INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HISTORY

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# Socio-religious reform movements in British colonial India

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**Abstract**
The Indian society in the first half of the 19th century was caste ridden, decadent and rigid. It followed certain practices which are not in keeping with humanitarian feelings or values but were still being followed in the name of religion. A change was therefore needed in society. When the British came to India they introduced the English language as well as certain modern ideas. These ideas were those of liberty, social and economic equality, fraternity, democracy and justice which had a tremendous impact on Indian society. Several contemporary groups, collectively termed social reform movements, strive to introduce regeneration and reform in India. Although these movements vary individually in their specific philosophies they generally stress the spiritual, secular, logical and scientific aspects of the Vedic traditions, creating a form that is egalitarian that does not discriminate Jati (caste or sub caste), gender, or race. Article emphasis on Modern socio-religious reform movements emerged in the 19th century India with the impact of the West on the East and the interaction between Christianity and Hinduism, and as a challenge and response to this impact and the inter-religious encounter.

**Keywords:** Hinduism, colonialism, egalitarian, renaissance, child-marriage, cast system, female infanticide, discrimination, etc.

## 1. Introduction
Nineteenth century is the period of turmoil in Indian society. The age-old traditions and practices were degraded and these were replaced by many social evils like female infanticide, sati, child-marriage, caste system, purdah system, ban on female education, and widow re-marriage etc. The conquest of India by the British during the 18th and 19th century exposed some serious weaknesses and drawbacks of Indian social institutions. The most distressing was the position of women. The socio-intellectual revolution that took place in the fields of social reforms is often known as Indian Renaissance. An important part of European Renaissance was reforming society from outside, on the basis of Post Enlightenment rationalism. But in Indian context, it implied rediscovering rationalism from within India's past.

In India, social reforms did not ordinarily mean a reorganization of the structuring of society at large, as it did in the West, for the benefit of underprivileged social and economic classes. Instead, it meant the infusion into the existing social structure of the new ways of life and thought. The idea was "The society would be preserved, while its members would be transformed." The social reform movement, as a matter of fact, was not an isolated phenomenon; it was loaded with wider national political and economic considerations. In a way, the social reform movement was a prelude to nationalism.

## 2. Importance of the Study
Through this article, we got to know about the different socio-religious movements that were happening pan colonial India and the most famous based on the inscriptional and textual evidence as stated in the history of mankind. The important heads under this topic led us to a deeper and unseen extent of the topic. Also, the vast and unending information regarding the social practices that existed in our society during colonial era, importance of socio-religious reform movements in raising awareness about prevalent social practices and efforts of the reformers to deal with issues faced by the, then, society. We are now able to provide a clear picture of the above-stated topics after all the research work done by us. So, let's move on to the detailed discussion of the topic here after.

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## 3. Objectives of the Study

This study is intended to get associated on the following: to

1. Identity some common characteristics of religious and social reform movement;
2. Explain the role played by Raja Rammohan Roy and his Brahmo Samaj in bringing about religious reforms in India;
3. Discuss the importance of socio-religious reform movements during the 19th and early 20th century in raising awareness about prevalent social practices;
4. Highlight the role of reformers from the 19th century onwards in promoting school education in India;
5. Measure the degree of the impact of reform movement on Indian society.

## 4. Research Methodology

Research Methodology is a compound of two words, research and methodology, indicating the mode of doing research. Research methodology deals with the activity of recognizing, using and interpreting the sources of history towards a careful investigation for increasing the sum of historical knowledge. The historical sources of data collection can be divided in two categories (i) Primary and (ii) secondary. The primary sources of information direct outcomes of events or the records of the eyewitness-original documents, relics, remains, artifacts etc. The secondary sources of information provide by a person who did not directly observes the event, object, conditions-textbooks, encyclopedia, newspapers, articles, periodicals, etc. The books written by different historians are put in the category of secondary sources. There is no history without interpretation. However; the study of cultural traits like religion requires a thorough analysis of not only the literary and philosophic evidence, but of the history of the religious institutions and religious practices in general.

## 5. Causes of the Reform Movements

Indian Society in the 19th century was caught in a vicious web created by religious superstitions and dogmas. All religions in general and Hinduism in particular had become a compound of magic, animism, and superstitions. 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. Another debilitating factor was Caste. It sought to maintain a system of segregation, hierarchically ordained on the basis of ritual status, hampering social mobility and fostered social divisions.

The conquest of India by the British during the 18th and 19th century exposed some serious weaknesses and drawbacks of Indian social institutions. The response, indeed, was varied but the need to reform social and religious life was a commonly shared conviction. It also brought in completely new sets of ideas and social world (NIOS, 2018) [5]. The exposure to post Enlightenment rationalism that came to signify modernity brought a change in the outlook of a select group of Indians. The introduction of western education and ideas had the far reaching impact on the Indian Society. Through the glasses of utility, reason, justice, and progress, a select group of individuals began to explore the nature of their own society. There was a gradual emergence of public opinion. The debates between the Orientalists, scholars of Eastern societies like India on one side, and the Utilitarians, Liberals and Missionaries on the other also enabled the penetration of ideas, at least amongst the upper section of society (Chandra, 2020) [2]. The resultant cultural change led to introspection about Indian traditions, institution, and culture.

## 6. Social and Religious Reform Movements

Social Reform Movement are linked with different ideas including presence of Colonial government, Economic and Social backwardness of society, influence of modern western ideas, rise of intellectual awakening in the middle class and poor position of women in society. British rule in India acted as a catalyst to deep seated social changes. Western culture also influenced the Indian Life and thought in several ways. The most important result of the impact of western culture was the replacement of blind faith in current traditions, (Sarkar, 1975) [6] beliefs, and conventions by a spirit of rationalism.

The major social problems which came in the purview of the reforms movements were emancipation of women in which sati, infanticide, child marriage and widow remarriage were taken up, casteism and untouchability, education for bringing about enlightenment in society. In the religious sphere main issues were idolatry, polytheism, religious superstitions, and exploitation by priest (Chandra, 2020) [2]. Important characteristics of Social Reform Movement included leadership by wide emerging Intellectual middle class. Reform movement started in different parts of India in different period but having considerable similarities. They were link with one region or one caste. It was clear to them that without religious reformation, there cannot be any social reformation (NIOS, 2018) [5]. Two Intellectual criteria of social reform movement included- Rationality

- Religious Universalism
- Social relevance was judged by a rationalist critique.

It is difficult to match the uncompromising rationalism of the early Raja Rammohan Roy or Akshay Kumar Dutta. Rejecting Supernatural explanations, Raja Rammohan Roy affirmed the principle of causality linking the whole phenomenal universe. To him demonstrability was the sole criterion of truth. In proclaiming that 'rationalism is our only preceptor', Akshay Kumar Dutta went a step further. All natural and social phenomena, he held, could be analyzed and understood by purely mechanical processes (NIOS, 2018) [5]. This perspective not only enabled them to adopt a rational approach to tradition but also to evaluate the contemporary socio-religious practices from the standpoint of social utility and to replace faith with rationality. In the Brahmo Samaj, it led to the repudiation of the infallibility of the Vedas.

In the Aligarh Movement, was to the reconciliation of the teachings of Islam with the needs of the modern age. Holding that religious tenets were not immutable, Syed Ahmed Khan emphasized the role of religion in the progress of society: if religion did not keep pace with and meet the demands of the time it would get fossilized as in the case of Islam in India (Chandra, 2020) [2]. Similarly, while the ambits of reforms were particularistic, their religious perspective was universalistic. Raja Ram Mohan Roy considered different religion as national embodiments of Universal theism. The Brahmo Samaj was initially conceived by him as a Universalist church (NIOS, 2018) [5]. He was a defender of the basic and universal principles of

all religionsthe monotheism of the Vedas and the Unitarianism of Christianity- and at the same time attacked polytheism of Hinduism and the trinitarianism of Christianity. Sir Syed Ahmed khan echoed the same idea: all prophets had the same din (faith) and every country and nation had different prophets.

This perspective found clearer articulation in Kehsub Chandra Sen's ideas saying that our position is not that truths are to be found in all religions, but all established religions of the world are true. He also gave expression to the social implication of this Universalist perspective saying that whosoever worships the True God daily must learn to recognize all his fellow countrymen as brethren. The emphasis was not on the word 'Muslim' but on the word 'tyranny'. This is amply clear from Syed Ahmed Khan's description of the pre- colonial system: 'The rule of the former emperors and rajas was neither in accordance with the Hindu nor the Mohammadan religion (NIOS, 2018) [5]. It was based upon nothing but tyranny and oppression; the law of might was that of right; the voice of the people was not listened to.

The socio religious reform movement, as a whole, was against backward element of traditional culture in terms of both religious and social evils. The focus was on regeneration of traditional institutions including medicine, education, and philosophy and so on. There were differences in methods of those reform movements but all of them were concerned with the regeneration of society through social and educational reforms (Chandra, 2020) [2]. Each of these reform movements was confined, by and large, to a region or other and also was confined to a particular caste and religion. In a nutshell, it can be argued that in the evolution of modern India the reform movements have made very significant contribution. They stood for the democratization of the society, removal of superstitions and decadent customs, spread of enlightenment and development of a rational and modern outlook. This led to the national awakening in India.

## 7. Raja Rammohan Roy and Brahmo Samaj

The central figure of this cultural awakening was Raja Rammohan Roy. Known as the "father of the Indian Renaissance", Rammohan Roy was a great patriot, scholar and humanist. He was moved by deep love for the country and worked throughout his life for the social, religious, intellectual and political regeneration of the Indians. He started the 'Atmiya Sabha' in 1815 and carried a consistent struggle against the religious and social malpractices. In first philosophical work *Tuhfat-ul-Muwahiddin* he analyzed major religions of the world in light of reason and social comfort (Chandra, 2020) [2].

In 1814, Rammohan Roy settled in Calcutta and dedicated his life to the cause of social and religious reform. As a social reformer, Rammohan Roy fought relentlessly against social evils like sati, polygamy, child marriage, female infanticide and caste discrimination. He organised a movement against the inhuman custom of sati and helped William Bentinck to pass a law banning the practice (1829) (Chandra, 2020) [2]. It was the first successful social movement against an ageold social evil. In August 1828, Roy founded the Brahmo Sabha, which was later renamed 'Brahmo Samaj' (The society of God). Object of the Brahmo Samaj was the worship and adoration of the eternal, unsearchable, Immutable God. It opposed idol worship and stayed away from practice of priesthood and sacrifice. The worship was performed through prayers, meditation, and readings from the Upanishads.

In 1829 Rammohan Roy founded a new religious society known as the Atmiya Sabha which later on came to be known as the Brahmo Samaj. This religious society was based on the twin pillars of rationalism and the philosophy of the Vedas. The role of the Brahmo Samaj as the 'first intellectual movement which spread the ideas of rationalism and enlightenment in modern India' cannot be over-emphasized (Chandra, 2020) [2]. Its liberal approach to social and religious questions won the approbation of Europeans and Indians alike. Its educational and social reform activities instilled a new confidence which, in turn, contributed to the growth of national movement. A number of Brahmo Samajis were later prominent in the struggle of Independence.

## 8. Young Bengal Movement

The establishment of the Hindu College in 1817 was a major event in the history of Bengal. It played an important role in carrying forward the reformist movement that had already emerged in the province. A radical movement for the reform of Hindu Society, known as the Young Bengal Movement, started in the college. 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 (Chandra, 2020) [2]. The Derozians also supported women's rights and education. Also, Derozio was perhaps the first nationalist poet of Modern India.

The main reason for their limited success was the prevailing social condition at that time, which was 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 (Chandra, 2020) [2]. In fact their radicalism was bookish in character. But, despite their limitations, the Derozians carried forward Roy's tradition of public education on social, economic, and political questions.

## 9. 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. Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, a towering personality of the mid- nineteenth century, was born in a poor Brahmin family of Bengal in 1820. He was a renowned Sanskrit scholar and became the Principal of the Sanskrit College in 1851. The Sanskrit College conferred on him the title of 'Vidyasagar' because of his profound knowledge of Sanskrit (Chandra, 2020) [2]. Vidyasagar started a movement in support of widow remarriage which resulted in legislation of widow remarriage. He was also a crusade against child marriage and polygamy. He did much for the cause of Women's education. As government inspector of schools, he helped organize thirty-five girls' schools, many of which he ran at his own expense. Vidyasagar was a staunch supporter of women's education and helped Drinkwater Bethune to establish the Bethune School, the first Indian school for girls, in 1849. As Inspector of Schools, Vidyasagar opened a number of schools for girls in the districts under his charge (Chandra, 2020) [2]. Soon a

powerful movement in favour of widow remarriage was started. At last, after prolonged struggle the Widow Remarriage Act was passed in 1856. Through his efforts, twenty-five widow remarriages took place. He also spoke vehemently against child marriage and polygamy. Through his writings, Vidyasagar made the people aware of the social problems and thus helped the growth of nationalism in India.

## 10. Dayanand Saraswati and Arya Samaj

This was the basic contribution of Mool Shanker an important representative of the religions reform movement in India from Gujarat. He later came to be known as Dayanand Saraswati (l824-1883). He founded the Arya Samaj in 1875. Arya Samaj is a Noble Hindu reform movement in Modern India. The most influential movement of religious and social reform in northern India was started by Dayanand Saraswari. He held that the Vedas contained all the knowledge imparted to man by God and essentials of modern science could also be traced in them. He was opposed to idolatry, ritual and priesthood, particularly to the prevalent caste practices and popular Hinduism as preached by the Brahmins. He favoured the study of western science (Chandra, 2020) [2]. 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. Swami Dayanand gave the mantra, "Go back to Vedas" as he believed that priestly class and Puranas had perverted Hindu religion. He wrote a book 'Satyarth Prakash', which contains his philosophical and religious ideas. He believed that every person had the right to have direct access to God. It started the Shuddhi Movement to bring back those Hindus who had converted to Islam and Christianity.

A Network of schools and colleges for boys and girls was established throughout northern India to promote the spread of education. Dayanand Anglo-Vedic School of Lahore, which soon developed into a premier college of Punjab, set the pattern for such institutions. Instruction was imparted through Hindi and English on modern lines (Chandra, 2020) [2]. Lala Hansraj played a leading role in this field. In 1902, Swami Shradhananda started the Gurukul near Hardwar to propagate the more traditional ideas of education. This was set up on the pattern of ancient Ashrams. Arya Samaj tried to inculcate the spirit of self-respect and self-reliance among the people of India. This promoted nationalism. At the same time one of its main objectives was to prevent the conversion of Hindus to other religions.

## 11. Rama Krishna Paramhansa and Swami Vivekananda

Gadadhar Chattopadhyaya (l836-86) was a poor Brahmin priest who later came to be known as Ramakrishna Paramahansa: His education did not proceed beyond the elementary stage and he had no formal education in philosophy and Shastras. He dedicated his life to God. He believed that there were many roads to God and the service of man was the service of God, because man was the embodiment of God (Jones, 1994) [3]. Hence sectarianism had no place in his teachings. He realised the divinity in humanity and looked upon the service of mankind as a means to salvation.

Narendra Nath Datta (l863-1902) later known as Swami Vivekananda was the most devoted pupil of Ramakrishna Paramahansa who carried the message of his Guru Ramakrishna all over the world, especially in America and Europe. He emerged as the preacher of neo-Hinduism. Certain spiritual experiences of Ramakrishna, the teaching 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 (Chandra, 2020) [2]. He subscribed to the Vedanta, which he considered a fully rational system with a superior approach. The principal feature of Vivekananda's social philosophy was his insistence on the upliftment of the masses. For him, service to the poor and downtrodden was the highest religion (Jones, 1994) [3]. To organise such service, he founded the Ramakrishna Mission in 1897. This Mission to date has played an important role in providing social service in times of national distress like famine, floods, and epidemic. Many schools, hospitals, orphanages are run by it. He urged his countrymen to work for their own salvation. For this purpose bands of workers devoted to this cause were trained through the Ramakrishan Mission. Thus Vivekananda emphasized social good or social services.

In 1893 he participated in the All World Religious Conference (Parliament of Religions) at Chicago in the United States of America. He argued that Vedanta was the religion of all and not of the Hindus alone. 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 in to a new harmony to produce happiness for mankind.

## 12. Theosophical Society

Theosophical society has played an important role in the history of the religion, society and culture of modern India. It was founded in the USA in 1875 by a Russian spiritualist Madame H.P. Blavatsky and an American Col. H.S. Olcott. Its objective was to promote studies in ancient religions, philosophies and science, develop the divine powers latent in man and form a universal brotherhood of man. By 1884, the society had 100 branches in India, apart from several in Europe and America. The movement was revived and revitalized by Annie Besant who came out to India in 1893, after the death of Madame Blavatsky. She succeeded Olcott as the president of society in 1907 and endeared herself to large numbers of People by preaching the wisdom of Krishna and Gita, thus turning theosophy 'into something specifically Hindu' (Jones, 1994) [3]. They helped to impart to the educated Indians a sense of pride in their own country. Annie Beasant's movement was a movement led and supported by westerners who glorified Indian religious and philosophical traditions. This helped Indians to recover their self-confidence. In fact the activities of Annie Besant in the field of education were more significant. She founded the Central Hindu College at Banaras which she later handed over to Madan Mohan Malaviya. He developed that college into the Banaras Hindu University (Jones, 1994) [3]. Although the Theosophical Movement did not enjoy mass popularity, its work under the leadership of Annie Besant for awakening of the Indians was remarkable. She contributed a great deal to the development of national spirit in Indians. The headquarters of the Theosophical Society at Adyar became a centre of knowledge with a library of rare Sanskrit books. The society opened schools for boys, for women, for the depressed classes and took part in the Boy scouts movements.

## 13. M.G. Ranade and Prarthana Samaj

Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade (1842 –1901) was a distinguished Indian scholar, social reformer and author. In 1867, the Prarthana Samaj was started in Maharashtra with the aim of reforming Hinduism and preaching the worship of one God. Mahadev Govind Ranade and R.G. Bhandarkar were the two great leaders of the Samaj. The Prarthana Samaj did in Maharashtra what the Brahmo Samaj did in Bengal. It attacked the caste system and the predominance of the Brahmins, campaigned against child marriage and the purdah system, preached widow remarriage and emphasised female education. In order to reform Hinduism, Ranade started the Widow Remarriage Association and the Deccan Education Society. In 1887, Ranade founded the National Social Conference with the aim of introducing social reforms throughout the country. Ranade was also one of the founders of the Indian National Congress. During his life he helped establish the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha and the Prarthana Samaj, and would edit a Bombay Anglo Marathi daily paper, the Induprakash, founded on his ideology of social and religious reform (Jones, 1994) [3]. A man of varied interest, an economist, politician, historian, and social reformer, Ranade did not let his official work interfere with his duty to the country and its people.

With his friends Dr. Atmaram Pandurang, Bal Mangesh Wagle and Vaman Abaji Modak, Ranade founded the Prarthana Samaj, a Hindu movement inspired by the Brahmo Samaj, espousing principles of enlightened theism based on the ancient Vedas. Prarthana Samaj was started with inspiration from Keshav Chandra Sen, a staunch Brahma Samajist, with the objective of carrying out religious reforms in Maharashtra (NIOS, 2018) [5]. The four point social agenda of Prarthana Samaj were:

1. Disapproval of caste system.
2. Women education.
3. Widow Remarriage.
4. Raising the age of marriage for both males and females.

Ranade founded the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha and later was one of the originators of the Indian National Congress. He has been portrayed as an early adversary of the politics of Bal Gangadhar Tilak and a mentor to Gopal Krishna Gokhale. Ranade was a founder of the Social Conference Movement, which he supported till his death, directing his social reform efforts against child marriage, the shaving of widows' heads, the heavy cost of marriages and other social functions, (Jones, 1994) [3] and the caste restrictions on traveling abroad, and he strenuously advocated widow remarriage and female education.

## 14. Satya Shodhak Samaj

Jyotiba Phule belonged to the Mali (gardener) community and organized a powerful movement against upper caste domination and Brahaminical 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 (Jones, 1994) [3]. The main aims of the movement were:

▪ Social service
▪ Spread of education among women and lower caste people

Phule's works, Sarvajanik Satyadharma and Ghulamgin, became source 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 caste system and socio-economic inequalities. This movement gave a sense of identity to the depressed communities as a class against the Brahmins, who were seen as the exploiters.

## 15. Social and Religious Movements in India

Down here is the detailed list of social and religious movements in India listed along with the founder, year and place of the origin.

**Table 1:** Shows in name of organisation, founder, year and place

| S. N. | Name of Organisation | Founder | Year | Place |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Atamiya Sabha | Raja Rammohan Roy | 1815 | Calcutta |
| 2. | Young Bengal Movement | Henry Vivian Derozio | 1826 | Calcutta |
| 3. | Brahmo Samaj | Raja Rammohan Roy | 1829 | Calcutta |
| 4. | Dharma Sabha | Radhakant Dev | 1830 | Calcutta |
| 5. | Tatwabodhani Sabha | Debendranath Tagore | 1839 | Calcutta |
| 6. | Paramhans Mandali | Dadoba Panderung | 1849 | Bombay |
| 7. | Rahnumai Mazdyan Sabha | Dadabhai Naroji | 1851 | Bombay |
| 8. | Radhaswami Satsang | Shiv Dayal Saheb | 1861 | Agra |
| 9. | Brahmo Samaj of India | Keshav Chandra Sen | 1866 | Calcutta |
| 10. | Prathana Samaj | Dr. Atmaram Pandurang | 1867 | Bombay |
| 11. | Arya Samaj | Swami Dayanand | 1875 | Bombay |
| 12. | Theosophical Society | H.P. Balatsvy & Col. Olcott | 1875 | New York |
| 13. | Sadharan Brahmo Samaj | Anand Mohan Bose | 1878 | Calcutta |
| 14. | Deccan Education Society | G.G. Agarkar | 1884 | Pune |
| 15. | Indian National Social Conference | M.G. Ranade | 1887 | Bombay |
| 16. | Dev Samaj | Shivnarayan Agnihotri | 1887 | Lahore |
| 17. | Ram Krishana Mission | Swmi Vivekanand | 1897 | Belure |
| 18. | Servants of Indian Society | Gopal Krishana Gokhale | 1905 | Pune |
| 19. | Pune Seva Sadan | Ms. Ramabai Ranade | 1909 | Bombay |
| 20. | Social Service League | N.M. Joshi | 1911 | Bombay |
| 21 | Seva Samiti | H.N. Kunjru | 1914 | Allahabad |

## 16. Muslim Reform Movements

Movements for socio-religious reforms among the Muslims emerged late. Most Muslims feared that Western education would endanger their religion as it was un-Islamic in character. During the first half of the 19th century only a handful of Muslims had accepted English education. The

Muhammedan Literary Society, established by Nawab Abdul Latif in 1863, was one of the earliest institutions that attempted to spread modern education. Abdul Latif also tried to remove social abuses and promote HinduMuslim unity (Jones, 1994) [3]. They took upon themselves the task of purifying and strengthening Islam resulting in Wahabi and Faraizi Movement. Apart from this, the official Government 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 (Ahmad, 1967). Hence the need for a cooperative attitude towards the British to improve the community's social condition was felt by many liberal Muslim. This resulted in Aligarh Movement.

## 16.1 Wahabi/Walliullah Movement
Shah Walliullah inspired this essentially revivalist response to western influences and the degeneration which had set in among Indian Muslims. He was the first Indian Muslims leader of the 18th century to organize Muslims around the two fold ideals of this movement (Ahmad, 1967). The teachings of Walliullah were further popularized by Shah Abdul Aziz and Syed Ahmed Barelvi who also gave them a political perspective (Jones, 1994) [3].
1. The desirability of harmony among the four schools of Muslims jurisprudence, which had divided the Indian Muslims.
2. The recognition of the role of individual conscience in religion where conflicting interpretation were derived from the Quran and the Hadis.

## 16.2 Titu Mir's Movement
Titu Mir was a disciple of Sayyid Ahmed Raebarelvi, the founder of Wahabi Movement. Titu Mir organized the Muslim peasants of Bengal against the Hindu landlords and the British indigo planters (Jones, 1994) [3]. The British records say it was a militant movement which wasn't completely true.

## 16.3 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 (Jones, 1994) [3]. Its scene of action was East Bengal, and it aimed at the eradication of social innovations current among the Muslims of the region.

## 16.4 Ahmadiya Movement
This movement was founded by Mirza Ghulam Ahmed in 1889. It was based on liberal principles. It described itself as the standard bearer of Mohammedan Renaissance, and based itself, like Brahmo Samaj, on the principle of Universal religion of all humanity, opposing jihad (Ahmad, 1967). The movement spread western liberal education among the Indian Muslims. However, the Ahmadiya Movement, like Bahaism which flourished in the west Asian Countries, suffered from mysticism (Sarkar, 1975) [6].

## 16.5 Aligarh Movement
It was organised by Syed Ahmad Khan (1817-1899), a man described as the most outstanding figure among the Muslims. Syed Ahmad Khan was born in 1817 into a Muslim noble family and had joined the service of the Company as a judicial officer. He realised that the Muslims had to adapt themselves to British rule. So Syed Ahmad

advised Muslims to embrace Western education and take up government service. In 1862, he founded the Scientific Society to translate English books on science and other subjects into Urdu (Ahmad, 1967). He also started an English- Urdu journal through which he spread the ideas of social reform. Through his initiative was established the Mohammedan Oriental College which later developed into the Aligarh Muslim University. It helped to develop a modern outlook among its students. This intellectual movement is called the Aligarh Movement (Jones, 1994) [3]. In pursuit to stimulate a process of growth among Indian Muslims through better education and employment opportunities, a section of Muslims led by Syed Ahmed Khan was ready to allow the official patronage (Sarkar, 1975) [6]. He argued that Muslim should first concentrate on education and jobs and tries to catch up with their Hindu Counterparts who had gained the advantage of an early start. Syed's progressive social ideas were propagated through his magazine Tahdhib-ul-Akhlaq (Ahmad, 1967). The Aligarh Movement emerged as a liberal, modern trend among the Muslim intelligentsia based on Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh. It aimed at spreading:-
1. Modern education among Indian Muslims without weakening their allegiance to Islam.
2. Social reforms among Muslims relating to purdah, polygamy, widow remarriage, women's education, slavery, divorce, etc.

## 16.6 Deoband Movement
Deoband Movement was established by Mohammad Qasim Nanautavi (1832-1880) and Rashid Ahamd Gangohi (1828-1916) as a revivalist movement with the twin objectives of propagating pure teachings of Quaran and Hadis among Muslims and keeping alive the spirit of jihad against the foreign rule (Ahmad, 1967). In contrast to the Aligarh Movement which aimed at the welfare of Muslims through western education and support of the British government, (Sarkar, 1975) [6] the aim of Deoband Movement was moral and religious regeneration of the Muslim community.

## 17. The Sikh Reform Movement
Religious and social movements among the Sikhs were undertaken by various gurus who tried to bring about positive changes in the Sikh religion. Baba Dayal Das propagated the nirankar (formless) idea of God (Sarkar, 1975) [6]. By the end of the 19th century a new reform movement called the Akali Movement was launched to reform the corrupt management of Gurdwaras. The formation of the two Singh Sabhas at Amritsar and Lahore in the 1870's was the beginning of religious reform movement among the Sikhs (Jones, 1994) [3]. The setting up of Khalsa College in Amritsar in 1892 helped promote Gurumukhi, Sikh learning and Punjabi literature.

## 18. The Parsi Reform Movement
The Parsi Religious Reform Association was started in 1851. It campaigned against orthodoxy in religion.

**Seva Sadan:** A parsi social reformer, Behramji M. Malabari, founded the Sevasadan in 1885. The organization specialized in taking care of those women who were exploited and then discarded by society (Sarkar, 1975) [6].

**Rahnumai Mazdayasnan Sabha**: It was founded by

Narouji Furdonji, Dadabhai Naoroji, S. S. Bengalee and others to begin religious reform among the Parsis. They played important role in the spread of education, especially among girls. They also campaigned against orthodox practices in Parsi religion (Sarkar, 1975) [6].

## 19. Analysis of the Study
### A. Target of the Social Reform Movement
The targets of the intellectual attack were the existing socio-cultural evils and malpractices such as obscurantism, superstitions and irrationality imbedded in the Society.

### B. Reformation and not Revolution
They did not stand for structural transformation; changes were sought within the framework of the every structure. In a word, they were advocates of reform and not exponents of revolution. The course they delineated for transformation was to be evolutionary, and not revolutionary.

### C. Urban Phenomenon
The intellectual movement in India was an urban phenomenon; it originated and greatly operated in the urban areas only. The main means used for the propagation of ideas add for the creation of favourable public opinion were the urban communication channels such as the press, lectures, and sabhas, propaganda network.

### D. Spread of the Movement
Although their activities remained confined to certain urban pockets, the intellectuals extended their vision to comprehend the problems of different regions and the country as a whole. Moreover, they made conscious attempts to undermine the notions of provinciality and regional distinctions.

**Table 2:** Shows in List of Legislative Measures for Women and Name of Act pass by British and Indian Governments

| S. N. | List of Legislative Measures for Women / Name of Act pass by British and Indian Governments | Year of Acts Pass by Legislation |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Bengal regulation banning sati | 1829 |
| 2. | Bengal Regulations declaring infanticide illegal | 1795, 1804 |
| 3. | Hindu Widow's Remarriage Act, | 1856 |
| 4. | Age of Consent Act, | 1891 |
| 5 | Sharda Act, | 1929 |
| 6. | Special Marriage Act, | 1954 |
| 7. | Hindu Marriage Act, | 1955 |
| 8. | Hindu Succession act, | 1956 |
| 9. | Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act | 1956 |
| 10. | Maternity Benefits Act, | 1961 |
| 11. | Equal Remuneration Act, | 1976 |
| 12. | Dowry Prohibition Act, | 1961 |

## 20. Common Feature of Reform Movement
An analysis of the reform movements of the 19th century brings out (Jones, 1994) [3] several common features:
A. All the reformers propagated the idea of one God and the basic unity of all religions. Thus, they tried to bridge the gulf between different religious beliefs.
B. All the reformers attacked priesthood, rituals, idolatry and polytheism. The humanitarian aspect of these reform movements was expressed in their attack on the caste system and the custom of child marriage.
C. The reformers attempted to improve the status of girls and women in society. They all emphasised the need for female education.
D. By attacking the caste system and untouchability, the reformers helped to unify the people of India into one nation.
E. The reform movements fostered feelings of self-respect, self-reliance and patriotism among the Indians.

## 21. Contribution of the Reform Movements
Many reformers like Raja Rammohan Roy, Dayanand Saraswati and Vivekananda upheld Indian philosophy and culture. This instilled in Indians a sense of pride and faith in their own culture. Female education was promoted. Schools for girls were set up. Even medical colleges were established for women (Jones, 1994) [3]. The cultural and ideological struggle taken up by the socio-religious movements helped to build up national consciousness. They, thus, paved the way for the growth of nationalism.

## 22. Impact of Socio-Religious Movements
The greatest impact of the nineteenth century socio-religious reform movements was (Sarkar, 1975) [6]:
1. The creation of national awakening among the masses;
2. The revival of Hinduism as a tolerant, rational religion to restore its lost prestige in the wake of Islam in the past and Christianity in the nineteenth century;
3. An onslaught on the indignities committed on women, untouchables and other oppressed and depressed sections of Indian society;
4. The creation of the feelings of sacrifice, service and rationalism;
5. An attack on the hereditary character and rigidities of the caste system; and finally
6. A sense of equality, indigenization and co-existence of cultures and religions.

## 23. Concluding Remarks
Numerous individuals, reform societies, and religious organizations worked hard to spread education among women, to prevent marriage of young children, to bring women out of the purdah, to enforce monogamy, and to enable middle class women to take up professions or public employment. Due to all these efforts Indian women played an active and important role in the struggle for independence of the nation (Sarkar, 1975) [6]. As a result many superstitions disappeared and many others were on their way out. Now, it was no longer a sin to travel to foreign countries.

Raja Rammohan Roy can be regarded as the central figure of India's awakening for championing the spread of modern education, science and technology and for his relentless fight against many social evils. The work of religious reforms in Maharashtra through the Prarthana Samaj by propagating inter-caste marriages, freedom from priestly domination and improvement of the lot of women. The Arya Samaj and pleaded for the right of individuals to interpret Vedas and free themselves from the tyranny of priests. Besides all this, the organisation fought against untouchability and caste rigidity as well as worked for promoting modern education. Swami Vivekananda, a great humanist, through his Ramakrishna Mission condemned religious narrow mindedness, advocated free thinking and emphasised on service for the poor. Religious reforms among the Muslims were carried out by Sayyid Ahmad Khan who encouraged Muslims to adopt modern education; denounced polygamy, purdah system and spoke against religious intolerance, ignorance and irrationalism.

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