full acceptance of the need for a modern scientific outlook. But, above all, these tendencies contributed, at least to some extent, in compartmentalising Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Parsis, as also alienating high caste Hindus from low caste Hindus.

An overemphasis on religious and philosophical, as aspects of heritage, got somewhat magnified by insufficient emphasis on other aspects of culture—art, architecture, literature, music, science and technology. To make matters worse, the Hindu reformers gave their praise of the Indian past to its ancient period and looked upon the medieval period of Indian history essentially as an era of decadence. This tended to create a notion of two separate peoples, on the one hand; on the other, an uncritical praise of the past was not acceptable to the low caste sections of society which had suffered under religiously sanctioned exploitation precisely during the ancient period. Moreover, the past itself tended to be placed into compartments on a partisan basis. Many in the Muslim middle classes went to the extent of turning to, the history of West Asia for their traditions and moments of pride.

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The process of evolution of a composite culture which was evident throughout Indian history showed signs of being arrested with the rise of another form of consciousness—communal consciousness—along with national consciousness among the middle classes.

Many other factors were certainly responsible for the birth of communalism in modern times, but undoubtedly the nature of religious reform movements also contributed to it. On the whole, however, whatever

the net outcome of these reform movements, it was out of this struggle that a new society evolved in India.

Views

I regret to say that, the present system of religion adhered by the Hindus is not well calculated to promote their political interests. it is, I think, necessary that some change should' take place in their religion at least for the sake of their political advantage and social comfort, Raja Rammohan Roy.

No other religion preaches the dignity of humanity in such a lofty strain as Hinduism and no other religion on earth treads upon the poor and the low in such a fashion as Hinduism, Swami Vivekananda.

A country where millions have nothing to eat and where few thousand holy men and brahmins suck the blood of the poor and do nothing at all for them, is not a country but a living hell. Is this religion or a dance of death? Swami Vivekananda.

Nationalist power to stir up discontent would be immensely increased if every cultivator could read, Bombay Governor, in a private letter to the Viceroy (1911).

The rising middle classes were politically inclined and were not so much in search of a religion; but they wanted some cultural roots to cling on to, that would reduce the sense of frustration and humiliation that foreign conquest and rule had produced, Jawaharlal Nehru.

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The dead and the buried are dead, buried and burnt once for all and the dead past cannot, therefore, be revived except by a reformation of the old materials into new organized forms. Mahadeo Govind Ranade

Unfortunately, no brahmin scholar has so far come forward to play the part of a Voltaire who had the intellectual honesty to rise against the doctrines of the Catholic church on which he was brought up. A Voltaire among the brahmins would be a positive danger to the maintenance of a civilisation which is contrived to maintain brahminic supremacy. B.R. Ambedkar

Untouchability question is one of life and death for Hinduism, if untouchability lives, Hinduism perishes, and even India perishes; but if untouchability is eradicated from the Hindu heart, root and branch, then Hinduism has a definite message for the world. M.K. Gandhi

Whoever worships the True God daily must learn to recognise all his fellow countrymen as brethren. Keshub Chandra Sen

Forget not that the lower classes, the ignorant, the poor, the illiterate, the cobbler, the sweeper are thy flesh and blood, thy brothers.
Swami Vivekananda

I want the culture of all lands to be blown about 'my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any. I refuse to live in other people's houses as an interloper, a beggar or a slave. M.K. Gandhi

Summary

FACTORS WHICH GAVE RISE TO REFORM MOVEMENTS

Presence of colonial government on Indian soil.

Various ills plaguing Indian society—obscurantism, superstition, polytheism, idolatry, degraded position of women, exploitative caste hierarchy.

Spread of education and increased awareness of the world.

Impact of modern western culture and consciousness of defeat by a foreign power.

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Religious and Social Reform Movements 57

Summary

Rising :tide of nationalism and democracy during the late 19th century.

SOCIAL BASE

Emerging middle class and western-educated intellectuals.

IDEOLOGICAL BASE

Rationalism, religious universalism, humanism, secularism.

SOCIAL REFORM COMPONENTS

Betterment of Position of Women

Degraded position due to Purdah system Early marriage Lack of education

Unequal rights in marriage, divorce, inheritance

Polygamy

Female infanticide

Restrictions on widow remarriage

Sati

Major Contributors to Reforms

Social reform movements,

freedom struggle,

movements led by enlightened women,

free India's Constitution.

Legislative Measures for Women

Bengal Regulation (1829) banning sati

Bengal Regulations (1795, 1804)—declaring infanticide illegal.

Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act, 1856.

Age of Consent Act, 1891

Sarda Act, 1930

Special Marriage Act, 1954

Hindu Marriage Act, 1955

Hindu Succession Act, 1956

Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act Maternity Benefits Act, 1961
Equal Remuneration Act, 1976
Child Marriage Restraint (Amendment) Act, 1978
Suppression of Immoral Traffic Act in Women and Girls, 1956 (amended in 1986)
Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 (amended in 1986)

STRUGGLE AGAINST CASTE-BASED EXPLOITATION

Factors Undermining Caste Rigidities
Forces unleashed by colonial administration
Social reform movements
National movement
Gandhi's campaign against untouchability
Stirrings among lower castes due to better education and employment
Free India's Constitution

REFORM MOVEMENTS: AMONG HINDUS Bengal Raja Ram-mohan Roy and Brahmo Samaj
Debendranath Tagore and Tattvabodhini Sabha
Keshub Chandra Sen and Brahmo Samaj of India Prarthana Samaj
Derozio and Young Bengal Movement Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar Western India Bal Shastri Jambekar Students' Literary and Scientific Societies
Pararnhansa Mandalis
Jyotiba Phule and Satyashodhak Samaj Gopalhari Deshmukh Lokahitawadi'
Gopal Ganesh Agarkar Servants of India Society Southern India Sri Narayana Dharma Paripalana Movement Vokkaliga Sangha Justice Movement
Self-respect Movement Temple Entry Movement All India
Ramakrishna Movement and Vivekananda
Dayanand Saraswati and Arya Samaj
Theosophical Movement

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Summary

• AMONG MUSLIMS

Wahabi/Walliullah Movement Ahmadiya Movement Syed Ahmed Khan and Aligarh Movement Deoband Movement

AMONG PARSIS

Rahnumai Mazdayasnan Sabha

AMONG SIKHS

Singh Sabha Movement Akali Movement

POSITIVE CONTRIBUTIONS

Liberation of individual from conformity out of fear psychosis. Worship made a more personal affair Cultural roots to the middle classes—thus mitigating the sense of humiliation; much needed self-respect gained
Fostered secular outlook Encouraged social climate for modernisation
Ended India's cultural, intellectual isolation from rest of the world
Evolution of national consciousness

NEGATIVE CONTRIBUTIONS

Narrow social base Indirectly encouraged mysticism Overemphasis on religious, philosophical aspects of culture while underemphasising secular and moral aspects Hindus confined their praise to ancient Indian history and Muslims to medieval history—created a notion of two separate peoples and increased communal consciousness Historical process of evolution of composite culture arrested to some extent.