

## Socio-Religious Reform Movements-Part 2 (Awakening among Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis and Non-Brahmins)

In this chapter, you will learn more about the reform movements of the 19th and the 20th centuries and their leaders, particularly the reform movements among Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis and the Depressed Classes.

### MUSLIM REFORM MOVEMENTS

While the Hindu community responded to Western influences with a desire to learn, the first reaction of Muslim community was to shut itself in a shell and resist all forces of change. Hence Muslim reform movements arose relatively later, i.e. only after 1860s.

#### The Wahabi/Waliullah Movement (1830s–60s)

The Wahabi Movement was the first Muslim movement to emerge in response to Western influences. It was a revivalist movement which tried to purify Islam of all the un-Islamic practices that had crept into Muslim society through the ages. The movement was led by Abdul Wahab of Arabia as well as Delhi's Saint Shah Waliullah Dehlawi (1702–62). In India, their teachings were popularised by **Syed Ahmad Barelvi** (also known as Syed Ahmed of Rae Bareli) and **Shah Abdul Aziz**.

Views and activities of the movement were:

- Barelvi condemned all innovations in Islam and advocated a return to original religion of Islam and Islamic society of Arabia as it was during the Prophet's times.
- Barelvi and Aziz gave the movement a political colour and aimed at creating a Muslim homeland (Dar-ul-Islam).
- Aziz set out a fatwa (ruling) declaring that India was **Dar-ul-harb** (land of the kafirs) and the need was to make it Dar-ul-Islam. Jihad was initially declared against the Sikhs of Punjab then ruled by Ranjit Singh.
- After the British annexation of Punjab in 1849, jihad was directed against the British.
- During the **Revolt of 1857**, the Wahabis played a significant role in spreading anti-British sentiments.

By 1860s, the movement was suppressed by the British in the presence of superior military might. In 1870, the term 'sedition' was added in the Indian Penal Code to outlaw speech that attempted to 'excite disaffection towards the government established by law in India'; thus, this movement marked the beginning of **sedition law** in India.

**Titumir's Movement:** Mir Nisar Ali, popularly known as Titu Mir, was an Islamic preacher and a disciple of Sayed Ahmad Barelvi. Titu organised a peasant agitation of the Muslim peasants of Bengal against the Hindu landlords and the British indigo planters. Mir was killed in a confrontation with the British in 1831.

#### The Faraizi Movement (Eastern Bengal, 1838–51)

The Faraizi sect was founded by **Haji Shariatullah of Faridpur** in eastern Bengal. The Faraizi Movement originally began as a peasant movement directed against the landlords and the British oppressors. However, under the leadership of **Dudu Mian** (founder's son), the Faraizis turned into a religious sect, advocating radical religious and socio-political changes. Dudu Mian propagated an **egalitarian ideology**—that all men are equal and that all land belongs to God and no one has the right to levy tax on it. He took upon himself the task of driving away the British intruders from Bengal. The Faraizis opposed the right of the zamindars to collect tax, set up parallel government in some parts of Bengal and even established village courts.

The movement was finally crushed by the government forces and ended in the arrest of Dudu Mian. The Faraizi disturbances continued till 1857 and most of the Faraizis later joined the ranks of the Wahabis.

#### The Muhammadan Literary Society (Calcutta, 1863)

The Society promoted Western education among the Muslims and also encouraged discussions on religious, social and political issues.

#### Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (1817–98) and the Aligarh Movement (Aligarh, 1875)

After the Revolt of 1857, the official impression was that the Muslims were main conspirators and they were immediately repressed. Since Bahadur Shah II was appealed to head the revolt, the British believed the revolt to be a Muslim plot. This was also confirmed by the activities of the Wahabis.

However, during the 1870s, winds of change were perceptible. WW Hunter's book, *The Indian Musalman*, made a vigorous plea for reconciling and 'rallying the Muslims' round the British government through thoughtful concessions. Syed Ahmad Khan wrote the booklet '**Asbab-e-Baghawat-e-Hind**' (Causes of the Indian Revolt), in which he rejected the notion of the revolt as Muslim conspiracy and instead blamed the East Indian Company's policy of aggressive expansion as the cause of the Revolt. Sir Syed advised the British to appoint Muslims to assist in administration, to prevent such revolts in the future.



**Sir Syed Ahmad Khan:** (1817–98) was born in Delhi in a respectable Muslim family and received education in traditional Muslim style. In 1828, he entered the service of East India Company and during the Revolt of 1857 he remained loyal to the British. He went on to become a judge at a Small Causes Court in 1867 and later retired from the service in 1876. In 1878, he became a member of the Imperial Legislative Council and earned a knighthood for his loyalty in 1888.



Sir Syed Ahmad Khan

### Role of Syed Ahmed

Sir Syed's name stands out among the Muslim reformers of the 19th century. The Revolt of 1857 was a turning point in his life. During the Revolt, he remained loyal to the British, blamed the British policies for the revolt, and saw the urgent need to restore the previous respect and status enjoyed by the Muslims in India. This, he felt, could be done if the Muslims could safeguard their share in the administrative services by coming out of their shell, ending resistance to modern ideas and opening themselves to Western style modern education. He clearly saw that proficiency in English language and modern sciences were a prerequisite for maintaining the socio-political identity of the Muslims in British India.

Thus, he started a movement in order to give respectable position to Muslims in society as they had in the past and this movement came to be known as the **Aligarh Movement**. The nucleus for the movement was provided by the **Muhammadan Anglo Oriental Collegiate School founded at Aligarh in 1875**. The city of Aligarh along with the institute and the accompanying educational reforms provided a firm base for the wider Aligarh Movement: a movement of Muslim Renaissance with widespread implications for the religion, politics, culture and society of the Indian subcontinent. Syed Ahmed became the leading light of the wider Aligarh Movement.

The main focus of the Aligarh movement was:

- **Loyalty to the British:** Syed Ahmed tried to reconcile the Muslims to the British rule and urged them to loyally serve the British Empire by accepting services under the government.
- **Modern Western education for the Muslims to compete with the Hindus:** In the field of education, Syed Ahmed believed that the future of the Muslim community was threatened by their orthodox outlook and began promoting Western-style scientific education by founding modern schools and journals.

Syed Ahmad took concrete steps to attain the objectives of the movement and initiated reforms as discussed.

### Educational Reform

- In 1875, Sir Syed opened the Muhammadan Anglo Oriental College at Aligarh, where instruction was imparted both in Western arts and sciences and Muslim religion. Hindus, Parsis and Christians had freely contributed to the funds of this college and its doors were also open to all Indians.
- Soon Aligarh emerged as the centre of religious and cultural revival of the Muslim community.

- The School provided the nucleus for the formation of **Aligarh Muslim University (AMU)** in 1920, known more as a movement than as an academic institution.

### Social Reform

- Syed Ahmad condemned the customs of polygamy and purdah and advocated the spread of education among women.
- He taught tolerance and urged the people to develop rational outlook and freedom of thought.
- He attacked the system of '**piri and muridi**' in which the pirs claimed to be followers of the Sufi school and passed on mystic words to their murids (disciples).
- He also denounced the institution of slavery, calling it un-Islamic.
- He propagated his progressive social ideas through his magazine **Tahzib-ul-Akhlaq** (Improvement of Manners and Morals).
- His other literary works include *Tuhafa-i-Hasan* and the *Loyal Muhammadans of India*.

### Religious Reform

- Syed Ahmad respected all religions and spoke against religious fanaticism and bigotry.
- In his work '**Commentaries on the Quran**' Sir Syed criticised the narrow outlook of traditional interpreters and gave his own broader interpretation of the Quran in the light of contemporary rationalism and scientific knowledge.

However, towards the end of his life, Syed Ahmad had begun to talk of Hindu domination to prevent his followers to join the rising tide of nationalism. This was unfortunate, though basically he was not a communalist. He also did not believe in the drain theory of Dadabhai Naoroji. He was a loyalist who opposed the Congress idea of self-rule and end of British Raj.

### The Deoband School or Darul-Uloom Deoband (Saharanpur, UP, 1866)

The Deoband School, also known as 'Darul-Uloom Deoband', was organised by the orthodox section among the Muslim ulema who stressed on the traditional Islamic learning. It was a **revivalist movement** which focused mainly on the attainment of two objectives:

- Propagating the pure teachings of the **Quran** and the Hadis among the Muslims.
- Keeping alive the spirit of **Jihad** against the British rulers.

The Deoband School was founded in 1866 at Deoband town in the Saharanpur district of UP by the ulema under the leadership of **Muhammad Qasim Nanotvi** (1832–80) and **Rashid Ahmad Gangohi** (1828–1905). The school curricula included original Islamic religion and it totally shut out English education and Western culture. The aim was religious and moral regeneration of the Muslim community and to train religious leaders for the Muslim community. Thus, while the Aligarh Movement aimed to reform the Muslim community through Western education and prepare them for government jobs, the Deoband School aimed to revive pure Islamic religion of the past and prepare them for preaching Islamic faith.

In 1885, the Deoband School welcomed the formation of the Indian National Congress. In 1888, the Deoband ulema issued a fatwa (religious decree) **against Syed Ahmad Khan's organisations**



'the Patriotic Association' and 'The Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental Association'. The critics often pointed out that the main aim of Deoband school was to oppose the activities of Syed Ahmad, more than anything else.

**Mahmud-ul-Hasan** (1851–1920), the new Deoband leader, tried to work out a balance between the religious and political aspirations of the Muslims in the overall context of national unity. He thus added a political and intellectual content to the religious ideas of the school. The Jamat-ul-Ulema later gave a concrete shape to Hasan's ideas.

**Shibli Nomani**, a supporter of the Deoband School, favoured the introduction of English language and Western sciences in the education system. He founded the Darul-Uloom in Lucknow in 1894–96. He had faith in the idealism of Congress and advocated peaceful co-existence between the Hindus and the Muslims.

### Ahmadiyya Movement (Punjab, 1889)

The Ahmadiyya Movement was an Islamic religious movement founded in Punjab towards the end of the 19th century. The movement takes its name from its founder **Mirza Ghulam Ahmad** (1835–1908) born in the town of Qadian in Punjab, who claimed that he was the awaited Messiah and Mahdi prophesised by Prophet Muhammad and foretold by the Holy Quran. He proclaimed that Muslim religion and society has deteriorated to the point requiring divine intervention and that Allah has chosen him as the renewer (Mujaddid) of Islam.

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad stated that all the major world religions were propounded by God himself and were part of God's plan towards the establishment of Islam as the most complete and final religion. The message of all religions was, therefore, essentially the same as that of Islam, albeit incomplete. Thus, the movement stressed **non-violence** and **tolerance of other faiths** (though he also believed that other religions had drifted away from their original form and had been corrupted).

Thus, it may be said that the Ahmadiyya Movement was based on liberal principles and believed in universality of religion, much like the Brahmo Samaj. It opposed jihad and stood for modern education among the Muslims.

### Prelim Capsule

#### Reform Movements (Muslims)

Leaders and Movements	Important Events
<b>The Wahabi /Waliullah Movement (1830s–60s)</b>	<p>It was the first Muslim movement to emerge in response to Western influences.</p> <p>It was a revivalist movement which tried to purify Islam of all the un-Islamic practices.</p> <p>The movement was led by Abdul Wahab of Arabia as well as Delhi saint Shah Waliullah Dehlawi.</p>

	<p>In India, their teachings were popularised by <b>Syed Ahmad Barelvi</b> and <b>Shah Abdul Aziz</b>.</p> <p>Aziz declared that India was <b>Dar-ul-harb</b> and the need was to make it Dar-ul-Islam.</p> <p>During the Revolt of 1857, the Wahabis played a significant role in spreading anti-British sentiments.</p> <p>The movement marked the beginning of <b>sedition law</b> in India.</p>
<b>Titumir's Movement (1831)</b>	<p>Titu Mir, a disciple of Sayed Ahmad Barelvi, organised a peasant agitation of the Muslim peasants of Bengal against the Hindu landlords and the British indigo planters.</p>
<b>The Faraizi Movement (eastern Bengal, 1838–51)</b>	<p>The Faraizi sect was founded by <b>Haji Shariatullah of Faridpur</b> in eastern Bengal.</p> <p>The movement originally began as a peasant movement.</p> <p>Under the leadership of <b>Dudu Mian</b> (founder's son), the Faraizis turned into a religious sect, advocating radical religious and socio-political changes.</p> <p>Dudu Mian propagated an <b>egalitarian ideology</b>—that all men are equal and that all land belongs to God and no one has the right to levy tax on it.</p>
<b>The Muhammadan Literary Society (Calcutta, 1863)</b>	<p>It promoted Western education among the Muslims and also encouraged discussions on religious, social and political issues.</p>
<b>Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (1817–98) and the Aligarh Movement (1875)</b>	<p>During the <b>Revolt of 1857</b>, he remained loyal to the British and blamed the British policies for the revolt, and saw the urgent need to restore the previous respect and status enjoyed by the Muslims in India.</p> <p>Thus, he started a movement in order to give respectable position to Muslims in society as they had in the past and this movement came to be known as the <b>Aligarh Movement</b>.</p> <p>The nucleus for the movement was provided by the <b>Muhammadan Anglo Oriental Collegiate School</b> founded at Aligarh in 1875.</p> <p>The School provided the basis for the formation of <b>Aligarh Muslim University (AMU)</b> in 1920.</p> <p>Soon Aligarh emerged as the centre of religious and cultural revival of the Muslim community.</p> <p>He propagated his progressive social ideas through his magazine <b>Tahzib-ul-Akhlaq</b>.</p> <p>Syed Ahmad wrote the booklet <b>Asbab-e-Baghawat-e-Hind</b> in which he rejected the notion of the revolt of 1857 as Muslim conspiracy.</p>



**The Deoband School or Darul-Uloom Deoband (Saharanpur, 1866)**

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- Propagating the pure teachings of the **Quran** and the Hadis among the Muslims.
- Keeping alive the spirit of **Jihad** against the British rulers.

The School was founded under the leadership of Muhammad Qasim Nanotvi and Rashid Ahmad Gangohi.

The School welcomed the formation of the Congress and opposed Syed Ahmad Khan's organizations 'the Patriotic Association' and 'The Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental Association'.

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**Ahmadiyya Movement (Punjab, 1889)**

It was founded by **Mirza Ghulam Ahmad** who proclaimed that Muslim religion and society has deteriorated to the point requiring divine intervention and that Allah has chosen him as the renewer (Mujaddid) of Islam.

He stated that all the major world religions were propounded by God himself, though Islam as the most complete of them all.

Thus, the movement stressed **non-violence** and **tolerance of other faiths**.

**SIKH REFORM MOVEMENTS**

The Sikh community did not remain untouched by the intellectual currents of the 19th century. The Sikh community had also in some ways got deviated from the path shown by the Sikh gurus and stood in need of socio-religious reform.

**Historical Background**

Sikhism was founded by Guru Nanak Dev as a movement of social protest against social evils such as caste based discrimination, meaningless rituals that had replaced true spirit of religion as well as the domination of priests in society and religion. Instead, Nanak preached the unity of Godhead and the brotherhood of mankind. Like other saints of medieval India, he emphasised on good actions and honest living. He also advocated equality for women and a just social order.

However, in due course of time, the Sikh religion firmly established its own rituals and institutions. The Sikh rule established by Ranjit Singh saw the introduction of pomp and show in religious places, giving rise to the very evils that the Sikh gurus had condemned. Thus, there arose the need for reform once again.

**The Nirankari Movement (Rawalpindi, Punjab)**

**Baba Dayal Das** (1783–1855), a contemporary of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, emerged as the first among the reformers of Sikh community.

- Baba Dayal taught his followers to believe in one formless God (hence the name Nirankari).
- He preached against idol worship of human gurus and worship of tombs and graves.
- He introduced a simple version of marriage named 'Anand Karaj' (a joyous deed). Under this system, marriage is performed in the presence of the Guru Granth, the holy book of the Sikhs with the priest singing four relevant hymns from this book. No other rituals are performed such as marriage procession, dancing and drinking, dowry, etc. Later, this version marriage got formal recognition through the **Anand Marriage Act of 1909**.

After the death of Baba Dayal in 1855, he was succeeded by his son **Baba Darbara Singh** and after him, by Ratan Chand or **Baba Ratta ji**.

**Namdhari or Kuka Movement (Western Punjab, 1840)**

The Namdhari Movement was started in 1840 by **Bhagat Jawahar Mal** (Sian Saheb) and **Baba Balak Singh** in western Punjab. It was popularly called 'Kuka' because its followers resorted to shrieks (kukan) while in ecstasy. It emerged as a powerful instrument of socio-religious reform among the Sikhs under **Baba Ram Singh**, who preached worship of one God and attacked social evils like caste system, female infanticide, early marriage and barter of daughters in marriage. He also popularised simple and inexpensive Anand marriages.

However, some of the followers of Baba Ram Singh got out of control and began committing religious excesses. For instance, some fanatics got angry over the killing of cows and murdered the Muslim butchers in places like Amritsar and Rajkot in 1871. This resulted in clash with the government and several of them were violently repressed. In 1872, a group of 62 Namdhari Sikhs were **blown up by cannons** for protesting against the British. The same year, Ram Singh was deported to Rangoon.

Though there is difference of opinion among the historians whether the movement was religious or political, violent repression of the Kukas definitely created much hatred against the British rule in the minds of the people in Punjab.

**Singh Sabha Movement, 1873**

The year following the suppression of the Kukas saw the emergence of the Singh Sabha Movement (1873, Amritsar). The movement was founded in an era when Sikh Empire had been dissolved and annexed by the British (in 1849), Khalsa had lost its prestige, and mainstream Sikhs were rapidly converting to other religions. Its leaders believed that social evils in the Sikh community were chiefly due to lack of education. It was thus founded with two-fold objectives:

- To bring to the Sikh community the benefits of **Western enlightenment** through modern education
- To **oppose the proselytising activities** of the Christian missionaries, Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj, the Aligarh and Ahmadiyya Movements.



The Singh Sabha leadership, either because of their own vested interests as landlords or because of the perceived 'interest of the Sikhs', did not want to incur displeasure of the British rulers. They, therefore, did not hold the British directly responsible for the manifold ills prevalent in Sikh society.

To achieve its objectives, the Sabha opened a number of **Khalsa schools and colleges** throughout Punjab. The educational activities of the Sabha received ready support and patronage of the government and the rulers of Sikh princely states, leading to the foundation of **Khalsa College at Amritsar in 1892**.

Though the College was opened for purely educational aims, its students and teachers could not remain untouched from the prevailing political unrest and growing movement of **nationalism** in the country. The CID officials reported that by 1907, the Khalsa College had 'become an important centre for inculcating national feelings among the students'.

The above movements of socio-religious reform among the Sikhs indirectly inculcated in them a desire for overall reform and prepared ground for the Akali struggle directed against the Mahants and other vested interests in Sikh shrines on the one hand and against the British imperialism in Punjab on the other.

### **Akali Movement or the Gurdwara Reform Movement (1920-25)**

The Akali Movement was an off-shoot of the Singh Sabha Movement and was launched with the aim of liberating the Sikh gurdwaras (temples) from the control of corrupt Mahants (priests) who enjoyed the support of the government.

#### **Historical Context**

The establishment of the Sikh kingdom by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1799 brought about significant changes in Sikh religion. The Maharaja gave generous endowments in terms of property and privileges to almost all well-known Gurdwaras. The sudden rise in income brought about a change in the style of living of the hereditary Mahants, who gradually began to live a life of luxury.

Following the annexation of Punjab by the British in 1849, the British government took over the control of the Golden Temple and Akal Takht and appointed a committee of ten members headed by a '**Sarbarah**' to manage their day-to-day affairs.

#### **Corruption in the Gurdwaras**

The appointment of the Sarbarah by the government created several problems. The control of the Sikh community over management declined before the increasing hold of the officialdom. The Sarbarah did not feel responsible to the people but was only interested in pleasing his appointing authority. The priests indulged in all sorts of evil practices such as misappropriation of offerings, misusing shrine properties for immoral activities and even abusing women visitors. Further, while Sikh religion does not recognize any caste distinctions, the priests of the Golden Temple did not allow the so-called low-caste Mazhabi Sikhs to offer their prayers in the temple directly.

The British authorities in Punjab resisted any attempt to change the existing state of affairs. Subsequently, the **Akali Jathas (band of volunteers)** of Sikhs of Amritsar thought of creating public awareness on the subject and defy the authority of the corrupt priests. They took control of the Golden Temple and the Akal Takht in their own hands and formed a committee (named as Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, SGPC) for the management of these two shrines, while the priests ran away from the scene.

#### **Toshakhana Keys Affair**

The Committee of the reform group asked the government appointed manager of the Golden Temple to hand over the keys of the Toshakhana (treasury). But before the manager could do so, the keys were taken away by the British Deputy Commissioner.

This action of the British official created great resentment in the Sikh community. To get the keys, the Akali reformers launched a powerful agitation which came to be known as the 'Keys Affair'. During this time, Mahatma Gandhi's Non-Cooperation movement was going on and the Sikh reformers were joined by the Congress volunteers in Punjab. Feeling threatened, the Punjab government decided to step back and handed over the keys to the then President of the SGPC, **Baba Kharak Singh**. The Punjab government also passed the **Sikh Gurdwaras and Shrines Act, 1922**, which provided for a committee nominated by the government to take over control of the gurdwaras. This, however, was not acceptable to the Akali leaders and remained for this reason a dead letter.

However, after the suspension of the non-cooperation movement in February 1922, Punjab government got its chance of teaching a lesson the Akali reformers which led to another agitation known as **Guru-ka-Bagh Morcha**.

#### **Guru-ka-Bagh Morcha, 1922**

The return of the keys had undermined the prestige of the Punjab government and its officials were waiting to retrieve their lost prestige. They arrested the Akali volunteers who were cutting wood from the dry kikar trees attached to the Gurdwara Guru-ka-Bagh, on the pretext that the dry wood was the private property of the Mahant and the Akali reformers were committing 'a theft' by taking this wood for community kitchen.

To assert their right and register protest, the Akali Jathas started marching to Guru-ka-Bagh and the police started arresting them. Over 5000 reformers were arrested, until finally there was no more space in the jail. The police then started beating them mercilessly till they fell unconscious and then released them. In this peaceful suffering, the Akalis won wide sympathy of the press as well as national leaders.

**Rev. CF Andrews**, a British missionary sympathetic to Indian political aspirations, visited the scene of Akali beatings and described the police actions as, 'inhuman, brutal, foul and cowardly which was incredible to an Englishman and a moral defeat of England.'



In the face of widespread criticism, the Punjab Governor ordered the police to stop beating the Akali Jathas. Those arrested were released and the volunteers were allowed to collect wood for use in the community kitchen.

### Passage of the Gurdwara Bill and the end of the Akali Movement, 1925

The Akali agitation was fast becoming the main vehicle for the spread of Congress ideology and programme among the Sikh peasantry in Punjab and was also likely to affect the Sikh soldiers in the British army. Due to these factors, the Punjab government felt compelled to find a solution to the Akali problem.

Consequently, the Punjab government passed the **Sikh Gurdwaras Act 1925**, giving the Sikh community a legal right to elect functionaries to manage their gurdwaras. This legislation ended the hereditary control of the Mahants and introduced democratic control in the Gurdwara management. Any Sikh, irrespective of caste, can be elected to any position including that of the President of the SGPC. Women also got the right to vote at par with men. With this ended the five-year long Akali agitation in Punjab.

### Significance

The movement created immense social, religious and political awakening among the people. Of special significance is the awareness created among the people of the Sikh princely states of Patiala, Nabha, Jind and Faridkot. The movement gave these people the much-needed moral support to organise themselves and fight against oppression in these princely states. Even after the Akali Movement was over, the people in these states continued their fight under the leadership of **Sardar Seva Singh Thikriwala** till independence and were finally merged with the Union of India.

Further, the Akali Movement was regional but not communal in nature. In general, the Akali leaders played a notable role in the national freedom struggle.

### Prelim Capsule

### Reform Movements (Sikhs)

Leaders and Movements	Important Events
<b>The Nirankari Movement (Rawalpindi, Punjab)-</b>	It was started by <b>Baba Dayal Das</b> (1783–1855), one of the first reformers of Sikh community & a contemporary of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He taught his followers to believe in one formless God (hence the name Nirankari). He popularised a simple version of marriage named 'Anand Karaj'.

### Namdhari or Kuka Movement (Western Punjab, 1840)

It was started by **Bhagat Jawahar Mal** (Sian Saheb) and **Baba Balak Singh**. It was popularly called 'Kuka' as its followers resorted to shrieks (kukan) while in ecstasy.

It emerged as a socio-religious reform movement under **Baba Ram Singh**. In 1872, a group of 62 Namdhari Sikhs were blown up by cannon for protesting against the British, while Ram Singh was deported to Rangoon.

### Singh Sabha Movement, 1873

It was founded with two fold objectives- **promote Western education** and **oppose the proselytising activities** of the Christians, Muslims, the Brahmos and the Arya Samajists.

The Sabha opened a number of **Khalsa schools and colleges** throughout Punjab, including Khalsa College at Amritsar (1892).

### Akali Movement or the Gurdwara Reform Movement (1920–25)

It was launched to liberate the Sikh gurdwaras from the control of corrupt Mahants (priests) who enjoyed the support of the government.

It led to the passing of the **Sikh Gurdwaras Act 1925**.

This legislation ended the hereditary control of the Mahants and introduced democratic control in the Gurdwara management.

## PARSI REFORM MOVEMENTS

### Rahnumai Mazdayasan Sabha (Bombay, 1851)

The rationalist and progressive ideas of the 19th century influenced the Parsi community as well. In 1851, in Bombay, the Rahnumai Mazdayasan Sabha (Religious Reform Association) was formed by a group of English educated Parsis with the following dual objectives:

- Regeneration of the social condition of the Parsis
- Restoration of the Zoroastrian religion to its pristine purity



Dadabhai Naoroji

### Main Leaders and Reforms

- Prominent leaders of the Sabha included **Naoroji Furdunji** (President), **Sorabji Shapurji Bengali** (Secretary), **KN Kama** and **Dadabhai Naoroji**.
- The Anglo-Gujarati newspaper **Rast-Goftar** (Truth-Teller) started by Naoroji and Kama in 1851 was the main organ of the association; it championed social reform among the Parsis.
- The Sabha severely criticised the elaborate ceremonies at marriages and funerals and stood for uniform laws of inheritance and marriage for the Parsi community.



- Special attention was paid on improving the condition of Parsi women. Purdah system was attacked and efforts were made to increase the age of marriage and to endure education for women.

Gradually, the Parsis emerged as the most Westernised section of Indian society.

### Prelim Capsule

#### Reform Movements (Parsis)

Leaders and Movements	Important Events
<b>Rahnumai Mazdayasan Sabha (Bombay, 1851)</b>	<p>This Religious Reform Association was formed by a group of English educated Parsis.</p> <p>Prominent leaders of the Sabha included Naoroji Furdunji (President), Sorabji Shapurji Bengali (Secretary), KN Kama and <b>Dadabhai Naoroji</b>. It published the Anglo-Gujarati newspaper <b>Rast-Goftar</b> (Truth-Teller) started by Naoroji and Kama in 1851.</p>

#### NON-BRAHMIN MOVEMENT IN WESTERN AND SOUTHERN INDIA

A number of factors in the 19th and 20th centuries gave rise to the non-Brahmin movements in western and southern India. These were as follows:

- The 19th-century reform movements (though mostly pioneered by upper-caste Hindus, condemned the caste system and untouchability)
- Spread of Western education
- Introduction of common Indian Penal Code (1861) and Code of Criminal Procedure (1872)
- Extension of the railway network (where every Indian could buy a ticket of any class and occupy any seat available)
- Growth of national consciousness and modern political ideas of equality and democracy

The above factors created an environment in which the caste system could no longer be defended. They created a class consciousness among lower castes and they themselves took upon the task of struggling for caste equality.

**Flashback:** The reformers in Maharashtra can be divided into two distinct strands:

1. The early radical reformers like Jyotiba Phule who sought a revolutionary reorganisation of traditional society on the basis of principles of equality and rationality.
2. The later moderate reformers like MG Ranade, who sought a return to past society with some modifications.

It was the early tradition of Phule that gave rise to the non-Brahmin Movement in Maharashtra.

#### Non-Brahmin Movements in Western India

##### Jyotirao Govindrao Phule (1827–90) and Satya Shodhak Samaj (1873)



Mahatma Jyotirao Govindrao Phule

Jyotiba Phule was born in a low-caste Mali family and was acutely aware of the degraded position of non-Brahmins in Maharashtra. His family members supplied flowers to the Peshwa house and came to be called Phule. He received initial education in a mission school but had to discontinue it in 1833. In 1848, as Phule attended a Brahmin friend's wedding, some orthodox Brahmins insulted him by calling him a shudra and asked him to leave. This incident turned him into a social revolutionary. The incident made Jyotiba search for the roots of caste discrimination and the inhuman practice of untouchability.

In his search for truth, Phule read the holy books and scriptures of almost all the major religions including Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and Jainism. He judged them in the light of equality and rationality. The caste system reserved a lifelong slavery for the shudras. They were not allowed to walk on the streets during sunrise and sunset, as their long shadows would fall upon the Brahmins' houses and pollute them. In fact, the principle of equality called for a complete rejection of caste system, authoritarian family system as well as subordination of women. Similarly, the principle of rationality called for the rejection of rituals and superstitions. Thus, Phule turned into a social rebel and called for a complete rejection of the existing system which was sustained by the irrational and inequitable institutions.

Phule argued that as per the Vedas, the Aryans had imposed the unequal caste system upon the Dravidians, after conquering them and Brahmins continue to hide the Vedas from the Shudras as they contain this truth. Naturally, he looked upon education as the most important liberating factor. He also believed that illiterate people are incapable of rebelling against their mental and physical slavery. Similarly, he held the Brahmins responsible for keeping women uneducated and slaves to men. Jyotiba was ever critical of the Indian National Congress leaders for their neglect of the lower castes and the downtrodden.

#### Activities of Phule

All his life Phule passionately campaigned for the cause of education and for equality between classes as also between men and women.

- He urged the government to impart compulsory primary education to the masses through teachers drawn from the cultivating classes.
- In 1851, Jyotiba and his wife started a **girl's school** in Poona.
- In 1854, he became the **first Indian to start a school for the untouchables**.
- He was also a pioneer of the widow remarriage movement in Maharashtra. He offered widows protection and shelter.
- In 1873, Phule started the **Satya Shodhak Samaj** (Society for Finding Truth) as a social reform society to attain equal rights for the people of lower castes.
- Phule made generous use of the print media to propagate his ideas and wrote extensively in Marathi language.



- **Deen Bandhu:** It was a Marathi journal, published and edited by Phule for exposing the oppressive character of the Aryan-Vedic tradition.
- **Gulamgin (slavery):** It was a book by Phule that appeared in 1873, where he elaborated upon his views on the historical roots of Shudras' slavery and compared it with the slavery of the Blacks in America.
- **Setakaryancha Asuda (the whip-cord of the peasantry):** Here he discussed upon the solutions to peasant problems.
- **Isara (a warning):** A pamphlet that published Phule's main ideas on economic concerns of the agrarian classes in 1885. Aware of the problems of Indian peasants, he extended his whole-hearted support to the peasants in their struggle. He was **one of the first to introduce the peasantry class in Indian politics**. He opposed the Indian National Congress for failing to take up the peasant cause.

Thus, throughout his life, Phule struggled for the downtrodden classes. However, he failed to perceive the colonial character of the British rule and believed in its progressive role. He failed to perceive that the type of revolution envisaged by him could not be achieved in the presence of exploitative colonial rule. With the death of Phule in 1890, the Satya Shodhak Movement saw a steady decline.

### Satya Shodhak Samaj in Kolhapur

In 1913, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur (1874–1922) established the Samaj in Kolhapur. This revived the activities of the Samaj, albeit temporarily, with a narrow complexion. No doubt, during 1913 and 1922 Shahu Maharaj was associated with several non-Brahmin activities and started several educational institutions, hostels and scholarships for the depressed classes. However, under him, the movement passed into the hands of feudal upper-caste non-Brahmins and business groups who began to use it for their political gains.

Shahu Maharaj waged a major battle for gaining Kshatriya status for his community. After 1919, post Montagu(e) Chelmsford Reforms, he demanded special political representation for backward classes in the Councils. This was nothing but a betrayal of Phule's ideology and only perpetuated caste inequalities.

### Non-Brahmin Movements in South India

Like in western India, in south India as well, the Brahmins dominated the social hierarchy. Traditionally the literate class, the Brahmins quickly took to English education and monopolised opportunities in professions during British times. This aroused the envy and hostility of the non-Brahmin communities, giving rise to a tide of non-Brahmin movements.

### Self-Respect Movement in Tamil Nadu

#### Context

During 1887 and 1904, several Tamil texts were published such as Pathupattu, Manimekalai and Silappatikaram, which had presented the picture of classical Dravidian civilisation, distinct from the Aryan and Sanskrit culture. Some Tamil scholars also propagated that the Dravidians were

the original inhabitants of India while the Aryans were the outsiders who brought the evil caste system with them. It was this rediscovered sense of distinct identity which expressed itself in the form of non-Brahmin movements after 1916.

**Justice Party (Madras, 1916):** In 1916 in Madras, the non-Brahmin resentment took a political form with the formation of the South Indian Liberal Federation (SILF), known as the Justice Party by **TM Nair**, **P. Theagaraya Chetti** and **C. Natesa Mudaliar**. The party claimed to represent the interests of all non-Brahmins in the Madras Presidency including Muslims, Christians and Untouchables. The initial demand of the Justice leaders was to secure reserved seats in the provincial councils and was slowly extended to concessions in education institutions, public appointments, etc.

However, during the 1920s, a conflict arose within the party as some members began to feel that the party should not restrict itself to the narrow quest for reservations and jobs but should also be working for the reform and regeneration of non-Brahmin society and culture. Thus, leaders such as EV Ramasamy Naicker launched a separate Self-Respect Movement, giving a new lease of life to the non-Brahmin movement in Madras.

### EV Ramasamy Naicker (1879–1973) and Self-Respect Movement

Ramasamy Naicker rebelled against the caste system early in life. In 1919, he joined the Indian National Congress and in 1924, emerged as the hero of the **Vaikom Satyagraha**. Soon he abandoned Hindu mythology and went to the extent of advocating the burning of Manu dharma Shastras and the Ramayana. In 1925, he resigned from the INC as he felt that the party was serving only upper caste interests. Henceforth, he emerged as a **radical social reformer** and in 1927, even broke off with Gandhi on the issue of Varnashrama dharma. His followers called him **Thanthai** (father) and **Periyar** (great soul).



EV Ramasamy Naicker  
(Thanthai Periyar)

#### Ideas and Works of Ramasamy

- Like Phule in Maharashtra, he also attacked the caste system and Brahmin domination.
- He stood for equality and basic dignity for all human beings.
- He held religion as mainly responsible for the low social status of non-Brahmins as well as women.
- He rejected religion and scriptures as guiding principles of social organization. He rejected Hinduism as an instrument of Brahmanical control, the laws of Manu as inhuman and the puranas as fairy tales.
- He opposed the imposition of Hindi on Dravidians.
- An iconoclast, he tarred caste name boards on hotels, cut-off holy thread of the Brahmins, beat the deities with chappals, broke idols and advocated burning of scriptures.
- He encouraged non-Brahmins to do away with the services of the priests in various ceremonies and popularized '**self-respect marriages**'. Such marriages were solemnised without the Brahmin priest, the groom and the bride took a simple vow that they accept



each other as equal partners in life, exchanged garlands and took the blessings of the elders. Interestingly, several such marriages were also inter-caste.

- In the field of women's emancipation, he advocated their freedom and autonomy in every field of life. He passionately advocated women's rights in the field of marriage, re-marriage, divorce and birth control. He attacked the patriarchal notion of women's chastity or 'karpu'.
- In 1925, Ramasamy started his paper '**Kudi Arasu**' to propagate his ideas.
- In 1939, he was elected the President of the Justice party.

The main limitation of Ramasamy's movement lay in its social base which remained limited to the upper non-Brahmin castes. In an attempt to expand his influence, Periyar merged the Self-Respect League with the Justice party in 1944 to form the **Dravida Kazhagam** (Dravidian Federation). This changed the character of Periyar's earlier social reform movement. Henceforth, the non-Brahmin movement got increasingly engaged in narrow electoral politics.

**Ramasamy Naicker:** There are certain things which cannot be mended but only ended. Brahmanical Hinduism is one such.

### Self-Respect Movement in Andhra

In Andhra, the non-Brahmin movement was basically for socio-cultural reform of the non-Brahmin groups like Kammass, Reddis, Balijas and Velamas. These were peasant groups with substantial landownership and though they were relatively well off, economically they were relegated to a low social status in society as they lacked knowledge of scriptures and even modern English education.

Hence, the movement in Andhra was a response of the non-Brahmin section belonging to the landowning, rich upper class. Naturally, it addressed only the problems of the upper caste non-Brahmins and left out the Harijans. It aimed at restructuring the caste system, with the upper-caste non-Brahmins at the top, rather than fighting for its complete abolition.

### Tripuraneni Ramaswami Chowdary (1887–1943)

A prominent non-Brahmin leader of the movement in Andhra was Tripuraneni, who had himself faced caste-based discrimination.

### Views and Works

Tripuraneni grew up to be an eminent scholar and spent his entire life propagating the Self-Respect Movement in Coastal Andhra. His ideas were very similar to the basic ideas put forward by Phule and Periyar.

- He challenged the authority of the sacred texts and argued that the caste system, sustained by religion, was a handiwork of the Aryans.

- He stood for emancipation of the women and the Shudras from the '**Slavery of Shastras**'. He demanded the non-Brahminisation of the services and tried to propagate his ideas through his literature:

- In **Kurukshetra Sangraman**, he argued that the Kauravas were more upright than the Pandavas and that the latter had no right to rule.
- In **Sambuka Vadha**, he exposed how king Rama, encouraged by Vasistha and in the name of preserving the Varnashrama dharma, killed the shudra sage Sambuka for spreading the sacred knowledge, denied to Sudras by the Brahmins.
- In **Vivah Vidhi**, He explains marriage rites in Telugu as the Shudras could not understand most of the Sanskrit mantras. In fact, his most successful reform was in the system of traditional marriages. The Kammass started performing marriages in the presence of their own community priests.

The Self-Respect movement in Andhra played a significant role in introducing modern education and increasing inter-caste interaction in terms of inter-dining and inter-marriages.

### Non-Brahmin Movement in Karnataka

#### Vokkaligas and Lingayats Associations

Around 1918, the non-Brahmin movement emerged in Karnataka and was spearheaded by the **Vokkaligas** and **Lingayats**. A delegation of the non-Brahmin leaders met the Maharaja of Mysore to register their protest against caste-based discrimination. This resulted in the appointment of a committee headed by **Sir Leslie Miller**. On the committee's recommendation, the government passed an order for an equitable communal representation in the public service.

Gradually, the non-Brahmin movement was drawn towards the national movement and it finally merged with the Congress in 1938. After the 1930s, secular politics in India began recognising caste-based demands, with the result that the non-Brahmin groups began to lose their cohesion and each caste began to demand separate representation for itself in the government. Thus, the non-Brahmin movement transformed into a Backward classes movement from the 1940s.

### Non-Brahmin Movement in Kerala

#### Shri Narayan Guru (1854–1928) and SNDP Yogam (1903)

In Kerala, a leader of the Ezhava Caste (untouchable caste), Shri Narayan Guru, established the SNDP (Shri Narayan Dharma Paripalana) Yogam in 1903 with the aim of-

1. giving up the practice of untouchability; and
2. building temples which would be open to all castes.



Sri Narayan Guru

### Views and Works

- Narayan Guru openly criticised the Congress for its lip-service towards lower castes. He opposed Gandhi for his faith in chaturvarnas, which he considered as the originator of caste system and untouchability.



- He gave the slogan, 'one religion, one caste and one God for mankind'.
- He simplified rituals regarding birth, death and marriage
- He achieved notable success in transforming the untouchables into backward class.

### Role of Bhim Rao Ambedkar (1891–1956)

Bhim Rao Ambedkar, popularly known as Baba Saheb, was a stalwart social reformer who initiated the Dalit Buddhist movement and championed the cause of the Dalits as well as women and labour.

He was born in 1891 in a Mahar (untouchable) caste at **Mhow**. Although he and other Dalit children attended school, they were not allowed to sit inside the class. He graduated from Elphinstone College, Bombay and went on to do his MA and PhD from Columbia University. Next, he went to London and earned another PhD from London School of Economics as well a degree in Law from Grey's Inn.

### Activities of Ambedkar

- **Bahishkrit Hitkarni Sabha (Bombay, 1924)**- this organisation was started by Ambedkar for the moral and material progress of the untouchables.
- He resorted to satyagraha agitation to secure civic rights for Dalits such as right to enter Hindu temples and to draw water from wells.
- In 1930, he founded the **Depressed Classes Federation**, entered national politics and demanded separate electorates for the untouchables.
- He represented the Dalit community in the three Round Table Conferences (1930-32)
- In 1936, he founded the **Independent Labour Party**.
- The Communal Award of 1932 provided for separate electorates for the Depressed Classes.
- In 1942, one of his earlier political parties transformed into the **All India Scheduled Caste Federation**, as an all India party. It later evolved into the Republican Party of India.
- In 1956, he converted to Buddhism and initiated mass conversions of Dalits.
- His famous literary works include the following.
  - The Annihilation of Castes
  - The Buddha and his Dhamma
  - Who were the Shudras?

BR Ambedkar, the emancipator of the lower castes, was the principal architect of the Constitution of independent India which accepted the principle of equality for all Indian citizens and **abolished untouchability** by law. He became independent India's First Law Minister. In 1990, the **Bharat Ratna**, India's highest civilian award, was posthumously conferred upon him.



BR Ambedkar

### MISCELLANEOUS MOVEMENTS

#### Aravippuram Movement (Kerala, 1888)

In 1888, on the occasion of Shivrathri, **Shri Narayan Guru**, despite belonging to the lower caste, installed an idol of Shiv at Aravippuram in Kerala in an attempt to show that the consecration of a God's idol was not a monopoly of the Brahmins. On the wall of the temple he got the following words inscribed, 'Devoid of dividing walls of caste or race, or hatred or rival faith, we all live here in brotherhood'. The event had a far-reaching impact in south India and inspired several socio-religious reform movements, including the famous Temple Entry Movement.

#### Temple Entry Movement (Kerala, 1920s–30s)

The Temple Entry agitation of Kerala emerged as a landmark in the history of religious and social reform in India. Since the end of the 19th century, the struggle against the disabilities imposed on the avaranas or members of depressed classes was being waged in south India. In Kerala, the struggle was being led by intellectuals such as **Shri Narayan Guru**, **N Kumaran Asan** and **TK Madhavan**.

#### Vaikom Satyagraha, 1924

In 1924, a new beginning was made when the struggle became a part of the Gandhian constructive programme and a Satyagraha led by **KP Kesava** was launched at Vaikom in Kerala demanding the throwing open of Hindu temples and roads to the untouchables. Though this struggle did not succeed in securing the entry of avarnas or lower castes inside the Mahadeva Temple in the town, it managed to open the roads around the temple for their use. In this way, the Vaikom Satyagraha proved to be a big push for the Temple Entry Movement in the rest of the country.

#### Guruvayur Satyagraha, 1931

The Guruvayur Satyagraha took place on 1 November 1931 demanding the entry for the untouchables inside the Guruvayur Temple in Thrissur district of Kerala. The ten-month long satyagraha protest was led by K. Kelappan, popularly known as '**Kerala Gandhi**'. Kelappan's twelve-day long hunger strike during the protest attracted country-wide attention to the Temple Entry Movement. He later broke the fast only on the advice of Mahatma Gandhi on 2 October 1932. With the Guruvayur Satyagraha, the call to open temples for the avarnas grew louder.

#### Temple Entry Proclamation, 1936

As a result of the agitation, a Gazette Extraordinary was published in which the Maharaja of Travancore historically proclaimed that the temples under his administration would be opened to all Hindus, without any discrimination on caste basis. The Proclamation was a big step in establishing the rights of the lower castes in Kerala, and the nation as a whole. The Proclamation had a far-reaching effect and not only state temples but even private temples were thrown open to the lower castes. Outside of Travancore, temples in Malabar and the rest of the Madras Presidency felt the cascading effects.



## Prelim Capsule

## Reform Movements (Non-Brahmins)

Leaders and Movements	Important Events
<b>Jyotirao Govindrao Phule (1827–90) and Satya Shodhak Samaj (1873)</b>	Phule campaigned for the cause of education and for equality between classes as also between men and women. In 1851, Jyotiba and his wife started a girl's school in Poona. In 1854, he became the first Indian to start a school for the untouchables. In 1873, Phule started the <b>Satya Shodhak Samaj</b> (Society for Finding Truth) to attain equal rights for the people of lower castes. His prominent literary works included- Deen Bandhu, Gulamgin, Setakaryancha Asuda and Isara.
<b>Justice Party (Madras, 1916)</b>	The Justice Party was formed by <b>TM Nair, P. Theagaraya Chetti</b> and <b>C. Natesa Mudaliar</b> . The party claimed to represent the interests of all non-Brahmins in the Madras Presidency including Muslims, Christians and Untouchables.
<b>EV Ramasamy Naicker (1879–1973) and Self-Respect Movement</b>	In 1924, Naicker emerged as the hero of the <b>Vaikom Satyagraha</b> . In 1925, he resigned from the INC as he felt that the party was serving only upper caste interests. Later, he even broke off with Gandhi on the issue of Varnashrama dharma. He emerged as a leader of Self-Respect Movement in Tamil Nadu. He popularised 'Self-Respect marriages'. In 1925, Ramasamy started his paper ' <b>Kudi Arasu</b> ' to propagate his ideas. In 1939, he became elected the President of the Justice party. He was popularly known as <b>Thanthai</b> (father) and <b>Periyar</b> (great soul).
<b>Tripuraneni Ramaswami Chowdary (1887–1943)</b>	He was a non-Brahmin leader of the Self-Respect Movement in Coastal Andhra. He tried to propagate his ideas through his literary works such as Kurukshetra Sangraman, Sambuka Vadha, and Vivah Vidhi.
<b>Shri Narayan Guru (1854–1928) and SNDP Yogam (1903)</b>	Narayan guru emerged as the leader of the Ezhava Caste (untouchable caste) in Kerala. He established the SNDP (Shri Narayan Dharma Paripalana) Yogam in 1903 with the aim of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Giving up the practice of untouchability.</li> <li>• Building temples which would be open to all castes.</li> </ul> He gave the slogan, 'one religion, one caste and one God for mankind'.

**Bhim Rao Ambedkar (1891–1956)**

Popularly known as Baba Saheb, he initiated the Dalit Buddhist movement and championed the cause of the Dalits as well as women and labour.

He founded the **Bahishkrit Hitkarni Sabha** (Bombay, 1924) for the moral and material progress of the untouchables.

In 1930, he founded the **Depressed Classes Federation**, entered national politics and demanded separate electorates for the untouchables.

In 1936, he founded the **Independent Labour Party**.

In 1942, one of his earlier political parties transformed into the **All India Scheduled Caste Federation**, as an all-India party. It later evolved into the Republican Party of India.

In 1956, he converted to Buddhism and initiated mass conversions of Dalits.

His famous literary works include- The Annihilation of Castes, The Buddha and his Dhamma, Who were the Shudras?

In 1990, he was posthumously awarded the **Bharat Ratna**.

**Aravippuram Movement (Kerala, 1888)**

It began when **Shri Narayan Guru**, despite belonging to lower caste, installed an idol of Shiv at Aravippuram in Kerala.

The event inspired several reform movements, including the Temple Entry Movement.

**Temple Entry Movement (Kerala, 1920s–30s)**

In Kerala, the struggle for the rights of the avarnas was being led by intellectuals such as **Shri Narayan Guru, N Kumaran Asan and TK Madhavan**.

In 1924, **Vaikom Satyagraha** was launched by KP Kesava at Vaikom. in Kerala demanding the throwing open of Hindu temples and roads to the untouchables.

On 1 November 1931, the **Guruvayur Satyagraha** took place demanding the entry for the untouchables inside the Guruvayur Temple in Thrissur district of Kerala.

The above efforts culminated in the **Temple Entry Proclamation of 1936** in which Maharaja of Travancore proclaimed that the temples under his administration would be opened to all Hindus, without any discrimination on caste basis.

## REFORM MOVEMENTS-AN ANALYSIS

## Nature of the Reform Movements

## Reformation, not Revolution

The nature of the movement was reformatory and not revolutionary. Reforms were sought in the existing socio-cultural order and the reforms did not envisage any abrupt departure from it. The transformation of society was to be evolutionary and not revolutionary.



### Revivalist Tendencies

Another tendency of the thinkers was to view the existing socio-religious practices as distortions that had crept in Indian society overtime. For them, the Vedic period of Indian history represented an ideal type of society free from the evils of the present times.

### Removal of Socio-religious Evils

The scope of reform movements was socio-religious and they targeted the elimination of various socio-religious evils and malpractices that were prevalent in India at the time.

### Urban Phenomenon

The 19th-century reform movement was majorly an urban phenomenon, originating and operating in urban areas only. The movement relied heavily on urban communication channels (such as press and lectures) for the spread of its messages. Even so, the movement was not localised in its inspiration as their messages of equity and justice had universal appeal and applicability.

## Limitations of the Reform Movements

### Limited Impact

The impact of 19th-century reforms remained limited in extent and achievement. In practice, the reforms affected a very small minority of people. The masses remained largely untouched from the intellectual currents of the time. Although the reformers attempted to reach the masses through writings in vernacular, their appeal remained confined to the educated urban middle classes alone. Moreover, religious malpractices continued. Caste distinctions remained strong and tradition of child marriage did not die away.

Several factors were responsible for the limited impact of the reform movements. These included widespread illiteracy, presence of hostile colonial state as well as the stubborn nature and deep rootedness of traditions and prejudices.

### Localised and Isolated

Each of the reform movements was confined, by and large, to one region, caste or religion. For instance, Brahmo Samaj and Arya Samaj did have branches in other parts of the country, yet they were more popular in Bengal and Punjab respectively. While Brahmo Samaj was concerned with the problems of the 'bhadralok', the Aligarh Movement with those of the Muslim upper classes. They were also isolated from one another as they all emerged at different points of time in different parts of the country.

### Overemphasis on Religion

The reform movements tended to overemphasise religious and philosophical aspects at the cost of other aspects of culture such as art, architecture, literature, music, science and technology. Further, any over-emphasis on religion in a multi-religion country was bound to give rise to **religious chauvinism** and have a divisive effect.

### Tendency to Look Back

Some reformers and movements tended to look backward and appeal to the greatness of ancient past or ancient scriptures. This not only created a sense of false pride and smugness, it also acted as a check on full acceptance of modern ideas. Further, Hindu reformers generally tended to praise India's ancient past at the cost of the medieval period or the so called 'Muslim period'. This not only alienated the Muslims but also the lower castes as the oppressive caste system traced its roots back to the ancient period. Thus, due to the looking back tendency, what we see is a simultaneous rise of national as well as **communal consciousness**. The colonial rulers were quick to take advantage of this communal divide and used it to weaken the Indian national movement.

### Inability to Perceive the Exploitative Nature of the British Rule

Some intellectuals erroneously perceived the British rule as God-sent, that would lead Indians to the path of modernity. Since their model of desirable Indian society was like that of the 19th-century Britain, they felt that British rule was necessary in order to make India British-like and openly preached loyalty to the British. Although the socio-religious aspects of Indian society were accurately perceived, the reformers tended to miss the political aspect of basically exploitative British rule.

## Achievements of the Reform Movements

### Historic Legislations

Limitations apart, the reform movements do have certain concrete achievements to their credit, including the historic legislations abolishing sati and legalising widow remarriage. Enlightened British and Indian opinion was unanimous in condemning certain practices such as infanticide. Even the prolonged debate over the age of consent bill and other activities of the intellectuals generated much intellectual fervour and raised the level of consciousness of the people. The following pathbreaking legislations were enacted.

### The Regulation of 1829

The Regulation of 1829 declared the practice of sati, or burning or burying alive of widows illegal and punishable by criminal courts as culpable homicide. The regulation of 1829 was initially applicable to Bengal Presidency alone, and was later extended to Madras and Bombay Presidencies in 1830 in slightly modified forms.

### Bengal Regulations of 1795 and 1804

These regulations declared infanticide illegal and equivalent to committing a murder. To further support these legislations, the government of India passed an Act in 1870 making it compulsory for parents to register the birth of all babies and providing for verification of female children for some years after birth.



### Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act of 1856

Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act of 1856 legalised marriage of widows and declared issues from such marriages as legitimate. However, in Bengal, this legislation achieved very limited success.

### Native Marriage Act (known as Civil Marriage Act) 1872

Native Marriage Act prohibited marriage of girls below the age of 14 and boys below 18 years. However, this Act was not applicable to major recognised faiths including Hindus and Muslims and as such had very limited impact on Indian society.

### Age of Consent Act 1891

Age of Consent Act 1891 forbade the marriage of girls below the age of 12.

### Sharda Act 1930

Sharda Act 1930 further pushed up marriageable age and provided for penal action in case of marriages of boys under 18 and girls under 14 years of age. (The Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1928 raised the marriageable age for girls to 18 and boys to 21 years).

### Female Education

Another significant achievement of the intellectuals lay in the field of female education. An increasing number of people no longer viewed female education as dangerous and the number of girls joining school increased at a consistent pace. Vidyasagar himself was associated with no less than 35 girls' schools in Bengal. It was this groundwork prepared by the early intellectuals that later enabled Mahatma Gandhi to bring the Indian women into the very vortex of national political life. The women themselves began to set up organizations for the uplift of women, the most outstanding among them was the **All India Women's Conference** founded in 1927. Thus, undoubtedly, the reform movements did set in motion the winds of change, however slow their pace might have been.

### Realisation of the Interconnection between Religion and Society

An important achievement of the 19th-century thought was the realisation of the interconnection between religion and society—how healthy beliefs were a gateway to healthy society, and a healthy society a stepping stone to politico-economic progress. Religious reform was therefore understood as the precondition for socio-political and economic progress of India.

This does not, however, imply that social reform was seen as secondary to religious concerns. It was their primary concern for social and material progress of society that made them take up the religious concerns. It was this understanding that distinguished the 19th-century reforms (driven mainly by social and material concerns) from the earlier Bhakti Movement (driven mainly by religious concerns).

## Significance of the Reform Movements

### Cleansing of Religion and Society

The reform atmosphere helped Indians to discard many malpractices that had crept in their religion and society. Those that had not been immediately discarded were thrown open to debate and discussion. The socio-religious practices were no longer held unquestionable, but reviewed through the newly acquired lenses of rationality and humanism.

### Regained Confidence and Pride

The various reform movements gave the much-needed confidence to Indians who had come under their influence. The movements reminded the Indians about the greatness of their ancient religions and rich cultural heritage. They developed a new self-concept, an identity they could be proud of.

### New Values of Secularism and Democracy

The reform movements infused the Indian mind with novel values of secularism and democracy.

### Prelude to Rise of Indian Nationalism

Finally, the 19th-century reform movements were a prelude to the rise of Indian nationalism. They were directly or indirectly related to the task of national reconstruction and nation building. The socio-religious ideas and activities of the intellectuals were loaded with wider national political and economic considerations. Bhaskar Pandurang was the first to provide a critique of colonial rule. Lokahitwadi was the first to seek Swaraj. His national and political farsightedness is noticeable in the lines below in which he chalked out the future course of the national movement, even as it still lay in the womb of the future.

Lokahitwadi Gopal Hari Deshmukh wrote, 'In order to remove our discontent, the British might part with some power. The more power they give, the more will it whet our appetite for it and the British may begin to oppose our demands. If they do so we may perhaps have to do what the Americans did when they drove away the English from their land'.

In this way, even as the 19th-century reformers did not directly take up political issues, they created space for them in the hearts and minds of the Indian people. In the 20th century, it was the national movement that carried forward the torch of social reform, with Mahatma Gandhi at its forefront.





## Previous Years' Questions – Preliminary Exam

- Who among the following leaders did not believe in the drain theory of Dadabhai Naoroji? [UPSC 1996]
  - B G Tilak
  - R C Dutt
  - M G Ranade
  - Sir Syed Ahmed Khan
- BR Ambedkar was elected to the constituent assembly from which of the following? [UPSC 1996]
  - West Bengal
  - The Bombay Presidency
  - the then Madhya Bharat
  - Punjab
- Which of the following parties were established by Dr B R Ambedkar? [UPSC 2012]
  - The Peasants and Workers Party of India.
  - All India Scheduled Castes Federation
  - The Independent Labour Party
 Select the correct answer from the following options.
  - 1 and 2 only
  - 2 and 3 only
  - 1 and 3 only
  - 1, 2 and 3
- Satya Shodhak Samaj organised which of the following? [UPSC 2016]
  - a movement for upliftment of tribal's in Bihar
  - a temple entry movement in Gujarat
  - an anti-caste movement in Maharashtra
  - a peasant movement in Punjab



## Previous Years' Questions – Main Exam

- Explain the significance of the following in socio-religious context. [UPSC 1986]
  - Faraizi Movement
  - Shuddhi Movement
  - Self-respect Movement
  - Rehnumai Mazdayasan
  - The Wahabi Movement
- 'Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar's versatile career went through various phases.' State briefly the various facets of his life. [UPSC 1991]
- Write a short note on Temple Entry Programme. [UPSC 1993]
- Write about: Vaikom Satyagraha. [UPSC 2008]
- Write about: Gurdwara Reform movement [UPSC 2009]



## Practice Questions – Preliminary Exam

- Consider the following statements with reference to the Deoband Movement?
  - The movement wanted to keep alive the spirit of Jihad against the foreign rule.
  - The movement propagated the pure teachings of Quran and the Hadis among Muslims.
  - It was a reformist movement.
  - The Deoband School was founded in 1866 in the Saharanpur district of UP.

Which of the above statements is/are correct? Select the correct answer from the following options.

- 1 and 4 only
  - 1, 3 and 4
  - 3 only
  - 1, 2 and 4
- Consider the following statements with reference to EV Ramasamy Naicker.
    - He mainly stood for women's rights and widow remarriage.
    - He abandoned Hindu mythology and denied to accept rules of caste purity.
    - He was also associated with Vaikom Satyagraha.
    - He was also known by the nickname of 'Thanthai' and 'Periyar'.

Which of the above statements are correct? Select the correct answer from the following options.

- 1, 2 and 3 only
  - 2, 3 and 4 only
  - 2, 3 and 4 only
  - all of the above
- Consider the following statements.

- Jyotiba Phule: Started Bethune school for girls education
- Syed Ahmed Barelvi: Wahabi Movement
- Sir Syed Ahmed Khan: Aligarh Movement
- Behramji M Malabari: Parsi social reformer

Which of the above are correctly matched? Select the correct answer from the following options.

- 2, 3 and 4
- 3 and 4 only
- 1, 2 and 4
- 1, 2 and 3

- Who established Satya Shodhak Samaj?

- BR Ambedkar
- Raja Ram Mohan Roy
- Jyotirao Phule
- MG Ranade

- Consider the following statements regarding Syed Ahmed Khan.

- He was an orthodox and communal in the beginning but later emphasised on the unity of Hindu Muslims.

- He was associated with Aligarh movement.
- He opened the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh.
- He propagated his progressive social ideas through his magazine Tahzib-ul Akhlaq.

Which of the above statements is/are correct? Select the correct answer from the following options.

- 1, 2 and 3
- 2, 3 and 4
- 2 and 3 only
- 1 and 4 only

- Who gave the slogan- 'One religion, one caste and one God for the mankind.'?

- Mahatma Gandhi
- Raja Rammohan Roy
- Sri Narayana Guru
- BR Ambedkar

- Consider the following statements regarding Aravipuram Movement.

- On the occasion of Shivratri, Sri Narayana Guru installed an idol of Shiva at Aravipuram in Kerala.
- The event inspired the Temple Entry Movement.
- It was a movement for widow remarriage launched by 'Periyar'.

Which of the above statements is/are not correct? Select the correct answer from the following options.

- 1 and 2 only
- 3 only
- 1 and 3 only
- 2 only

- Consider the following statements regarding Sikh Reform Movement.

- Akali Movement was aimed at liberating the Sikh gurdwaras from the influence of corrupt Mahants.
- The Singh Sabha Movement was founded in Amritsar in 1873.
- Singh Sabha Movement established a network of Khalsa schools to propagate Western education.



## 5.66 Modern Indian History

Which of the above statements is/are correct? Select the correct answer from the following options.

- (a) 1 and 2 only      (b) 2 and 3 only  
(c) 3 only            (d) all of the above

9. Consider the following statements.

1. Ahmadiyya Movement was based on liberal principles and was founded by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in 1889.
2. The Deoband Movement was organised by orthodox section among the Muslim ulema and was a revivalist movement.
3. Like Jyotiba Phule in Maharashtra, EV Ramasamy Naicker also attacked the caste system and Brahmin domination.

Which of the above statements is/are correct? Select the correct answer from the following options.

- (a) 1 and 2  
(b) 2 and 3  
(c) none of the above  
(d) all of the above

10. DK Karve was associated with which one of the following social issues?

- (a) Female Infanticide  
(b) Sati Pratha  
(c) Women Education  
(d) Widow Remarriage



### Practice Questions – Main Exam

1. To what extent were the Muslim Reform movements successful in reforming the social conditions of their time? Discuss with special reference to Aligarh Movement led by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan.
2. Discuss the nature and the outcome of the Sikh Reform Movement in India.
3. Write a short note on each of the following.
  1. Self-Respect Movement
  2. Parsi Reform Movement
4. Assess the contribution made by Jyotirao Phule and Satya Shodhak Samaj to the socio-cultural awakening in the 19th century.
5. Discuss the contribution made by Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar towards the upliftment of the backward classes.

### Answers

#### Previous Years' Questions – Preliminary Exam

1. (d)      2. (a)      3. (b)      4. (c)

#### Practice Questions – Preliminary Exam

1. (d)      2. (c)      3. (a)      4. (c)      5. (b)  
6. (c)      7. (b)      8. (d)      9. (d)      10. (c)



# Indian National Movement-Part 1 (Emergence of Organised Nationalism)



## Chapter

# 1

## Political Associations before Indian National Congress

Earlier we have seen that the educated middle class responded to the British rule in two important ways—in the form of literary activities and in the form of organisations and associations. One of the consequences of the spread of Western culture in India was the growth of modern political concepts like nationalism and political rights. The 19th-century India witnessed the growth of political ideas and political organisations hitherto unknown to the Indians. And it was these political organisations which ushered India into the era of modern politics. Moreover, while the earlier organisations were formed along religion or caste lines, the new organisations were formed along secular lines for promoting secular interests of the Indian people.

It does not matter to what extent the early political associations directly contributed to the national movement, they definitely contributed to political awakening and formed the substratum for political evolution much needed for national movement. Even though they were localised in their approach, their significance cannot be overlooked and the beginning of organised political activity in India is generally traced back to the formation of Landholders' Society in 1838.

### POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS IN BENGAL PRESIDENCY

#### Role of Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1774–1833)

Rammohan Roy, the Morning Star of reform movement in the country, was the first great leader of modern India, who contributed to nearly every aspect of Indian life. He was also the **pioneer of the political movement in India**. He was a well-read man and was deeply influenced by Western ideas. He is considered to be the first to focus the attention of the Englishmen on the grievances of the Indian people. He demanded liberty of press and appointment of Indians to higher posts. It is believed that some of the beneficent provisions of the **Charter of 1833** were due to his efforts in England. He acted as a catalyst in political awakening not only in Bengal but in the entire country as well.

#### Bangbhasha Prakashika Sabha (1836)

The Bangbhasha Prakashika Sabha was a political association formed by the associates of Raja Rammohan Roy in 1836 with the aim of discussing government policy and seeking redressal through petitions and memorandums.



### Landholders' Society (1838)

In July 1838, the Zamindari Association or the Landholders' Society (Calcutta) was founded by Dwarkanath Tagore, Radhakanta Deb and others to safeguard the interests of the landlords of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. This organisation is credited with the **launching of organised political activity in India** and the use of constitutional methods for grievance redressal. In July 1839, the Landholders' Society cooperated with the British India Society founded by William Adam in London.



Dwarkanath Tagore, grandfather of Rabindranath Tagore

### Bengal British India Society (1843)

In April 1843, the Bengal British India Society was founded with the wider objective of protecting and promoting general public interests. It aimed at disseminating information related to the actual condition of the people in British India and advancing the interests of all classes of Indian subjects by lawful and peaceful means.

### British Indian Association (1851)

On 29th October 1851, Landholders' Society (representing aristocracy of wealth) and Bengal British India Society (representing aristocracy of intelligence) were merged into one and named the British Indian Association as the two did not flourish well individually. In 1852, its branches were also established in Bombay and Madras and were known as the **Bombay Association** and the **Madras Native Association** respectively.

When the time came for the renewal of the East India Company's Charter, the three Presidency associations sent petitions suggesting changes in the Company's Charter. In general, the petitions prayed for a separate popular legislature, bigger share for Indians in administration of their country, separation of judicial from executive functions, reduction in the salaries of higher officials, abolition of taxes such as salt, stamp and abkari (excise) duties and aid to indigenous industry. Even as a desire was expressed for preserving existing interests in land, the petitions also prayed for the need of improving the condition of peasants. Many of these demands were later taken up by the Congress.

**British Indian Association:** Stated in one of its petitions, "while Indians acknowledged the blessings of an improved form of government, they could not but feel that they had not profited from their connection with Great Britain to the extent which they had a right to look for".

The prayers of the Association were partially met and the **Charter of 1853** provided for the addition of six members in the Governor General's Council for legislative purpose. The British Indian Association continued to function even after the formation of the Indian National Congress.

**Associations before 1858:** The chain of political activity was first triggered in 1838 with the formation of **Landholder's Society** in Bengal. One by one, several political associations emerged in different parts of the country. They did a good job in stirring political momentum but soon people became dissatisfied with many of them for various reasons. For instance, all these associations were dominated by wealthy landed gentry. The annual subscription fee for British India Association was ₹50 per annum which was too high for the middle class. Another drawback was that such associations tended to promote their class interests. They were also found to be active in their own provinces and had little influence over the rest of the country.

**Associations after 1858:** However, those formed after 1858 were dominated by the educated middle class and had a larger agenda. The period after 1858 saw a gradual widening of the gulf between the educated Indians and the British government. By 1870s, a new elite had emerged in the Presidency towns, sharing a similar educational background and aspirations. Ideas of nationalism moved in the air and individuals belonging to this class now began to form popular, mass-based associations to promote political consciousness among various sections of Indian people. Thus, during the period 1875–85, political thrust came from younger, more radical nationalist intellectuals.

### Indian League (1875)

In September 1875, **Sisir Kumar Ghosh** founded the India League with the objective of stimulating nationalism among the people and of promoting political education. Ghosh himself was a noted journalist and founder of *Amrita Bazaar Patrika* (1868, a noted Bengali newspaper).

### Indian Association (1876)

Indian Association was the most important of the pre-Congress organisations and was founded in July 1876 by **Ananda Mohan Bose** and **Surendranath Banerjee**. The people of Bengal were getting discontented with the narrow class interests of the British India Association and wanted a sustained political agitation on wider issues. They found a leader in Banerjee who had been ejected from the ICS on 'insufficient grounds' and was embittered with the British in India. He had declared that the new association was based on the concept of **United India derived from the inspiration of Mazzini**.

With the hope of attracting the masses, the Indian Association kept its annual subscription low at ₹5 as opposed to ₹50 charged by British Indian Association (It is noteworthy that according to Lord Curzon's estimate, per capita income in British India in 1898 was ₹30 per annum). Its aims included establishing contact with the masses, spreading awareness among them, developing a strong public opinion on political questions, promoting Hindu-Muslim unity and uniting the Indian people on a common political programme. The Indian Association certainly showed all signs of a broad-based nationalist movement.

Soon the Indian Association became the leading representative of the educated community of Bengal as well as a major force in Indian politics. When in 1876, Lytton reduced the maximum age



Surendranath Banerjee



for appearing in the ICS to 19 years from 21 years, the Indian Association took up this issue and organised a pan-India agitation, also known as the **Indian Civil Service Agitation**.

### POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS IN BOMBAY PRESIDENCY

#### Bombay Association (1852)

Bombay Association was founded on the lines of British Indian Association of Calcutta and its objective was sending prayers and petitions to the government to advance Indian interests. This association did not survive for long.

#### Poona Sarvajanik Sabha (1870)

Poona Sarvajanik Sabha was formed in Poona by **MG Ranade**, **Ganesh Vasudeo Joshi** and **SH Chiplunkar** with the aim of serving as a bridge between the government and the people. It worked in close association with the Bombay Presidency Association and played an important role in arousing political consciousness. This body is considered as a **precursor to the Indian National Congress** which was also formed in Maharashtra. The Sabha produced many of the early leaders of the national movement including Bal Gangadhar Tilak.

#### Bombay Presidency Association (1885)

Bombay presidency association was formed by popularly called brothers-in-law—**Pherozeshah Mehta**, **KT Telang** and **Badrudin Tyabji**, representing the three communities of Bombay.



Pherozeshah Mehta (a leading lawyer of Bombay and a political activist)



Badrudin Tyabji (a leading lawyer, served as third President of INC)



Kashinath Trimbak Telang (a judge at Bombay High Court)

### POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS IN MADRAS PRESIDENCY

#### Madras (Native) Association (1852)

A branch of the British Indian Association of Calcutta was set up at Madras under the name of the Madras Native Association. This body faded into obscurity after 1857.

#### Madras Mahajan Sabha (1884)

Madras Mahajan Sabha was formed by a group of younger nationalists of Madras such as **M Viraraghavachariar**, **G Subramaniya Iyer**, **P Ananda Charlu** and others to coordinate the activities of local associations. It also demanded reforms in legislative councils, viz. expansion of councils and greater representation for Indians.

### POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS IN ENGLAND

#### East India Association (1866)

East India Association was formed in **London** by some Indian students like **Pherozeshah Mehta**, **Badrudin Tyabji**, **Dadabhai Naoroji** and **Manmohan Ghose** to carry on political propaganda in England, discuss the Indian question and work for the interest and welfare of the Indians.

**Dadabhai Naoroji (1825–1917)**—Born in 1825, he devoted his entire life to the creation of a national movement in India and soon came to be known as the 'Grand Old Man of India'. He was a Parsi intellectual, cotton trader and early nationalist leader and also the first economic thinker of India. He is credited with the founding of the INC along with AO Hume and DE Wacha. He served as the President of the INC three times. He was the **first Indian to become a British MP** in the British House of Commons during 1892–95. He was also the first to give the theory of Drain of Wealth in his book *The Poverty and Unbritish Rule in India*, and showed that India's poverty was due to British exploitation and drain of wealth.



Dadabhai Naoroji

In this way, many political bodies were established in different parts of India with branches in mofussil towns, thus setting the stage for the emergence of a national body. After the formation of Indian National Congress in 1885, these local bodies became the regional arms of the Congress.

### TRENDS TOWARDS AN ALL-INDIA POLITICAL ORGANISATION

With nationalism in the air, the need was thus felt for an all-India association. By 1885, the formation of a national level body had become a political necessity. Nationalists all over the



country had begun to feel the need to unite politically against the common enemy—the British rule.

### Pre-Congress Political Work (1875–1885)

Indians gained tremendous experience and confidence through the political work carried on during this decade. For instance:

- The **Indian Mirror** of Calcutta was carrying out a continuous campaign on the need for an all-India association.
- There were protests all over India over imposition of **License Tax** (1878) and abolition of **Cotton Import Duties** (1879).
- A massive campaign had been organised during 1877–88 around the demand for Indianisation of government services.
- Indians also opposed the **Afghan war** of Lord Lytton.
- Major campaigns were waged against the **Vernacular Press Act**, the **Arms Act** (aimed at disarming the Indians) and the **Plantation Labour and the Inland Emigration Act** (during 1881–82 which condemned plantation labourers to serfdom) were also opposed.
- During 1883, a major agitation was organised in favour of the **Ilbert Bill** which aimed at bringing the Indian magistrates at par with the European magistrates.
- In 1885, a massive all India campaign was organised to raise a **National Fund** to promote political agitation in India as well as in England.
- Indians also appealed to the British voters to elect candidates who were friendly towards India.
- In December 1883, the Indian Association organised an **All India National Conference** and gave a call for another one in December 1885. **Surendranath Banerjee** and **Anand Mohan Bose** were the main architects of the All India National Conference (this was the reason why Banerjee could not attend the founding session of the INC in December 1885).
- Two other conferences were held during the same time: one by Eurasians at Jabalpur and the other by Prayag Central Hindu Samaj at Allahabad.

Now, it was only a matter of time before a national body was created and the stage was set for the birth of the INC. The stage was set for some basic objectives to be struggled for and the founders of the INC were inspired by these basic objectives. India had begun to enter the process of becoming a nation, and the first major objective of the founders of INC was to weld India into one nation. The Indian National Congress, founded in 1885, thus emerged as the first organised expression of the Indian national movement on an all-India scale.

In 1878, the Commissioner of Berar wrote, “within the 20 years of my own recollection, a feeling of nationality, which formerly had no existence...has grown up. Now we are beginning to find ourselves face to face, not with the population of individual provinces, but with 200 millions of people united by sympathies...which we have ourselves fostered. This seems to me the great political fact of the day.”



### Previous Years' Questions – Preliminary Exam

1. His principal forte was social and religious reform. He relied upon legislation to do away with social ills and worked unceasingly for the eradication of child marriage, the purdah system.... To encourage consideration of social problems on a national scale, he inaugurated the Indian National Social Conference, which for many years met for its annual sessions alongside the Indian National Congress.

Who is being referred to in this passage? Select the correct answer from the following options.

[UPSC 1996]

- (a) Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar
- (b) Behramji Merwanji Malabari

- (c) Mahadev Govind Ranade
- (d) B. R. Ambedkar

2. Consider the following pairs:

[UPSC 2017]

1. Radhakanta Deb - First President of the British Indian Association
2. Gazulu Lakshminarasu Chetty - Founder of the Madras Mahajan Sabha
3. Surendra Nath Banerjee - Founder of the Indian Association

Which of the above pairs is/are correctly matched? Select the correct answer from the following options.

- (a) Only 1
- (b) 1 and 3
- (c) 2 and 3
- (d) 1, 2 and 3



### Practice Questions – Preliminary Exam

1. Examine the following statements with regard to the Bangbhasha Prakashika Sabha-

1. It was founded by Raja Ram Mohan Roy.
2. The association was formed with the aim of promoting Bengali literature.

Which of the above statements is/are correct? Select the correct answer from the following options.

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) both
- (d) neither

2. Examine the following statements with regard to the Zamindari Association of Calcutta-

1. It was founded to safeguard the interests of the landlords of Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and Assam.
2. This organisation is credited with the launching of organised political activity in India and the use of constitutional methods for grievance redressal.

Which of the above statements is/are correct? Select the correct answer from the following options.

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) both
- (d) neither

3. Which of the following were characteristics of all pre-Congress associations?

1. Nationalism
2. Promotion of public interests
3. Organised political activity
4. Use of constitutional methods

Select the correct answer from the following options.

- (a) 1 and 2
- (b) 1, 2 and 3
- (c) 2 and 3
- (d) 3 and 4

4. Which of the following is/are true regarding British India Association?

1. It was founded in 1843
2. It was formed by the merger of Landholders' Society and Bengal British India Society



## 6.10 Modern Indian History

3. Addition of six members in the Governor General's Council for legislative purpose in the Charter of 1853 was among its important achievements.

Select the correct answer from the following options.

- (a) 1 and 2                      (b) 1 and 3  
(c) 2 and 3                      (d) 1, 2 and 3

5. Which of the below are true regarding the Indian Association?

1. It was formed in 1875.  
2. It was the most important of the pre-Congress organisations.  
3. It was inspired by the ideas of Mazzini.

Select the correct answer from the following options.

- (a) 1 and 2                      (b) 1 and 3  
(c) 2 and 3                      (d) 1, 2 and 3



### Practice Questions – Main Exam

1. Pre-Congress Organisations played an important role in awakening national consciousness and fostering the growth of national movement. Evaluate.
2. How were pre-Congress organisations lacking in their ideology and approach towards freedom struggle? Discuss.

## Answers

### Previous Years' Questions – Preliminary Exam

1. (c)                      2. (b)

### Practice Questions – Preliminary Exam

1. (d)                      2. (b)                      3. (d)                      4. (c)                      5. (c)