

# **MODERN INDIAN SOCIAL AND POLITICAL THOUGHT**

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**Modern Indian Social and Political Thought**

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**Unit - I The Resurging India**

The Indian Renaissance: Background, Evolution, Importance The Impact of British Rule on Indian on Social, Economic, Religious and Political Systems Raja Rammohan Roy's: Contributions Social reforms, Impact on Society

**Unit - II Socio-Religious Reform**

Social and Religious Reforms in the Early Nineteenth Century Swamy Dayananda Saraswati: Mission, Reforms Swami Vivekanand - Concept of Freedom, Nationalism and Politics

**Unit - III POLITICO-SOCIAL REFORM**

Dadabhai Nouroji: Socio-Economic and Political Views Gopalakrishna Ghokle: Social and Political Views Bala Gangadhara Tilak - Views on Social Reform, Militant Nationalism

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**1.0 Objectives**

The objective of this unit is to familiarize to the students about the ideas of Indian Renaissance and its Evolution and importance in the resurging India, as well as the Impact of British Rule in India on Social religious and political system and how contribution of Raja Ram Mohan Roy on social reform and how it impacts on Indian Society. After studying this unit, students should be able to understand:

- An assessment of Indian renaissance movement in India.
- Critically evaluate social reform movements in India.
- Explore and evaluate religious movements in India.

- The impact of British rule in India.
- The Social, Political and Religious reformers of India By Raja Ram Mohan Roy.

### **1.1 Introduction**

India has a rich history of socio-religious reform movements, particularly during the nineteenth century. These reforms involve the alteration or substitution of institutions that have become functionally obsolete, either entirely or in part, within the contemporary social framework. These outdated institutions contribute to low quality of life, deprivation, social unrest, and suffering among significant segments of society.

The genesis of the social and religious reform movements in the nineteenth century can be attributed to the convergence of two distinct societal groups: the traditional orthodox society and the English-educated youth. The younger generation, exposed to the new education system, became acquainted with the liberal and rational ideologies of Europe. This exposure led them to rebel against the confines of dogma, traditional orthodox beliefs, customs, and long-standing practices.

The era marked a shift away from blind adherence to archaic traditions, beliefs, and customs prevalent in the medieval period. Instead, it ushered in an era of rationalism, a defining characteristic of the modern age. Essentially, these reform movements facilitated the transition from the medieval to the modern age. Recognizing the significance of socio-religious movements, this study focuses on the subject of Indian Renaissance and Socio-Religious Movements.

### **1.2 The Indian Renaissance**

The Indian renaissance, often referred to as the socio-intellectual revolution of the 19th century, encompassed transformative changes across various domains, including science. A pivotal aspect of this renaissance was the reformulation of Hinduism.

#### **1.2.1 Background**

Prior to the Indian Renaissance, the era was characterized by a socio-religious crisis, particularly exacerbated by Western influences. The Indian society was entangled in the grip of religious superstitions and dogmas,



resulting in a period of darkness that posed a threat to the essence of Indian heritage and culture due to the intrusion of Western ideas. Abhorrent practices such as animal sacrifices and physical abuse had supplanted genuine worship, while priests wielded an undue and negative influence over the populace.

Social conditions were equally bleak, marred by issues like child marriage, untouchability, and the deplorable state of women. The birth of a girl was unwelcomed, her marriage a burden, and her widowhood deemed inauspicious. The stratification of society into numerous castes and sub-castes further weakened the social fabric, perpetuating divisions and stifling social advancement.

This environment was characterized by bigotry, intolerance, widespread ignorance, and communal conflicts, which collectively eroded the foundations of the nation. Mutual animosity and discontent became pervasive in individual lives. The reform movements emerged as a response to these manifestations of a declining society, aiming to cultivate a climate conducive to modernization by rejecting these aspects and fostering an environment of progress and unity.

The beginnings of the Hindu way of life, which is now an integrated behavioural pattern, go back to very ancient days and stem from widely different sources. They have latter commingled to form the Hindu social tradition but even that stage of fusion was reached so long ago that there has been ample time for that system to take root, and become hoary authentic and orthodox in its own right. This great principle of anonymity is at the root of lack of history in India. The sense of history, which is the desire not only to write history but also to wish to be participants in a record-worthy history was significantly absent and search as we may in Hindu literature we get no bio data regarding great men whose names alone have survived to reach us. The fact of the matter is that the literates in a society that had become almost inorganic in view of the extremely slow pace of change could see no point of in engaging in an enquiry on the nature of and justification for social change which is the essence of historical investigation. Hinduism was culturally perfectly totalitarian and as so as in all totalitarian systems, the writing of the history was naturally different from what it is expected to be in the non-Hindu traditions of historiography; the system deprecated such interests. As in the modern totalitarian states history becomes the tool of another ideology; Hinduism

produced semi-religious literature called the Itihasaa and the Puranas, which twisted secular life out of historical shape and fitted it into a mythical pattern.

### **1.2.2 Evolution**

The Indian movement was started in the 19th century. And during these centuries many new factors and many forces came into play in the historical arena. Furthermore, the historical development of Europe had been considerably different from that of India. However, even keeping in mind these historical differences, one cannot but discern a striking similarity between the European Renaissance and the Indian one. In this regard, one should also note that in Europe what a host of outstanding men tried to achieve, in India Raja Ram Mohan attempted single-handed. The many-sided movement that Ram Mohan Roy started was, like its European counterpart, a revolt against medievalism in every aspect of our life. Even though it was a crusade for the supremacy of reason over dogmatic worship of authority, yet it did not mean the total rejection of the Hindu Shastras.

### **1.2.3 Importance**

A New method of studying Indian history was Introduced, The renaissance represented the first efforts to redeem India from its state of all-around degradation and to spread this spirit of revival and recreation from sphere to sphere of national life. The Indian Renaissance gave rise to the study of English literature, thoughts, philosophies, and historical books. The socio-reform movement created a social climate conducive to reform. This was an attempt to revitalize the socio-cultural system by transforming the existing social milieu. It rekindled faith in India's glory. In the face of the imperialistic disintegration of Indian society and culture, they instilled a sense of self-respect and new confidence. They served as a cultural fortification against the assault of colonial culture. They were crucial in the quest and struggle for a new cultural identity and autonomy. Since the first reaction against colonialism took place in the cultural arena, the ideas and activities of reformers were inextricably linked to the task of nation building.

It made a significant contribution to the birth of Indian nationalism. They were a national movement that had an impact on people all over the country, not just in isolated areas. People felt a sense of oneness as a

result of reform activities and attacks on institutions such as caste, which hampered social creation. Indian nationalism aims to regenerate the entire Indian society, regardless of caste or community. The nationalist addressed all social ills on a national scale. The urgent need for social and religious reform that began to emerge in the early decades of the nineteenth century arose as a result of contact with Western culture and education. The weakness and decay of Indian society became clear to educated Indians, who began to work systematically for their abolition. They were no longer willing to accept Hindu society's traditions, beliefs, and practices simply because they had been observed for centuries. The impact of Western ideas sparked a new awakening.

### **1.3 The impact of British Rule in India**

During the 18th century, significant global events unfolded, including the Industrial Revolution that originated in England and gradually extended to other parts of Europe. One prominent outcome of this period was the discovery of new sea and trade routes, exemplified by Vasco da Gama's Portuguese expedition to India in 1498. This voyage paved the way for English, French, Portuguese, and Dutch traders to venture to India, thereby facilitating trade and missionary activities. This marked the inception of the modern era in Indian history, as explored in this section, focusing on the British arrival in India and its multifaceted impact on society, economy, religion, and politics.

#### **1.3.1 Social Impact**

The British arrived in India with a primary goal of maximizing profits, achieved through the acquisition of raw materials at low costs and the sale of finished products at higher rates. This strategy aimed at ensuring that Indians were educated and modern enough to consume British goods, yet not to an extent that threatened British interests. Certain British individuals propagated the notion that Western ideas were modern and superior, contrasting Indian ideas as outdated and inferior. Contrary to this misconception, Indian culture boasted a rich traditional knowledge that remained relevant.

During this period, England had a group of Radicals who embraced a humanistic perspective toward Indians, desiring India to integrate into the modern, scientifically progressive world. However, the British government exercised caution in rapidly modernizing India, fearing potential backlash

if religious beliefs and social customs were too heavily interfered with. The British sought to perpetuate their rule in India, prioritizing stability over reactionary sentiments. Although they spoke of introducing reforms, their implementation was limited and lacklustre.

#### **1.3.1.1 Education Policy**

The British displayed a keen interest in introducing the English language in India for several strategic reasons. Promoting English education was part of their plan to create a workforce of Indians who would work as low-wage clerks, reducing administrative costs compared to British employees demanding higher wages. This effort also aimed to cultivate a segment of Indians loyal to the British, disconnected from their compatriots. Such individuals would appreciate British culture and viewpoints and contribute to expanding the market for British goods. Education was employed as a tool to consolidate their political authority, assuming that a select group of educated Indians would propagate British culture among the masses, facilitating rule through this educated class.

As a result, the British selectively offered jobs to Indians proficient in English, pushing many Indians to pursue English education. This policy restricted education to the affluent and urban population. Although the British education policy in India was tepid, the introduction of the English language and Western ideas did yield some positive effects on society. Reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, and Swami Vivekananda embraced Western concepts of liberalism and democracy, channeling them to challenge non-humanitarian social and religious practices of the time. While widespread education remained elusive, certain ideas of anti-imperialism, nationalism, social equity, and economic fairness began to take root through political parties, public discussions, debates, and the press.

#### **1.3.2 Economic Impact**

The Industrial Revolution played a pivotal role in shaping economic dynamics globally. English merchants amassed significant capital from various regions like Asia, Africa, and America. Eager to invest this wealth, they turned to establishing industries and trading with India. The Industrial Revolution, characterized by mass production through mechanization, pioneered by late 18th and early 19th century England, led to substantial increases in finished goods output. The East India Company supported

this industrial expansion, and a subset of English manufacturers benefited more from manufacturing than trading. They sought raw materials from India and sought to export finished goods back.

Between 1793 and 1813, British manufacturers embarked on a campaign against the East India Company's trade monopoly and privileges, successfully dismantling its monopoly on Indian trade. Consequently, India became an economic colony of Industrial England. This section delves into the economic impact on various Indian industries and trade.

#### **1.3.2.1 Textile Industry and Trade**

Indian handloom textiles once enjoyed a thriving market in Europe and held prominence in Asia and Africa. However, with English industrialization, the direction of textile trade shifted. Machine-made clothes from English factories inundated Indian markets, posing a significant challenge to handicraft industries due to the affordability of British goods.

#### **1.3.2.2 Land Revenue Policy and Settlements**

Throughout history, agriculture has been the primary source of livelihood for people, and consequently, land tax has stood as a fundamental revenue source for rulers across the globe. In the 18th century, agriculture remained the dominant occupation for the Indian populace. Under British rule, land revenue continually rose due to a variety of factors. Initially, the British arrived in India as traders, but over time, their ambitions expanded to encompass the vast Indian territory. This required substantial financial resources for territorial conquest, trade endeavors, company projects, and administrative expenses. The British pursued various land revenue experiments, which often imposed hardships on cultivators. Taxes were levied on farmers to fund their policies and military undertakings, using both direct and indirect methods to collect revenue.

In 1793, Lord Cornwallis introduced the Permanent Settlement in Bengal and Bihar. This initiative mandated that landlords or zamindars deposit a fixed sum of money in the state treasury, in return for which they gained recognition as hereditary landowners. This effectively transformed zamindars into landowners, with a predetermined revenue payment to the British Company, ensuring financial security for the British.

In 1822, the British introduced the Mahalwari Settlement in areas such as the North Western Provinces, Punjab, the Ganga Valley, and parts of Central India. This system assessed revenue based on the product of a mahal or estate, which could be a village or a cluster of villages. All mahal proprietors were collectively responsible for paying the assessed revenue to the government. Unfortunately, this settlement did not prove advantageous for peasants, as the British demands were excessively high.

The Ryotwari Settlement was established in the early 19th century across many regions of the Bombay and Madras Presidencies. Under this arrangement, land revenue was directly imposed on individual cultivators, known as ryots, who worked the land. While the peasants were recognized as landowners as long as they could pay the revenue, the system still subjected them to exploitation due to the burdensome revenue demands.

#### **1.3.2.3 Commercialization of Agriculture**

British policies introduced an array of commercial crops like tea, coffee, indigo, opium, cotton, jute, sugarcane, and oilseeds, each serving different purposes. For instance, Indian opium balanced British-Chinese trade, but its market was controlled by British traders. Indigo cultivation was forced upon Indian farmers, and the exploitation of this crop impacted the land's fertility. The tea plantation industry witnessed frequent ownership changes, and workers endured arduous conditions.

These economic shifts reveal the complex ramifications of British policies on India's industries and trade during this transformative period.

#### **1.3.2.4 Emergence of a New Moneylending Class**

The British government's demands for timely and excessive revenue compelled peasants to seek loans from moneylenders. These moneylenders often took advantage of the situation by imposing exorbitant interest rates. Unfair practices such as false accounting, forged signatures, and thumb impressions were used to exploit the peasants. The British legal system and policies predominantly favored moneylenders, who were often local merchants or landlords. Many peasants struggled to repay the loans along with interest, leading to the gradual transfer of their lands to the moneylending class.

### **1.3.2.5 Emergence of a New Middle Class**

The British rule introduced significant changes in India, giving rise to a new middle class. As British commercial interests grew, opportunities opened up for a small segment of the Indian population. This class often acted as intermediaries for British traders, amassing considerable wealth. The new landed aristocracy, formed after the implementation of Permanent Settlement, also became part of this emerging middle class. Traditional landowning elites lost ownership of their land to this new class, which embraced some level of English education and became the new elite. The expansion of British influence created new employment prospects, with the establishment of law courts, government officials, and commercial agencies. The English-educated individuals received patronage from the colonial rulers, leading to the creation of a new professional and service-oriented middle class.

### **1.3.2.6 Transformation in Transportation and Communication**

In India, transportation mainly relied on bullock carts, camels, and pack animals. However, England needed an efficient railway network to connect raw material-producing regions with exporting ports, facilitating the movement of British goods and materials. The extensive railway network that exists today was established during the latter part of the 19th century. British bankers and investors seized the opportunity to invest surplus wealth in railway construction. Railways immensely benefited British capitalists by facilitating profitable trading and connecting internal markets with ports. Additionally, the technology and capital for building rail lines originated from Britain. The British rule in India also brought ideas of liberty, equality, human rights, science, and technology from the West. This infusion accelerated the process of modernization in India during that period.

### **1.3.3 Religious Impact**

Indian society was steeped in orthodoxy, traditionalism and practiced various barbaric practices like Sati. Indians imbibed the modern ideas and thus began a quest to change the decadent practices and reform the socio-religious practices. Ram Mohan Roy vehemently opposed the ritualistic practices and idol worship endorsed by the priests of his era, expressing his dissent on multiple occasions. Engaging in an exploration of the Holy Scriptures from various religions, he deduced that Hindu texts, including the Upanishads, presented arguments in favor of monotheism.



His examination extended to the Bible as well. This led him to pursue a religious transformation aimed at restoring the original, unadulterated essence of ancient Vedic teachings. In 1828, he laid the foundation for what is now recognized as the Atmiya Sabha. Subsequently, on August 20 of the same year, the inaugural assembly of this nascent faith took place.

After undergoing internal reorganization, the assembly, initially named the Atmiya Sabha, was later renamed the Brahma Sabha. This predated the Brahmo Samaj and shared a comparable purpose. Rooted in the ideals of monotheism, liberation from rigid scriptures, and opposition to the caste system, this burgeoning religious movement revolved around these core concepts. The practices of worship within the Brahmo tradition were reconfigured to reflect Christian or Islamic prayer rituals, discarding the Hindu ceremonial elements that had been intertwined with them. This adaptation aimed to align them more closely with Christian or Islamic prayer customs.

Over time, the Brahma Samaj evolved into a significant force for progress, catalyzing social reforms in Bengal, particularly in expanding educational opportunities for women. This transformation occurred during the period of British colonial rule, signifying the impact of Ram Mohan Roy's visionary approach.

#### **1.3.4 Political Impact**

Colonialism had a profound political impact on India. The British systematically annexed regions and established absolute authority over the Indian government, leading to the erosion of India's sovereignty. Furthermore, they strategically divided and manipulated various tribal and cultural factions to uphold their dominion. But, probably the most important of these impacts was the one they had on the political structure of pre-Independence India. Seeing as the Indians were numerically superior, the British devised an ingenious plan to take advantage of the unstable balance of power in the subcontinent. Their 'Divide and Rule' policy was by far, the most brilliant political strategy in history as well as being the epitome of cruelty, barbarism and inhumanity. The effects of the Partition of Bengal and of India can be felt even today. They recruited Indians to aid them in their conquest and thus, gulped the difference in numerical strength. After that, it was easy to pick off one province after another. The technological superiority also gave them an advantage over the antiquated Indians.



The landscape of political power underwent significant transformation with the consolidation of British imperial rule, which had far-reaching implications for former chiefs and minor rulers. Their status and roles shifted dramatically as imperial consolidation progressed. These once-central figures within systems of political and religious concepts, where they shared authority with divine entities, found their significance altered. In the pre-colonial Indian context, civil society, as a distinct realm of human interaction separate from the state, was absent. Instead, a web of loosely connected institutions of governance, spanning from the village level upwards, operated within ritual networks that emphasized the shared authority between ruling individuals and deities. The rituals and concepts of authority in villages mirrored those of royal courts and grand temples.

With the establishment of the colonial regime, a political revolution occurred, particularly in relation to the ideological structures of the former order. What remained of the networks of ritual and patronage underwent distortion. The colonial state took control over the use of force and assumed the responsibility of managing major conflicts. The former ruling elites lost their roles as community protectors. These elites attempted to uphold their previous status and prestige by constructing opulent residences and engaging in lavish spending. Their conflicts over titles and honor shifted from the battlefield to colonial courts of law. Throughout the 19th century, traditional Indian ideologies of rule and monarchical cosmologies became fragmented. The disruption caused by colonial rule shattered any integrated system of Indian political ideology. As the 19th century drew to a close, nationalist leaders looked to Western models of liberal democracy, rather than Indian monarchical traditions, as they contemplated the future of their nation.

One noteworthy outcome of the cultural and political divide between colonial officials and the Indian populace was the emergence of civic arenas – public spaces where elite urban men gathered to discuss matters of common interest. These individuals often included affluent traders, merchants, and those who had acquired a Western education, often in English. The development of civic arenas and the nature of discourse in the public sphere varied from region to region. Bengal experienced quicker and more radical changes, leading to more immediate results within the public sphere compared to the Bombay Presidency or Madras. Madras witnessed a slower pace of political change.

## 1.4 Raja Ram Mohan Roy's Contribution

Raja Ram Mohan Roy, a prominent figure in the Indian Modern Renaissance, was a social reformer and accomplished scholar, born on May 22, 1772, and passing away on September 27, 1833. He played a crucial role in founding the Brahmo Sabha in 1828, which later evolved into the Brahmo Samaj, a socio-religious reform movement in the Indian subcontinent. He was bestowed the title of Raja by Akbar II, the Mughal emperor, in recognition of his contributions.

He launched a formidable onslaught against pseudo-religious Puranic cults and dogmas, which had crept into Hinduism in much later periods of its history, and attempted to link Hinduism with its original classical concepts of monotheism. And in order to bring the original Hindu Scriptures to his countryman who did not know Sanskrit, Ram Mohan Roy was the first to translate the classics of Hindu religion into Bengali and English. Ram Mohan Roy unequivocally asserted man's intellectual freedom, rejected the claim of asceticism as the only means of realizing God, and recognized feelings and emotions as vital factors of life. And finally, he raised the standard of revolt against social oppression and tyranny. Furthermore, as the Indian Renaissance followed in the 19th century, Ram Mohan Roy developed two fundamental concepts which could not germinate in the womb of the 15th century Europe; first comparative study and synthesis of three world religions Hinduism, Islam and Christianity and, secondly, unqualified support to democratic struggles for freedom of the oppressed people all over the world. Thus, the Indian Renaissance truly served the historical need of the epoch. In order to resuscitate the inner meaning of classical Hinduism, the methodology that Raja Ram Mohan followed was that of the Mimamsa School of Philosophy. This school enunciated that for arriving at truth one should start with a particular sloka of a Shashtra, challenge its validity, re-examine it, and then arrive at a conclusion. Raja Ram Mohan believed that the scriptures should not be considered the supreme power. The pinnacle of human realization is not constructed upon supernatural or metaphysical underpinnings; instead, it finds its basis in the realm of human consciousness itself.

### 1.4.1 Social Reforms

Raja Ram Mohan Roy stood out as an exceptional social thinker, and his historical significance is particularly notable for his instrumental role in eradicating the practice of sati among orthodox Brahmins. Founding the Brahmo Samaj, he aimed to express his belief in the Islamic concept of a

single deity. He prioritized social reform over political change, considering the former as the bedrock for achieving political liberty. This emphasis led to relatively less focus on his political ideas. Despite his aversion to colonialism, he appeared to support British rule, perhaps due to its role in countering prevailing feudal forces. He perceived British rule as culturally superior to the former feudal rulers and saw it as a vehicle to inject new values into India.

His admiration for British rule stemmed from his faith in its potential to reshape traditional Hindu mindset. Roy believed that the sustained British rule would eventually pave the way for democratic institutions akin to those in Great Britain. Aligning with liberal perspectives, he viewed the uncritical embrace of British liberal values as a potent means to establish democracy in India. Essentially, he saw British rule as a hidden boon, a conduit for transplanting democratic governance.

Ram Mohan Roy also played a pivotal role in advocating for press freedom. Collaborating with his associate Dwarkanath Tagore, he petitioned for press freedom, deeming it crucial for the democratic functioning of the government. Apart from providing an outlet for grievances, press freedom could facilitate remedial actions by the administration. This demand was noteworthy on two counts: it marked a step toward democratization among Indian elites and, if granted, acted as a release valve for the colonial rulers by allowing public airing of grievances.

Ram Mohan Roy's historical role was progressive within a specific context. He seemed to prioritize his experience with British colonialism over India's recent feudal past. While this may have led him to downplay the adverse impact of foreign rule, it also demonstrated his preference for one form of administration over another. His endorsement of British Enlightenment as transformative for Indian mindsets informed this preference.

His appeal to British planters in India, despite their harsh treatment of Indian peasants, can be rationalized by his argument for the empire's continuity based on economic strength. Roy believed that the more wealth the planters amassed, the stronger their defense for the empire's persistence in India. In sum, Ram Mohan Roy fulfilled his role in accordance with the historical requirements of India's evolving socio-political landscape. Categorizing him as pro-imperial or nationalist in today's terms would oversimplify his historically conditioned perspectives.

### **Educational Reforms**

Ram Mohan Roy's studies encompassed traditional languages like Sanskrit and Persian. Later, his exposure to English prompted him to master the language to enhance his career prospects under British rule. His aptitude for writing led him to engage extensively with English literature and various publications to broaden his knowledge. Despite his deep reverence for ancient texts like the Vedas, Upanishads, and the Quran, he recognized a gap in his education pertaining to scientific understanding and logical reasoning.

Recognizing this gap, Roy advocated for an English Education System that incorporated subjects like mathematics, physics, chemistry, and botany. He aimed to have these subjects taught in English. In 1817, he, along with David Hare, established Hindu College, which would later become a prestigious global educational institution. Hindu College played a pivotal role in nurturing some of India's most creative minds. Roy's efforts catalyzed a revolutionary shift in India's educational system. He also founded the Anglo-Vedic School in 1822 and later the Vedanta College in 1826. The latter aimed to blend traditional philosophical teachings with contemporary reasoning. Both schools were established in England.

#### **1.4.2 Impact on Society**

During this era, Hindu beliefs and customs faced severe mockery, yet to them, the West represented unfiltered freedom. Missionaries seized this opportune climate for converting Hindus to Christianity, prompting ceaseless efforts to undermine Hinduism. New converts adopted Western ways, sparking a clash between the two ideologies. The rapid expansion of Western education in parts of India facilitated Christianity's penetration into regions historically dominated by Hinduism. Recognizing the impending threat, Hindu leaders sought to counter this peril.

Historically, Christianity established its initial strongholds alongside missionary institutions, establishing their efficacy. This marked a breakthrough, opening doors to knowledge, freedom, and empowerment. These shifts challenged conventional norms, making way for a new world and lifestyle. People were captivated by the novelty and distinctiveness of these changes. Although most did not embrace Christianity outright, many endeavored to Westernize aspects of their lives and perspectives.

Despite this pull, women often resisted, resulting in Anglicized Indians straddling the challenges of both Western and Eastern influences.

While Raja Ram Mohan Roy was also attracted to the West, his approach differed. He possessed an ability to delve beyond surface appearances and grasp the underlying truth. Turning his attention to Hinduism, he found solace in the Vedas and Upanishads. The core assertions of Hindu faith, centered around the idea that “All is Brahma,” stood in contrast to practices like idolatry, caste, and sati. Collaborating with a select group of friends, he engaged in discussions on the timeless truths of all religions, culminating in the foundation of the Brahmo Samaj in 1828. His legacy continued through Prince Dwarkanath Tagore and his son Maharshi Debendranath Tagore, who carried forward his work.

Debendranath's meeting with Keshub Chunder Sen in 1857 marked a significant event for the Brahmo Samaj. Over a decade of collaboration yielded a powerful presence in Bengal, a crucible for both religious and cultural renaissance. Keshub's fascination with Christ and the Gospel prompted him to establish his own church in 1866. Amid challenges within the Brahmo Samaj, the organization played a pivotal role in shaping Bengal's cultural history during the 19th century.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy initiated various fronts for national reconstruction, followed by Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar and Keshub Chunder Sen, who were dedicated social reformers. Dayanand Saraswathi from Punjab, founder of the Arya Samaj, aimed to purify and preserve Hinduism. While some attempted to bridge Hindu spirituality and Christian ideals, Dayanand's focus was on fortifying Hinduism. The collective effort of social, educational, and religious reforms paved the way for economic progress and, subsequently, political emancipation.

The transformative intellectual and moral environment led to the emergence of institutions like the Paramahansa Sabha and the Prarthana Samaj, which emphasized pure worship of God. Leaders like Kashinath Trimbak Telang and Mahadev Govind Ranade played prominent roles. Notably, Rama Krishna embodied human unity through God-realization, underlining love as the ultimate law of life. Swami Vivekananda, an esteemed educator, founded the Ramakrishna Mission, advocating for a balance between Western ideals and spiritual heritage.

The reformers intention was not to replace indigenous Indian culture with Western values. Rather, they selectively incorporated Western values that aligned with societal development, such as humanism. They emphasized interpreting scriptures and simplifying rituals rather than full-scale Westernization. Swami Vivekananda reinterpreted the Vedas in a changing context, promoting selfless service and action. Raja Ram Mohan Roy admired Western thought yet held the Vedas and Upanishads in high esteem. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar used ancient texts to advocate for widow remarriage, successfully influencing policy change. These reformers condemned social evils while cherishing scriptures' core truths, which occasionally conflicted with modern equality ideals.

In India, social reform differed from Western contexts, as it didn't entail a complete restructuring of society for the underprivileged. Instead, it involved infusing new ideas into the existing social framework, preserving society while transforming individuals.

### **1.5 Let's sum up**

All the cultural changes which occurred in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in India are usually collectively designated a Renaissance But in India there was no renaissance in that sense. The old values relevant to the Hindu way of life were a continuing system; they were never upset or forgotten in fact they were carefully remembered and cherished and occasionally modified only to ensure continuance.

The art and letters of ancient India, till the West came in massively to pose an unprecedented threat, were harnessed to the overriding purpose of upholding Hindu context. The situation really is that a fully operating and thoroughly integrated social system geared to spiritual values is suddenly faced with the problem of blinding the people to the prospects of as yet unheard-of material prosperity. The situation has no semblance to the European Renaissance.

The British initially arrived in India as traders, but their ambitions gradually extended to territorial control. Through methods like direct conquest, annexation, and diplomacy, they gradually gained dominion over the entire Indian subcontinent. The pivotal moment came with the Battle of Plassey in 1757, marking the commencement of British political dominance in India. This colonial rule profoundly impacted both the political and social fabric of Indian society.



Among the few visionaries of his time, Raja Ram Mohan Roy comprehended the profound implications of the modern era. He recognized that the ultimate goal of human civilization is to foster a sense of interconnectedness and interdependence among individuals and nations, rather than pursuing isolation and independence. His mission was to awaken Indians to their distinct cultural identities and facilitate an understanding of the unique realities that defined their civilizations, all within the spirit of collaborative harmony.

### 1.6 Self Assessment Question

- 1) Discuss in Brief the background and Importance of Indian Renaissance?
- 2) Write a short note on Evolution of Indian Renaissance?
- 3) What is the impact of British rule in Indian Society?
- 4) Discuss the effects of British rule in Economic, Religious and Political System in India?
- 5) Identify the influences that shaped Raja Ram Mohan Roy as a Reformer?
- 6) What are the Roy's Social Reforms that impact on Indian Society?

### 1.7 References

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DDE, Pondicherry University



**UNIT - II****Socio - Religious Reforms****Structure**

- 2.1. Objectives
- 2.2. Introduction
- 2.3. Social And Religious Reforms In The Early Nineteenth Century
- 2.4. Swami Dayanand Saraswati: Mission and Reforms
  - 2.4.1. Mission and Reforms
- 2.5. Swami Vivekanand: Concept of Freedom, Nationalism, and Politics
  - 2.5.1. Concept of Freedom
  - 2.5.2. Nationalism
  - 2.5.3. Politics
- 2.6. Summary
- 2.7. Keywords
- 2.8. Self-Assessment Questions
- 2.9. References

**2.1. Objectives**

The objective of this unit is to appraise the reader about the socio-religious reforms that started in early nineteenth century. The unit covers various social organizations, their missions, and activities they carried out, that were at the forefront of the reforms. The aim was to make society more, equitable, and harmonious, often challenging existing norms and practices to bring about positive changes. From advocating education to eradicating discrimination to speaking against patriarchy, what was holding back the nation when the comparison was drawn to the progress of the west, was addressed. Further, the reader can learn about Swamy Dayanand Saraswati and Swami Vivekananda's social reform measures, their views on nationalism and politics of early nineteenth century India in detail. and form an opinion about their contributions.

The objective of a lesson Swami Dayanand Saraswati and Vivekananda is to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the lives,

philosophies, and contributions of these two influential figures in 19th-century India. It seeks to acquaint students with the biographical details of Vivekananda and Dayanand Saraswati, highlighting their early years, significant life events, and the societal context in which they lived. The lessons further explore their philosophical teachings and beliefs of both Swamis. It emphasizes Dayanand Saraswati's emphasis on Vedic principles, monotheism, and social reform, while contrasting it with Vivekananda's universalist approach, focusing on spiritual realization, interfaith harmony, and the unity of all religions.

Students will also learn about the lasting impact these two had on society. Dayanand Saraswati's ideas contributed to religious reform in India, while Vivekananda's teachings inspired a global audience and continue to influence individuals in their spiritual quests. Lastly, the lessons encourage students to think critically about the different approaches of these two prominent figures, fostering a deeper understanding of the complexity and diversity of India's social and spiritual landscape in the 19th century.

## **2.2. Introduction**

The early nineteenth century in India was marked by significant socio-religious reforms that aimed to challenge and transform traditional practices and beliefs prevalent in Indian society. These reform movements emerged in response to the changing socio-political landscape, British colonial influence, and the need to address various social, cultural, and religious issues that were hindering progress and causing inequalities. The early 19th century in India marked a period of profound transformation and socio-religious awakening. It was an era when individuals and movements arose with a fervent commitment to challenge the status quo, rectify social injustices, and reevaluate religious practices. These socio-religious reformers, often referred to as the torchbearers of change, played a pivotal role in shaping the course of Indian society. With a vision of progress, equality, and a more enlightened future, they initiated a wave of reforms that transcended religious boundaries and left an indelible mark on the Indian subcontinent. This period of socio-religious reform represents a significant chapter in India's history, where tradition met modernity, and the quest for a just and inclusive society began in earnest. In this introduction, we will explore the key figures, movements, and ideas that characterized this transformative era of Indian history.

These reform movements can be broadly categorized into three major phases: the Brahmo Samaj movement, the Arya Samaj movement, and the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement. These were the earliest socio-religious reform movements in modern India. The Brahmo Samaj, founded in 1828 by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, was a pioneering Indian socio-religious reform movement. It aimed to promote monotheism, rationalism, and social reform within Hinduism. The Brahmo Samaj advocated for the abolition of regressive practices like Sati, child marriage, and caste discrimination. It played a crucial role in India's journey towards modernization, religious tolerance, and social justice. The movement continues to be a significant influence in India's religious and social landscape.

The Arya Samaj, established by Swami Dayananda Saraswati in 1875, was a prominent socio-religious reform movement in India. It advocated for the revival of Vedic ideals and the promotion of monotheism. The Arya Samaj rejected idol worship, caste distinctions, and encouraged social and educational reforms. It has had a lasting impact on Indian society and is known for its commitment to promoting Vedic knowledge and social equality. The Ramakrishna Mission, founded by Swami Vivekananda in 1897, is a renowned spiritual and humanitarian organization based on the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. It focuses on the principles of selfless service, spiritual development, and the harmony of religions. The mission runs numerous educational, medical, and relief activities to serve society and has centres both in India and around the world. It plays a pivotal role in promoting the values of compassion, tolerance, and social welfare.

Although Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Dayananda Saraswati and Swami Vivekananda spoke about need for reforms in Hindu society, the reforms in general weren't restricted to it. Sir Sayed Ahmed Khan's Aligarh movement in late 19<sup>th</sup> century, when India was gaining political momentum in its quest for independence, aimed to promote modern education and social reform among Muslims in India. It led to the establishment of the Aligarh Muslim University, which became a symbol of educational empowerment for Muslims. The movement emphasized the importance of English education, scientific knowledge, and a rational outlook, helping to bridge the gap between traditional Islamic learning and contemporary education. Sir Syed's efforts played a crucial role in the socio-economic and educational upliftment of the Muslim community in India. Focused on the upliftment of the Muslim community from the

backwardness by introducing them to modern education. It sought to blend oriental knowledge with the western knowledge. Jyotirao Phule's Satya Shodhak Samaj was a significant socio-religious reform movement in India. It aimed to uplift and empower marginalized communities, particularly the Dalits and the lower castes. The movement challenged caste-based discrimination and advocated for social equality, education, and the rights of the oppressed. Phule's work through the Satya Shodhak Samaj contributed to the broader social reform movements in India and played a pivotal role in addressing caste-based injustices.

The Theosophical Society, founded by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, Henry Steel Olcott, and William Quan Judge in 1875, was a spiritual organization that explored the esoteric and mystical aspects of religion and philosophy. It seeks to promote universal brotherhood, comparative religion, and the study of ancient wisdom traditions. The society has had a global influence and continues to encourage spiritual exploration, dialogue, and the search for common threads among world religions and philosophies. Satya Shodhak Samaj challenged the caste based discrimination and advocated for education of women.

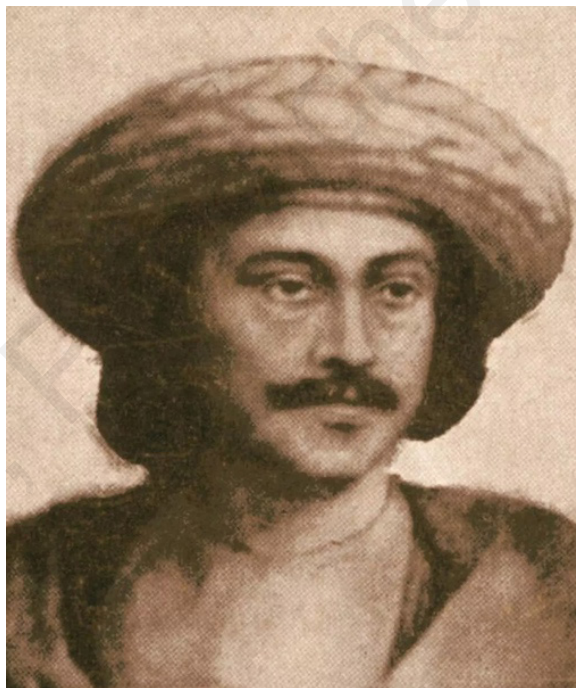
In the 19th century, India witnessed a wave of socio-religious reform movements aimed at challenging traditional practices and fostering social justice and modernization. Prominent figures like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Vivekananda, and Dayananda Saraswati founded movements like the Brahmo Samaj, Ramakrishna Mission, and Arya Samaj. These movements focused on eradicating regressive customs, promoting education, and advocating for social equality. The Aligarh Movement and the Theosophical Society contributed to education and spiritual exploration. Satya Shodhak Samaj addressed caste based discrimination and campaigned for its abolition. These reform efforts were aimed to create a more inclusive, tolerant, and equitable Indian society by blending traditional values with modern ideals.

### **2.3. Social and Religious Reforms in the Early Nineteenth Century**

In the early nineteenth century, India underwent significant social and religious reforms that aimed to address various issues prevailing in society and challenged traditional practices. The journey of religious reforms began in the 19th century and continued into the early 20th century. This period marked a significant shift in religious and social consciousness, with notable figures such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Vivekananda,

and Mahatma Gandhi playing key roles. These reformers advocated for various changes, including the eradication of social evils like Sati and untouchability, the promotion of religious tolerance and unity, and a call for a more rational and inclusive interpretation of religious texts. These reforms were pivotal in shaping modern India's religious landscape and promoting a more inclusive and progressive society. These reforms were often driven by the need to modernize, promote equality, and improve the lives of marginalized groups. Some of the notable social and religious reform movements during this period include:

- I. **Brahmo Samaj:** The Brahmo Samaj was a prominent socio-religious reform movement in India during the 19th century. Founded by Raja Ram Mohan Roy in 1828, it aimed to promote monotheism, rationalism, and social reform within Hinduism. The Brahmo Samaj sought to discard idol worship, caste distinctions, and various superstitions, emphasizing the worship of one formless God. It had a significant impact on the broader Indian reform movement, laying the foundation for religious and social changes in the country.



Raja Ram Mohan Roy

Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833) was a pioneering social and religious reformer in India during the 19th century. He was born in Bengal and is often referred to as the “Father of the Indian Renaissance.” His life and work were characterized by a dedication to advocating for progressive social and religious change. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was a prolific writer and knew Sanskrit, Persian and was an influential figure in the 19th-century Indian reform movement. He wrote and published numerous books and articles advocating for social and religious reform. Some of his notable publications include- Gifts to Monotheists and Debates on Theological Affairs of the Hindu (1814), and Mirat-ul-Akbar and Sambad Kaumudi were two most influential newspapers edited by him.

Swami Dayanand Saraswati (1824-1883) was a prominent Indian religious and social reformer. He was born in Gujarat, India, and is known for founding the Arya Samaj, a reformist Hindu movement. Through the samaj, Swami Dayanand Saraswati actively promoted Vedic Values, monotheism and social reforms. He advocated for rejection of idol worship, superstitions, caste based discriminations and promoted the importance of education especially women. Swami opposed child marriage and campaigned for widow remarriage.

Swami Dayanand Saraswati was prolific writer. He authored several books including ‘Satyarth Prakash’ which was published in 1875.

Swami passed away in 1883, but his legacy continues to influence Hindu reform movements and modern Indian thought.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy through the samaj sought to eliminate social evils such as practice of Sati and child marriage. He advocated for reason rather than blind faith in religion. The Brahmo Samaj played a crucial role in advocating for the abolition of the practice of Sati in India. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, a key figure in the Brahmo Samaj, actively campaigned against this harmful tradition. His efforts led to the passage of the Sati Regulation Act in 1829 by the British authorities, which marked the beginning of the end of the Sati system. This social contribution helped save the lives of countless women and significantly improved the status of women in Indian society.



The Brahmo Samaj also made a significant contribution to education in India by advocating for and establishing educational institutions based on modern and rational principles. Prominent Brahmo reformers like Keshab Chander Sen and Dwarkanath Tagore were instrumental in founding schools and colleges that emphasized scientific, secular, and Western-style education. Their efforts helped promote modern education in India, paving the way for the development of a more enlightened and progressive society. Hindu College, established in 1817 in Kolkata, India, was one of the earliest educational institutions in the country. It played a vital role in promoting Western-style education and fostering a sense of nationalistic identity during the early 19th century. Vedanta College, founded in 1825 in Calcutta (now Kolkata), was another significant educational institution during the 19th century. It was established by Raja Ram Mohan Roy to teach the principles of Vedanta and modern sciences. Vedanta College contributed to the spread of rational and progressive ideas in India and played a crucial role in the Brahmo Samaj's educational and philosophical initiatives.

- II. **Arya Samaj:** Swami Dayanand Saraswati founded the Arya Samaj in the year 1875 with a aim to reform the Hindu society of its regressive practices. The samaj championed a range of social reforms aimed at revitalizing and purifying Hindu society. The Arya Samaj stressed the importance of adhering to Vedic teachings and values, emphasizing monotheism and the rejection of idol worship and superstitions.

The movement advocated for women's education and worked to uplift the status of women in society, encouraging their participation in various fields, including education and public life. Arya Samaj vehemently opposed the practice of child marriage and advocated for the marriageable age to be raised, which contributed to legal reforms in this regard.

The Arya Samaj campaigned against untouchability and the caste system, advocating for social equality and integration, the movement supported the remarriage of widows, challenging the prevailing social norms that stigmatized widows and denied them the opportunity to remarry, and actively promoted social justice and equal rights, advocating for the abolition of oppressive practices and the betterment of marginalized sections of society.



Swami Dayanand Saraswati

Swami Dayanand Saraswati (1824-1883) was a prominent Indian religious and social reformer. He was born in Gujarat, India, and is known for founding the Arya Samaj, a reformist Hindu movement. Through the samaj, Swami Dayanand Saraswati actively promoted Vedic Values, monotheism and social reforms. He advocated for rejection of idol worship, superstitions, caste based discriminations and promoted the importance of education especially women. Swami opposed child marriage and campaigned for widow remarriage.

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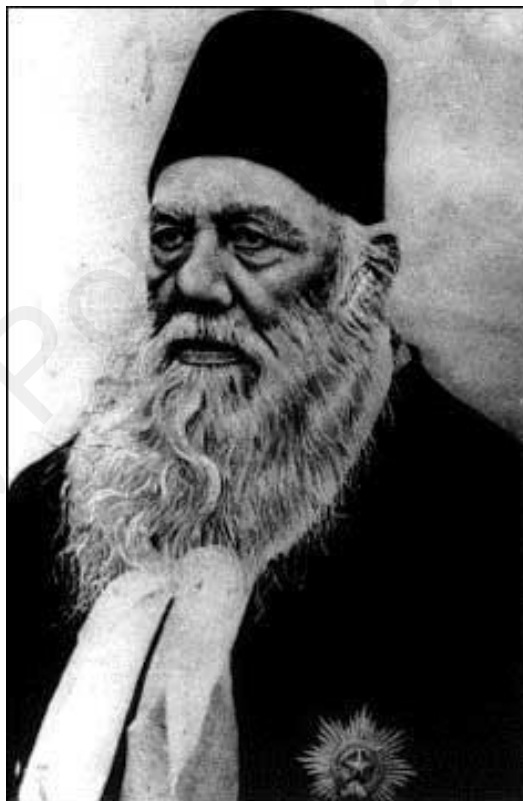
Swami passed away in 1883, but his legacy continues to influence Hindu reform movements and modern Indian thought.

The way advocated for the reform was going back to studying Vedas as the original sources of knowledge. The Arya Samaj's social reforms were rooted in a return to the ancient Vedic values while challenging regressive



practices within Hindu society. These efforts had a significant impact on social progress and contributed to the broader reform movements in India during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

III. **Aligarh Movement:** The movement was led by Sir Sayed Ahmed Khan, a pioneer Indian Muslim scholar and reformer. His contributions significantly shaped the intellectual and educational landscape of India, particularly for the Muslim population. The Aligarh movement focused on modern education and upliftment of the Muslims through educational and socio-economic reforms. He blamed prevailing education system for the backwardness of the Muslim community and sought to bring change through modern education. Aligarh Movement began in 1875 to persuade the Muslim community to Western scientific education by this it aimed to bridge the gap between traditional Islamic knowledge and modern science. The establishment of Muhammadan Anglo-oriental college in 1857 gave impetus to the intellectual, cultural, educational and social regeneration of the Muslim society.



Sir Sayed Ahmed Khan

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (1817-1898) was an influential Indian Muslim scholar, educator, and social reformer. His significant contributions include the promotion of modern education for the Muslim community in 19th-century India and the establishment of the Aligarh Movement. Sir Syed's founding of Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) in 1875 was a pivotal development that provided Western-style education while preserving Muslim cultural and religious identity. He was a proponent of rationalism, advocated for women's education, and opposed traditional practices such as purdah and polygamy. His work has left a lasting impact on the intellectual and social fabric of India and has influenced the modern educational landscape for Muslims in the country. Sir Syed authored several books, including "Asar-us-Sanadid" and "Asar-us-Sanadid-e-Bahriyah," which were focused on Indian history and architecture.

The institution aimed to provide western education while also preserving and promoting the cultural religious identity of Muslims. Sir Sayed worked for various social reforms within the Muslim community, including advocating for the education of women and opposing practices like purdah and polygamy. His efforts greatly influenced the intellectual and social landscape of 19th-century India, especially for the Muslim community. He is often referred to as the "Father of the Two-Nation Theory," a concept that would later have a significant impact on the partition of India. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's legacy endures through Aligarh Muslim University and his pioneering work in promoting modern education and social reforms among Indian Muslims. His contributions have had a lasting impact on the development of Indian society and its educational system.

IV. **Theosophical Society:** The society was founded in New York City in the year 1857 by Helena Blavatsky and Henry Steel Olcott with an objective to forge brotherhood among men, encourage the study of comparative religion, philosophy and science. It promoted the understanding of spiritual knowledge and philosophy. The Theosophical Society played a significant role in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in popularizing Eastern spiritual ideas in the West and fostering an interest in mysticism and esoteric knowledge. The Theosophical Society made several notable contributions to the spiritual and philosophical landscape of the late 19th and early

20th centuries. First and foremost, it introduced Western audiences to Eastern spiritual and mystical traditions, including Buddhism, Hinduism, and Theosophy itself, which blended elements of these traditions. The society's emphasis on the unity of all religions and the exploration of universal spiritual truths helped foster religious tolerance and a broader understanding of world faiths. Additionally, the Theosophical Society was one of the earliest proponents of the idea of women's rights and gender equality, with prominent female leaders like Helena Petrovna Blavatsky. Its influence on the New Age movement and the popularization of esoteric and mystical concepts in the West continues to be felt in modern spirituality and philosophy.

The Theosophical Society's headquarters, known as the "Adyar" branch, is situated in Chennai, India. Established in 1882, it has been a central hub for the society's activities in India and around the world. This branch played a crucial role in the propagation of Theosophy, the study of comparative religion, and the promotion of spiritual and philosophical exploration. The serene setting of the Adyar campus, along the banks of the Adyar River, provides a peaceful environment for research, meditation, and the dissemination of Theosophical teachings. It remains a significant center for those interested in the society's spiritual and philosophical pursuits.

The Theosophical Society, has made indirect contributions to the Indian freedom movement. While not a political organization, its influence on the intellectual and spiritual landscape of India had some impact on the quest for freedom. Prominent Indian leaders, including Annie Besant and A.O. Hume, who were members of the Theosophical Society, played dual roles as both theosophists and freedom fighters. The society's emphasis on universal brotherhood and the exploration of spiritual and philosophical truths fostered an environment of unity, tolerance, and social reform. It contributed to a sense of cohesion among diverse communities and encouraged them to work collectively for social and political progress. Although not a direct participant in the political struggles, the Theosophical Society nurtured ideas of unity and social justice that were essential to the broader Indian freedom movement.



Jyoti Rao Phule

Jyotirao Phule (1827-1890) was a pioneering social reformer and educator in 19th-century India. Born into a lower-caste family in Pune, he faced the harsh realities of caste-based discrimination and limited access to education. Alongside his wife, Savitribai Phule, he established one of the first schools for girls in India, breaking societal norms. Jyotirao Phule's relentless efforts extended to the founding of the Satyashodhak Samaj, which aimed to eradicate the oppressive caste system and promote social equality. His literary contributions, including "Gulamgiri" and "Sarvajanik Satyadharma," challenged orthodoxy and advocated for rational and humanitarian interpretations of religious texts.

**Satya Shodhak Samaj:** It was founded by Jyotirao Phule in the year 1873. The name "Satyashodhak" means "Truth Seeker," reflecting the movement's core mission. The movement challenged the caste based discrimination and oppressions faced by the lower caste communities. It advocated for the social justice and equality. Through the samaj, Phule denounced caste discrimination and opposed idolatry. The emphasis was given more to education as that was the means for emancipation for large section of the untouchable community. Savitribai Phule and Jyotirao Phule were pioneer

of women's education in early India, they advocated for the empowerment through education for all. The Samaj rejected orthodox religious practices and rituals, advocating for a more rational and humane interpretation of religious texts. It played a crucial role in fighting against social inequalities, caste-based discrimination, and the unjust hierarchies within Indian society, leaving a lasting legacy in the struggle for social justice.

Phule's enduring legacy lies in his unwavering dedication to social reform, inspiring generations of activists and contributing significantly to the fight against caste-based discrimination and social inequality in India. Phule's pioneering work in education, particularly for marginalized communities and women, laid the foundation for greater inclusivity in Indian society. His advocacy for rationalism and his critique of religious orthodoxy contributed to a more enlightened and critical intellectual environment. Phule's influence extended to later social reformers like B.R. Ambedkar, whose work was instrumental in shaping India's Constitution and policies for social justice. Jyotirao Phule's legacy continues to inspire generations of activists and remains central to the ongoing struggle for equality, education, and social reform in India.

#### TO REMEMBER

The 19th century in India was marked by a surge in socio-religious movements that sought to address various social injustices and reform outdated religious practices. Key movements included the Brahmo Samaj, founded by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, which advocated monotheism and rationalism, and played a pivotal role in the abolition of Sati and the promotion of religious tolerance. The Arya Samaj, initiated by Swami Dayanand Saraswati, emphasized the study of the Vedas, monotheism, and social reforms. The Aligarh Movement, led by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, aimed to modernize and educate Muslims. The Theosophical Society, founded by Blavatsky and Olcott, introduced Eastern spiritual ideas to the West. These movements, though diverse in their approaches and objectives, collectively contributed to the reshaping of Indian society, fostering greater tolerance, modernization, and social justice. They laid the foundation for the broader reform movements and the fight for independence that would characterize the 20th century in India.

**Check Your Progress**

- a) What were the main objectives and principles of the Brahmo Samaj, and how did Raja Ram Mohan Roy contribute to the socio-religious reforms of 19<sup>th</sup> century India.
- b) How did the Arya Samaj, led by Swami Dayanand Saraswati, differ from the Brahmo Samaj in its approach to reforms?
- c) In what ways did the socio-religious movements of the 19<sup>th</sup> century contribute to the broader social and political changes in India?
- d) What were the contribution of Brahmo Samaj in eradicating social evil such as Sati and Child marriage?
- e) Who established Theosophical Society? Explain its objectives.
- f) Who established Satya Shodhak Samaj? And what was its role in eradicating untouchability in society?
- g) Explain the contributions of Sir Sayed Ahmed khan in bringing socio-religious reforms in Muslim community?
- h) Briefly write a note on Arya Samaj and Aligarh Movement. And explain their major contributions to the socio-religious reforms in early 19<sup>th</sup> century India.

**Fill in the blanks.**

- a. The ..... Samaj, founded by Swami Dayanand Saraswati, emphasized the importance of returning to original teachings of the Vedas and rejected idol worship.
- b. The ..... movement, led by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, aimed at modernizing Muslim community.
- c. Brahmo Samaj was founded in the year 1828 by.....
- d. .... were the objectives of the theosophical society.
- e. .... were the pioneers of women's education in 19<sup>th</sup> century India.
- f. ....gave call to "Go Back to Vedas."
- g. Jyotirao Phule established .....samaj to carry out socio-religious reforms.

## 2.4. Swami Dayanand Saraswati: Mission and Reforms

Dayanand Saraswati was a prominent social reformer of the nineteenth century India. He was born as Mool Shankar Tiwari in Tankara, on 12 February 1824 in Gujarat. Since young age he displayed strong inclination towards spiritual and critical approach to religious practices, leading him to leave home at young age in pursuit of education. After wandering through various regions and engaging in rigorous self-study, he encountered a yogi who became his spiritual teacher. This encounter influenced him and set him on a path of spiritual awakening and reform. He founded the Arya Samaj in 1875, a socio-religious movement that aimed to promote the study of Veda. He campaigned against caste-based discrimination, idol worship and other prevailing social customs. His teachings emphasized the importance of the Vedas, rational thinking, and social reforms. Swami Dayanand Saraswati along with Raja Ram Mohan Roy were leading intellectuals of the Indian renaissance movement in the nineteenth century. He believed in the infallibility of the Vedas and rejected all other texts. His book “Sathyartha Prakash” remains highly influential text on the philosophy of the Vedas. The books bring out the idea of god as an ‘active agent’, where the empirical world is no illusion but has an objective existence and laments on the divisive nature of Hindu society. Dayanand Saraswati emphasized the idea of “Back to the Vedas.” He believed that the Vedas contained the true knowledge of God and the universe, and advocated for a return to the original teachings of the Vedas, rejecting later commentaries and interpretations.

### 2.4.1. Mission and Reforms

Swami Dayanand Saraswati’s missions and reforms covered issues from religion, social, cultural, and educational within Hindu society. Swami Dayanand Saraswati, was a renowned social and religious reformer of the 19th century, was known for his mission to bring about a resurgence of Vedic values and rational thinking in Indian society. Dayanand Saraswati advocated for a return to the pure teachings of the Vedas and emphasized the importance of reason and logic in spiritual matters. His reform activities included campaigns against child marriage, the caste system, and untouchability. He believed in women’s education and played a significant role in improving the status of women in society. Dayanand Saraswati’s mission had a profound impact on Indian society, laying the foundation for a more progressive and enlightened approach to religion, social justice,



and education. His legacy continues to inspire those dedicated to social and religious reform, as his efforts laid the groundwork for a more progressive and enlightened India. Dayanand Saraswati's early life experiences, including his quest for knowledge and his spiritual awakening, played a pivotal role in shaping his mission and vision for the reform of Indian society.

- I. **Establishment of Arya Samaj:** Swami Dayanand Saraswati's most enduring legacy was the founding of the Arya Samaj in Bombay in 1875, a socio-religious organization dedicated to the principles of Vedic reform, social upliftment, and the promotion of a monotheistic worldview. The Arya Samaj played a central role in spreading his mission and teachings. Through Samaj, he sought to revive the glory of the Vedas as a true knowledge. He encouraged people to study Vedas in original Sanskrit form rather than corrupt interpretations. He opposed idol worship and propagated the worship of one true formless God. He also advocated for the equality of women in society. He challenged traditional practice of child marriage and encouraged widow remarriages. Dayanand Saraswati was a social reformer with almost no interest in politics. Therefore, the role of the samaj was scripted accordingly. Perhaps, the samaj in infancy would not have survived the political might of the British and Dayanand Saraswati was careful in making Arya samaj non-political.
- II. **Reform in Hinduism:** Swami Dayananda Saraswati's primary mission was to reform Hinduism by advocating a return to the original teachings of the Vedas. He believed that over time, Hinduism had become laden with superstitious practices, ritualistic complexities, and deviations from the true teachings of the Vedas. His mission was to cleanse Hinduism of these corruptions and to promote a more rational and ethical interpretation of the Vedic scriptures. Key reforms included the promotion of monotheism and the worship of one formless, omnipotent God, challenging idol worship and polytheism. The Arya Samaj vehemently opposed the caste system and untouchability, advocating for social and political equality. They emphasized the importance of a rational and scientific approach to religious matters, rejecting superstitions and rituals that had strayed from Vedic teachings. These reforms contributed to a more progressive and inclusive interpretation of Hinduism, fostering greater unity and social justice within the religion.



III. **Social Reforms:** His mission extended beyond religious reform to encompass social issues. He was a strong critic of social inequalities perpetuated by the caste system and untouchability. He called for the eradication of caste distinctions and advocated for social equality and justice. He encouraged inter-dining and inter-marriage to break away from the scourge of the caste.

IV. **Promotion of Education:** He recognized the importance of education for individual and societal progress. He believed that education was essential for the moral and intellectual development of individuals and for the betterment of society as a whole. He encouraged the spread of modern education alongside Vedic studies. The Arya Samaj, under the leadership of Swami Dayanand Saraswati, was a staunch advocate for education. As part of their broader reform agenda, the Arya Samaj placed significant emphasis on the promotion of education. They believed that education was the key to enlightenment, empowerment, and social progress. The Samaj established a network of schools and educational institutions across India, with a particular focus on disseminating Vedic knowledge and promoting a rational, scientific approach to learning.

Swami Dayanand Saraswati with his Samaj brought in spiritual and cultural revival of the Hindu society. Fought and advocated shelving of dogmatic and evil practices that has hampered Hindu society for far too long. He called for eradication of untouchability and encouraged inter-dining to break the barriers. He gave the call 'Go Back to Vedas' to revive the glory and the true source of knowledge. He sought to unify the Hindu society by removing discriminatory practices and discouraged the conversion to other faiths. They actively promoted education, particularly for girls and women, and encouraged a rational and scientific approach to religious and social matters. The Arya Samaj's legacy endures in the form of educational institutions and a continued commitment to social justice, rationalism, and an enlightened interpretation of Hinduism.

### Check Your Progress

- a) Who was Swami Dayanand Saraswati, and what were his main contributions to the socio-religious reform movements in 19<sup>th</sup> century India?
- b) What were the core beliefs and principles of Arya Samaj, and how did they differ from traditional Hindu practice?

- c) How did the Arya Samaj promote education and social equality, and what were the key social reforms they advocated for the Indian society?
- d) What is the significance of the Arya Samaj's emphasis on rationalism and the rejection of idol worship in Hinduism?
- e) How has the legacy of Dayanand Saraswati and Arya Samaj influenced modern Indian society, particularly in terms of education, social reforms, and religious thought?

**Fill in the Blanks.**

- a. The ..... was founded in 1875 by .....
- b. The Arya Samaj aimed to reform Hinduism by emphasizing ..... the rejection of ..... , and return of the teachings of.....
- c. Swami Dayanand Saraswati was a staunch advocate for ..... And ....., believing that education was key to enlightenment and social progress.....
- d. The Arya samaj strongly opposed the ..... system and untouchability, advocating for social and political ..... among all Hindus.
- e. They also promoted women's..... and participation in various fields, challenging traditional norms.

**2.5. Swami Vivekanand: Concept of Freedom, Nationalism, and Politics**

Swami Vivekananda was born on 12 January 1863 in the present-day Kolkata. Born as Narendranath Datta was raised in middle class family. He was attracted to spirituality from a very young age and was fascinated by the wandering monks. In college he studied wide range of subjects, including philosophy, arts, literature, religion, and history. He met Ramakrishna Paramahansa in the year 1881. Over the period of next five years Vivekananda grew closer to the idea of spirituality espoused by Ramakrishna. He was deeply influenced by the teachings of Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Ramakrishna Math was founded in 1886.

Swami Vivekananda held profound reverence for his guru, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, and often referred to him as the "Paramahansa" or the Supreme Swan. He regarded Ramakrishna as the embodiment of spiritual

realization and the living proof of the highest truths of Vedanta. Vivekananda saw in Ramakrishna a perfect example of the harmony of all religions and the living realization of the Divine. He believed that Ramakrishna's teachings and experiences demonstrated that the essence of all faiths leads to the same ultimate truth, emphasizing the universality of spiritual realization. Vivekananda's deep respect and love for Ramakrishna were a central part of his own spiritual journey and a key element of his teachings.



Swami Vivekananda

Swami Vivekananda, born as Narendranath Datta on January 12, 1863 was an prominent Indian monk and philosopher who left an indelible mark on the world through his teachings and speeches. He is renowned for his eloquent address at the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago, where he emphasized the importance of religious tolerance and the unity of all faiths. After his return to India, Vivekananda founded the Ramakrishna Mission, a spiritual and humanitarian organization that aimed to promote the principles of service, self-realization, and the unity of all religions. He wrote extensively on a wide range of subjects, including Vedanta, yoga, and the application of spiritual principles to practical life. His writings include books like "Raja Yoga," "Karma Yoga," and "Jnana Yoga," which continue to be influential today. Swami Vivekananda passed away on July 4, 1902, at the young age of 39. However, his legacy endures through his writings, the Ramakrishna Mission, and the worldwide followers he inspired.

Vivekananda advocated the practice of yoga and meditation as a tool for self-realization and spiritual growth. His teachings were rooted in Vedanta, which explored the idea of nature of reality. His moment of greatness came in 1893, when he attended the World's Parliament of Religion in Chicago. He began his speech with 'Brother and Sisters of America' and introduced Hinduism and its philosophies to the west. He spoke on religious tolerance and universalism of the truth. While many became his admirers for introducing the Hinduism to the west. Some like, Sister Nivedita, born Margaret Noble, became disciple. She played a significant role in promoting his teachings and the ideals of Indian culture. After meeting Vivekananda in London, she travelled to India in 1898, where she dedicated her life to social work, education, and the empowerment of Indian women. Her contributions included the establishment of a girls' school and her active involvement in the Swadeshi movement. Nivedita authored several books, including "The Master as I Saw Him," where she shared her experiences with Vivekananda. She was a key figure in bridging the East-West cultural divide and remains an inspiration for her commitment to India and its spiritual heritage.

Swami Dayanand Saraswati and Swami Vivekananda were two prominent spiritual leaders of 19th-century India, but they held different

philosophies and had distinct approaches to their teachings. Dayanand Saraswati, the founder of the Arya Samaj, was known for his emphasis on religious and social reform. He advocated the purification of Hinduism by returning to the Vedas, rejecting idol worship, and championing social issues like the abolition of caste discrimination and promotion of women's education. On the other hand, Swami Vivekananda, a disciple of Ramakrishna Paramahansa, focused on the spiritual and philosophical aspects of Hinduism and the universal truths in all religions. He stressed the importance of self-realization and direct experience of the Divine. Vivekananda's teachings revolved around the idea of harmony among religions and service to humanity, and he played a pivotal role in spreading the message of Vedanta to the Western world.

While both Dayanand Saraswati and Swami Vivekananda were influential figures in India's spiritual and reform movements, their approaches and emphases differed. Dayanand Saraswati was primarily concerned with religious and social reform within Hinduism, while Vivekananda's teachings were more universal in nature and focused on the spiritual evolution of individuals and the promotion of interfaith harmony.

Even on the idea of God, Dayanand Saraswati's thoughts varied from Vivekananda's. The difference not only lay in the visualization of the God and its attributes but the construct of the Hindu universality.

Dayanand Saraswati had a monotheistic perspective on God. He emphasized the existence of a singular, formless God (Nirguna Brahman) as described in the ancient Vedic scriptures. Dayanand Saraswati's vision of God was consistent with the Vedic tradition, and he rejected idol worship and polytheism. He sought to purify Hinduism by adhering strictly to the Vedic teachings and propagating a strict monotheistic approach.

Swami Vivekananda's concept of God was more inclusive and aligned with the teachings of his guru, Ramakrishna Paramahansa. He recognized the diversity of religious paths and believed that different individuals might have their unique ways of approaching and realizing the Divine. Vivekananda embraced both monotheistic and polytheistic interpretations of God. He often spoke of the impersonal, formless aspect of the Divine (Nirguna Brahman) as well as the personal, deities of various religions. His central message was that all religions lead to the same ultimate truth, and individuals should choose a path that resonates with their temperament and culture.

### 2.5.1. Concept of Freedom

Swami Vivekananda's concept of freedom was rooted in spiritual and philosophical teachings. His idea of freedom was closely associated with Vedanta and interpretations of Hindu spirituality. His philosophy emphasized not only political and social freedoms but also spiritual liberation and self-realization. His concept of freedom extended beyond the realm of material gains. For true freedom and becoming one with divinity he advocated liberation through spiritual awakening, which is to be the goal of human life. Another important aspect of his idea of freedom was freedom from ignorance, which he believed was the root cause of all suffering and bondage. For that he advocated the pursuit of knowledge and expansion of consciousness to overcome ignorance. He emphasized on the harmony of body, mind, and spirit to achieve inner peace and spiritual liberation.

He also emphasized on the importance of using one's freedom to serve humanity and that way freedom can be realized when one dedicates their life in the service of society and others. Romain Rolland, the renowned French writer and Nobel laureate, held a deep admiration for Swami Vivekananda and his ideas. In his biography of Vivekananda, titled "The Life of Vivekananda and the Universal Gospel," Rolland recognized Vivekananda's significant role in advocating for political and social change in India. He saw Vivekananda's quest for spiritual and individual freedom as intricately linked to his vision of political freedom. Vivekananda's call for political freedom was rooted in his belief that it was a prerequisite for individuals to have the opportunity to explore and practice their spiritual beliefs without external constraints.

Nationalism was a prominent theme in his thoughts, he recognized the importance of political and social freedom as the foundation for not only the individual's growth but the nation itself. His advocacy for the upliftment of the downtrodden, eradication of social inequalities, and promotion of religious harmony, rights tell us that every individual should have opportunity to live a life of dignity, free from oppression and discriminations.

To understand the concept of freedom and what it meant to Vivekananda, we would draw some thought on Tagore's and Dayanand Saraswati's view on freedom. Tagore's concept of freedom was more aligned with humanism and the celebration of the human spirit. He believed in

the freedom of thought, expression, and creativity. Tagore emphasized the importance of artistic and intellectual freedom, advocating for the free flow of ideas and the expression of one's inner self. He was a staunch advocate of individualism and saw freedom as the foundation of creativity and self-expression. Tagore's works, including his poetry and essays, often revolved around the idea that true freedom came from the unfettered expression of one's thoughts and emotions. Now, Dayanand Saraswati's concept of freedom was deeply rooted in religious and social reform. He believed in the freedom to return to the Vedic scriptures and the ancient values of Hinduism, advocating for the rejection of what he saw as corruptions and innovations that had crept into the religion. He sought to free Hinduism from the shackles of ritualism, idol worship, and caste discrimination. His idea of freedom was about purifying and returning to the true essence of the religion, aligning it with the principles he believed were outlined in the Vedas.

In summary, while both Vivekananda and Tagore valued freedom, their perspectives on it were distinct. Vivekananda's focus was on spiritual and individual liberation, with external freedoms being instrumental to that end. Tagore, on the other hand, emphasized the freedom of thought and expression as an inherent and essential aspect of human existence, celebrating individualism and creativity and Dayanand Saraswati's concept of freedom was rooted in religious and social reforms, where he expressed the need to look back the ancient wisdom for unfettering yourself from the corruption.

### **2.5.2. Nationalism**

Swami Vivekananda is primarily known for his teachings on spirituality and philosophy, but he also had distinct views on politics and nationalism. He believed that spiritual transformation was essential to the progress of the nation. His views were shaped by his deep understanding of Hindu philosophy, spirituality and concern for the people of the country. His strong sense of nationalism is rooted in the spiritual and cultural heritage of India. He emphasized the importance of recognizing and preserving India's ancient wisdom, traditions, and values. He considered the idea of a united India, encompassing its diverse cultures and religions, as essential for its progress and well-being. Vivekananda saw spirituality as the unifying force that could transcend the differences and divisions within Indian society.



Although, a spiritual teacher he acknowledged the role of politics in shaping a nation's destiny. He believed that spirituality and politics should not be separate, but rather, they should complement each other. He urged his fellow Indians to integrate spiritual principles into their political actions, emphasizing the need for ethical governance, social justice, and the welfare of the masses. He cautioned against materialistic and self-serving political motives that could lead to corruption and exploitation. Vivekananda stressed the importance of selfless service to humanity as a fundamental aspect of both spirituality and nationalism. He believed that true patriots should work towards the upliftment of the less fortunate, addressing issues such as poverty, illiteracy, and social inequality. He saw service to others as a means of realizing one's own spiritual potential and contributing to the overall well-being of the nation.

One of Vivekananda's most significant contributions was his articulation of the concept of universal brotherhood. He advocated for the idea that all religions are pathways to the same truth and that humanity should move beyond religious divisions. He believed that recognizing the inherent unity of all people would lead to a more harmonious and peaceful society. He believed that true nationalism should be rooted in the idea of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" (the world is one family), a concept he introduced to the world at the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago. He saw the diversity of religious and cultural traditions as valuable contributions to a nation's strength and believed that a nation's greatness lay in embracing all faiths and philosophies. Vivekananda's nationalism was not confined to narrow boundaries but extended to the larger human family, promoting interfaith harmony and cooperation among nations.

Swami Vivekananda views on politics and nationalism were deeply rooted in spiritual teachings. He saw expression of love and responsibility for one's own country. His teaching- integration of spirituality, selfless service, and ethical governance is to create a harmonious societies.

Also, on many accounts Tagore could agree with Vivekananda and for that matter Aurobindo's on centrality of the Vedas and Upanishads in shaping the Indian society, but he would dismiss ancient texts saying they cannot form the heart of the Indian society. Similarly, Tagore's idea of nationalism was too radical for nationalist themselves, such that nationalism is colonial concept and such a thing is not natural to Indian



society. Also, he is dismissive of masculine nationalism saying it is an ideological project which divides the community and destroys it.

Further, Swami Dayanand Saraswati had a more traditional and territorial view of nationalism. He was an advocate for the revival of Vedic traditions in India and sought to promote a “Hindu Rashtra,” where the Hindu way of life and religion would form the basis of the nation. His vision of nationalism was rooted in the idea of protecting and preserving the cultural and religious identity of the Hindu community. Dayanand Saraswati’s perspective on nationalism was influenced by a desire to reform and strengthen Hinduism and align the nation’s identity with these religious and cultural values.

Therefore, it could be said that, Vivekananda’s perspective on nationalism was more universal and inclusive, emphasizing the unity of all religions and the importance of transcending national boundaries. Dayanand Saraswati’s perspective, in contrast, was more aligned with traditional and territorial notions of nationalism, emphasizing the protection and promotion of Hindu culture and religion as the foundation of the nation.

### 2.5.3. Politics

Swami Vivekananda had a unique and holistic perspective on politics. While he was primarily known as a spiritual leader, his views on politics were influenced by his deep understanding of human nature, ethics, and the interconnectedness of life. Vivekananda believed that politics and spirituality were not separate entities but intertwined aspects of human existence.

Vivekananda saw politics as a means to fulfil the higher goals of human life. He believed that the primary purpose of political governance should be the welfare and upliftment of the people, addressing their physical, mental, and spiritual needs. He emphasized that the ultimate aim of politics should be the betterment of society and the realization of human potential.

Furthermore, Vivekananda advocated for a just and compassionate form of governance. He promoted the idea that leaders should serve the people selflessly, with a sense of duty and a commitment to the greater good. He envisioned a society where individuals, driven by the principles

of truth, righteousness, and non-violence, would work collectively for the common welfare.

Vivekananda's perspective on politics was marked by an emphasis on moral and ethical values in leadership and a call for individuals to become active and responsible citizens. His vision was that politics should be a tool for creating a just and equitable society, one where every individual had the opportunity to realize their spiritual potential, in line with his broader message of universal brotherhood and the oneness of humanity.

Now, let's see what Mahatma Gandhi said about politics to draw perspective on the concept of politics, and how two spiritual leaders visualized politics in the Indian society. Mahatma Gandhi's ideas on politics are characterized by his unique philosophy of nonviolent resistance, known as "Satyagraha." Gandhi's political thought was deeply rooted in his unwavering commitment to truth, nonviolence, and the pursuit of justice. He believed that politics should be an instrument for social transformation and the betterment of humanity. Gandhi rejected conventional politics based on coercion, oppression, and the use of force. Instead, he advocated for nonviolent civil disobedience as a powerful means to bring about political and social change. He believed that individuals should actively engage in the political process to challenge injustices and advocate for the rights of the marginalized. One of Gandhi's central tenets was the importance of moral integrity in politics. He believed that political leaders and activists should adhere to high ethical standards and live in accordance with the principles they espoused. Gandhi's politics focused on self-sufficiency and the revitalization of rural communities through his concept of "Sarvodaya" or the welfare of all. Gandhi's approach to politics was deeply democratic. He believed in the decentralization of power, giving people at the grassroots level the authority to make decisions that directly affected their lives. This idea is encapsulated in his notion of "Gram Swaraj" or village self-rule.

Therefore, Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi had differing yet complementary ideas of politics. Vivekananda's perspective was rooted in spirituality and universal values, emphasizing the moral and ethical development of individuals as the foundation of a just society. He believed in the unity of all religions and saw politics as a means to promote human welfare and selfless service to society. Gandhi, on the other hand, applied Vivekananda's principles to the realm of practical politics. He championed

the concept of nonviolent resistance (Satyagraha) as a powerful tool for social and political change, using it in the Indian independence movement. Both men shared a commitment to moral integrity in politics, advocating for ethical leadership, nonviolence, and the pursuit of truth. While Vivekananda's vision was more spiritually oriented and philosophical, Gandhi's was grounded in the practical application of these principles in the political arena. Together, their ideas and actions played a crucial role in India's journey toward independence.

## 2.6. Summary

These reform movements collectively sought to address various social issues, challenge oppressive practices, promote education, and stimulate critical thinking. They contributed to the intellectual awakening of Indian society and laid the foundation for future social and political changes. While these movements did bring about significant positive changes, they also faced resistance from conservative elements within society and encountered challenges in translating their ideas into widespread acceptance and implementation. The socio-religious reform movements of the early nineteenth century in India were pivotal in shaping the country's modern identity, as they questioned established norms and worked towards creating a more inclusive, rational, and socially just society. The 19th century in India witnessed a surge of socio-religious reform movements, each driven by distinct objectives aimed at bringing about transformative changes in Indian society.

The primary objectives of these reforms included the eradication of deeply entrenched social ills, such as the caste system, untouchability, and oppressive practices against women. Promoting modern education and rational thinking was another key aim, as reformers believed that education could help eliminate superstition and encourage critical thinking. Religious reform was also a significant focus, with an emphasis on returning to the core values of religions like Hinduism and Islam while shedding ritualistic practices. Promoting social justice, equality, and the rights of marginalized groups, including women and lower castes, were central goals. These movements also contributed to political awareness and nationalism, as they played a crucial role in shaping the trajectory of Indian politics and the fight for independence from British colonial rule. In essence, the 19th century socio-religious reforms were driven by

a vision of a more just, equitable, and enlightened India, both in terms of social practices and political rights.

## 2.7. Keywords

Renaissance, Sati, Infallibility of Vedas, Backward community, Universal brotherhood, Colonial rule.

## 2.8. Self Assessment Questions

1. How did Swami Vivekananda's vision of universal brotherhood and the unity of all religions influence his contributions to the socio-religious reforms of the 19<sup>th</sup> century?
2. What were the key themes and messages that Vivekananda emphasized in his speeches at the World's Parliament of Religions in 1893, and how did they contribute to the broader socio-religious reform movements in India?
3. In what ways did Vivekananda advocate for the upliftment and empowerment of women, and how did this contribute to the reform of gender roles and women's status in 19<sup>th</sup> century India?
4. How did Vivekananda's teachings promote education and rational thinking as tools for individual and societal transformation, and what role did these ideas play in the socio-religious reforms movements?
5. Critically examine the Vivekananda's perspective on the coexistence of science and spirituality, and how did this influence the reformist thinking of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in India?

## Fill in the Blanks

- a. Swami Vivekananda's speech at the World's Parliament of Religions in .....introduced the world to the spiritual heritage of India.
- b. Vivekananda emphasized the importance of self-realization, advocating that individuals recognize their.....potential.
- c. Vivekananda's teachings encouraged individuals to serve humanity.....
- d. Vivekananda played a pivotal role in the revival of Hinduism and the rekindling of national pride in India in the late..... century.

- e. In his teachings, he often referred his guru, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, as..... swan?

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**UNIT - III****Politico-Social Reforms****Structure**

- 3.1. Objectives
- 3.2. Introduction
- 3.3. Dadabhai Nouroji: Socio-Economic and Political Views
  - An Overview
  - 3.3.1. Socio-Economic Views
  - 3.3.2. Political Views
- 3.4. Gopal Krishna Gokhale: Social and Political Views
  - An Overview
  - 3.4.1. Social Views
  - 3.4.2. Political Views
- 3.5. Bal Gangadhar Tilak: Views on Social Reforms and Militant Nationalism.
  - An Overview
  - 3.5.1. Social Reforms
  - 3.5.2. Militant Nationalism
- 3.6. Summary
- 3.7. Keywords
- 3.8. References.

**3.1 Objectives**

The objective of this unit is to appraise the reader about the politico-social reforms of early nineteenth-century India. In this unit, the reader will learn about the contributions of early 19th-century reformers such as Dadabhai Nouroji, Gopal Krishna Gokhale and nationalist Bal Gangadhar Tilak to socio-political reforms and their active participation in the independence movement. Further, the units discuss the British colonial rule on Indian society, including administrative and educational reforms, and how these reforms influenced political awakening. Finally, the units discuss the broader implications of these reforms, including the role of

women in the reform movements and the growth of nationalism in 19th-century India and provide historical context to help readers appreciate the evolution of India's socio-political landscape and its significance in shaping the nation's future.

### 3.2 Introduction

The socio-political reforms of early nineteenth-century India were driven by a range of objectives aimed at addressing various social, cultural, and political challenges the society faced during that time. These reforms were often closely intertwined with the broader context of British colonial rule, as well as the desire to modernize and uplift Indian society. The socio-political reforms of early nineteenth-century India were multifaceted and interconnected. They aimed to create a more equitable and progressive society, elevate the status of women, promote education, and pave the way for a national awakening that would eventually contribute to India's struggle for independence from British colonial rule.

The 19th century in India marked significant socio-political reforms that were instrumental in shaping the nation's trajectory towards independence and modernization. These reforms were driven by a complex interplay of indigenous and external forces and had far-reaching consequences. One of the most notable socio-political reform movements was the Indian Renaissance, which sought to challenge regressive customs and orthodox beliefs. Prominent figures like Raja Ram Mohan Roy advocated for the abolition of Sati (the practice of widows self-immolating on their husband's funeral pyres) and worked towards women's education.

The British colonial rule also played a pivotal role in transforming Indian society. The introduction of modern education and administrative reforms laid the groundwork for political awareness and organization. The 1857 Indian Rebellion, albeit a failed attempt, was a significant event that paved the way for India's struggle for independence.

The 19th century also witnessed the emergence of political leaders like Dadabhai Naoroji and Bal Gangadhar Tilak, each making distinct contributions to the nation's transformation, who used their platforms to demand constitutional reforms and self-governance. These early nationalist leaders sowed the seeds for India's eventual freedom in the 20th century.

Dadabhai Naoroji, known as the "Grand Old Man of India," was a trailblazing nationalist who became the first Asian to be elected to the



British Parliament. His most significant contribution was articulating the 'Drain Theory,' which highlighted the economic exploitation of India by the British. This theory became pivotal in the early nationalist movement, drawing attention to the need for self-governance.

Bal Gangadhar Tilak, often referred as the 'Father of Indian Unrest,' was a fervent advocate for Indian nationalism. He ignited the spark of mass mobilization with his slogan, "Swaraj is my birthright and I shall have it." His work in awakening the masses and promoting self-reliance played a crucial role in the struggle for independence.

Gopal Krishna Gokhale was a moderate nationalist who emphasized education and constitutional means to achieve reforms. He was instrumental in fostering a political consciousness among the masses and encouraged the growth of the Indian National Congress. Gokhale's pragmatic approach laid the foundation for future political leaders.

These three leaders collectively advanced the cause of socio-political reforms in 19th-century India, with Naoroji focusing on economic exploitation, Tilak on mass mobilization and nationalism, and Gokhale on education and constitutional reforms. Their efforts paved the way for India's eventual independence.

Therefore, the socio-political reforms of 19th century India were a dynamic fusion of indigenous initiatives and colonial influences, setting the stage for the country's modernization and eventual struggle for independence. These reforms were critical in reshaping the socio-political landscape of India and laying the foundation for the nation's future.

### **3.3 Dadabhai Nouroji: Socio-Economic and Political Views an Overview**

Dadabhai Nouroji was born in 1825 in Bombay (Mumbai) and is known as "Grand Old Man of India". He was an important political leader during British colonial rule and contributed in various capacities to the early Indian national movement. He is remembered more for his critical analysis of the economic exploitation of Indians by the British. His book 'Poverty and un-British Rule in India', published in 1901, highlighted the "economic drain theory". He wrote that 'India's wealth was systematically drained by the British through the mechanisms of taxation, exploitation of resources, and unfair trade practices'.



**Dadabhai Naoroji**

Dadabhai Naoroji (1825-1917) was an influential Indian nationalist and politician known as the “Grand Old Man of India.” Born in Bombay (now Mumbai), he was a scholar, educator, and social reformer. Naoroji was a pioneer in articulating the economic exploitation of India by the British, coining the ‘Drain Theory’ which highlighted the outflow of wealth from India to Britain. He was the first Indian to be elected to the British Parliament, serving as a Liberal MP. Throughout his life, Naoroji passionately advocated for Indian self-governance and played a vital role in fostering nationalist sentiments. His legacy as a prominent reformer and nationalist leader continues to be celebrated in India’s history. He published newspaper known as ‘The Voice of India’ and opened London India Society to discuss Indian politics, social and literary subjects.

The theory argued that the British were siphoning off India’s wealth to Britain, impoverishing the nation. This ground-breaking economic critique drew international attention and played a crucial role in raising awareness about the economic exploitation of India.

Nouroji's 'Drain Theory' was not just a critique of British exploitation but also a call for Indian self-reliance and economic empowerment. He advocated for indigenous industries and economic reforms to stimulate Indian prosperity. His ideas helped inspire later economic and industrial efforts in India's quest for self-sufficiency.

Dadabhai Naoroji was a trailblazer in the realm of politics. In 1892, he became the first Asian to be elected to the British Parliament as a Liberal MP for Finsbury Central. This remarkable achievement demonstrated his commitment to representing Indian interests on the international stage. Naoroji also served as the president of the Indian National Congress in 1886, where he advocated for political reforms within the framework of the British Empire.

Dadabhai Naoroji was not just a political leader but also a champion of civil rights and social reform. He actively worked to challenge regressive customs and promote social reforms, including the abolishment of the inhumane practice of Sati and advocating for women's rights. His commitment to social reform mirrored his dedication to economic and political change, contributing to a more just and equitable society. Nouroji's contributions were pivotal in nurturing the seeds of Indian nationalism. His work inspired and laid the foundation for subsequent generations of leaders, including figures like Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. His ideas of economic self-sufficiency, political representation, and civil rights became cornerstones of the Indian independence movement.

Dadabhai Nouroji's ideas and advocacy transcended national borders. His economic theories on colonial exploitation influenced debates on imperialism and colonialism worldwide. His recognition as an elected British MP also spotlighted the global dimension of the Indian struggle for independence, demonstrating that Indian concerns resonated internationally.

Dadabhai Nouroji's multifaceted contributions to socio-political reforms in 19th-century India were ground-breaking and instrumental. His pioneering economic analysis, political leadership, commitment to education, and advocacy for civil rights and social reform not only shaped the Indian nationalist movement but also left a lasting impact on the global discourse surrounding imperialism and colonialism. Nouroji's enduring legacy as a socio-political reformer and a champion of India's rights continues to be celebrated in India's history.

### 3.3.1. Socio- Economic Views

Dadabhai Naoroji was a stalwart of 19th-century Indian socio-political reform, making indelible contributions that transcended boundaries of caste, gender, and tradition. His endeavours for social reform were multifaceted and progressive. Naoroji vigorously advocated for the abolition of the horrific practice of Sati, a traditional custom where widows were immolated on their husbands' funeral pyres, which he considered inhumane and regressive.

In tandem with Sati abolition, Naoroji championed the cause of women's rights, arguing for their education and social upliftment. He believed that the emancipation of women was essential for the holistic development of Indian society. His support for women's education helped lay the groundwork for subsequent gender equality movements in India.

Naoroji was also a staunch critic of the caste system and endeavoured to promote social equality and harmony. His efforts aligned with the broader social reform movements of the era, which sought to eradicate the oppressive social hierarchies and discrimination entrenched in Indian society.

Dadabhai Naoroji's role in social reform was a crucial facet of his comprehensive efforts for India's progress, alongside his contributions to economic analysis and political representation. His commitment to humanitarian causes and his advocacy for a more equitable and enlightened society continue to inspire and influence social reform initiatives in India today, underscoring his enduring legacy.

Dadabhai Naoroji's socio-economic views were centered on raising awareness about the economic exploitation of India by the British colonial rulers. He played a pivotal role in highlighting the economic drain caused by colonial policies and advocating for self-governance and economic reforms that would benefit the Indian population. He explained by propounding a "Drain Theory," that, how British colonial rule was draining India's wealth to benefit the British economy. He calculated that a significant portion of India's resources were being siphoned off to Britain, resulting in poverty and underdevelopment in India.

Dadabhai Naoroji highlighted the dire economic conditions in India, emphasizing that poverty and unemployment were widespread due to British economic policies. He argued that India's resources were being

exploited for the benefit of the colonial rulers, while the Indian population suffered. He advocated for investment in railways, irrigation, and other public works in India.

Nouroji's point of contentions with the British government was that they were extracting a large amount of wealth from India through trade and taxes. He estimated that the annual drain of wealth from India was around £30 million, which was a significant sum at the time. Instead of reinvesting the wealth they extracted from India, the British used it to develop their own economy. This left India underdeveloped and impoverished. The British were imposing discriminatory trade policies that favoured British businesses over Indian businesses. For example, the British imposed high tariffs on Indian goods imported into Britain, while British goods were imported into India duty-free. This made it difficult for Indian businesses to compete and thrive. At the same time the exploitations of India's natural resources such as coal, timber and iron ore without adequately compensating the natives left industries further impoverished.

Nouroji's powerful critique of British economic exploitations helped raise awareness.

Such an amount on these infrastructure projects would create job opportunities, stimulate economic growth, and improve the overall living conditions of the Indian people. Dadabhai Nouroji emphasized the role of education and social reform in addressing India's economic challenges. He believed that education would empower Indians to understand and address their economic predicament and work towards improvement. Dadabhai Nouroji's economic theories and his efforts to bring Indian issues to the forefront of British politics greatly contributed to raising awareness about the inequities of colonial rule and fueled the early stages of India's struggle for freedom. Alongside his political activities, He believed that education was crucial for the upliftment of Indians and worked to improve educational opportunities, particularly for the marginalized sections of society. He was vocal in opposing racial discrimination and advocated for equal treatment of Indians in all aspects of life, including employment, education, and governance. His efforts contributed to raising awareness about the unjust treatment of Indians under British rule.

His views on economics were an integral part of his broader socio-political reform agenda, reflecting his commitment to addressing the economic injustices perpetuated by the colonial regime. Nouroji's economic

theories continue to be studied and discussed in the context of economic history and colonial exploitation, showcasing their enduring relevance

### 3.3.2 Political Views

Dadabhai Nouroji made significant contributions to India's politics through active participation, writings, and advocacy for Indian rights and self-governance. His views and efforts played a crucial role in shaping the early stages of India's struggle for independence from British colonial rule.

His critique of economic exploitation of India by British gained widespread attention and became a rallying point for nationalists seeking economic justice. Dadabhai Nouroji played a crucial role in the founding of the Indian National Congress in 1885 and he became the president in 1886. He aimed to create a platform for Indians to voice their grievances and demands within the British political system. The Indian National Congress eventually evolved into the principal political organization advocating for India's independence. Dadabhai Nouroji believed that Indians should have representation in the British Parliament to advocate for their rights and interests. And in 1892 he became the first Indian to be elected as a Member of Parliament in the British House of Commons. This marked a significant step toward Indian political participation in the British legislature. He was a proponent of peaceful and constitutional methods to achieve Indian political rights. He used his position in the British Parliament and his writings to raise awareness about the injustices of colonial rule and the need for Indian self-governance.

Mahatma Gandhi and Tilak admired his courage and commitment to the independence cause, Gandhi wrote to Nouroji, saying that 'Indian look up to you as a children to father'. And Tilak wrote, when Nouroji got elected to British parliament, that 'if twenty crore Indian were entitled to send one member to British parliament, there is no doubt that we would elect Dadabhai Nouroji'.

Dadabhai Nouroji, was associated with several organizations aimed at advancing the cause of Indian self-governance. He co-founded the East India Association in London, dedicated to raising awareness about India's issues and advocating for reforms. Naoroji also established the London Indian Society, which focused on political education and organizing for the Indian community in the UK. His commitment to economic and political reforms and his pioneering work in these organizations played a

pivotal role in shaping the discourse on Indian independence and laid the groundwork for the future freedom movement.

He believed that India's political future should be determined by its own people. Again in 1906 Nouroji's his presidency in 1886 also coincided with a period of internal divisions and the emergence of various ideological strains within the party. This period of division was largely related to differing approaches and perspectives on the strategies to attain self-governance for India.

Yet, when British announced its intention to divide Bengal, Nouroji expressed strong opposition to the partition of Bengal in 1905. He saw the partition as a divisive tactic by the British colonial government to weaken Indian unity and sow discord among different communities. Naoroji believed that it was an attempt to stifle the burgeoning nationalist movement. He argued that the partition was not in the best interests of the people of Bengal, especially given the social and economic ties that spanned the entire region. Nouroji's stance on the Bengal partition highlighted his commitment to preserving Indian unity and autonomy in the face of colonial policies.

One of the primary schisms that occurred during Nouroji's presidency was the division between the "moderates" and the "extremists." The moderates, led by Naoroji himself, advocated for a peaceful and constitutional approach to achieve Indian self-rule. They believed in using petitions, negotiations, and dialogue to persuade the British government to grant more rights and representation to Indians.

On the other hand, the extremists, led by leaders like Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal, were impatient with the slow pace of progress called for more radical and direct action, including civil disobedience and mass protests. This ideological split within the INC would persist and evolve over the following years and culminate in the partition of the party into two distinct groups. The differences in approach and tactics during Nouroji's presidency highlighted the complexity of the struggle for Indian independence and the diverse perspectives among its leaders. Despite these divisions his presidency remained committed to the over reaching goal of achieving self-rule for India.

and Dadabhai Nouroji's legacy lives on as a pioneer in Indian nationalism and a symbol of the early efforts to resist colonial oppression. His political nature was defined by his unwavering commitment to achieving self-rule



for India. His economic theories and political activism inspired subsequent generations of leaders in their fight for India's independence.

### Check Your Progress

- Who was Dadabhai Naoroji, and what significant role did he play in the Indian independence movement?
- What was the 'drain theory', and how did Dadabhai Nouroji's work impact the Indian struggle for independence?
- How did Dadabhai Nouroji's presidency of the Indian National Congress in 1886 influence the direction of the organization and the boarder independence movement?
- What were the key principles and strategies advocated by Dadabhai Nouroji during his time as a president of Indian National Congress?
- How did Dadabhai Naoroji contribute to fostering unity among diverse groups within the Indian population in their quest for self-governance?
- Can you explain the ideological split within the Indian National Congress during Dadabhai Nouroji's presidency, and how did he respond to these division?
- What is the lasting legacy of Dadabhai Nouroji's contributions to the Indian independence movement, and how is he remembered in India's history today?

### Fill in the Blanks

- Dadabhai Nouroji was often referred to as the ..... of the Indian freedom movement.
- He is best known for introducing the concept of the ....., which highlighted the economic exploitation of India by the British colonial rule.
- Dadabhai Nouroji became president of Indian National Congress in the year ..... and .....
- He was a prominent advocate for the representation and political rights of ..... in the British parliament.
- Nouroji's emphasis on ..... agitation and political education laid the groundwork for the future leaders of the Indian independence movement.

- f. Dadabhai Nouroji was committed to fostering unity among..... Indian communities, bridging regional and religious gaps.
- g. His contributions to the Indian independence movement left a lasting ..... in the history of India and its struggle for the self-rule.

### 3.4 Gopal Krishna Gokhale: Social and Political Views

#### An Overview

Gopal Krishna Gokhale was a prominent Indian nationalist leader and social reformer during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. He played a significant role in the Indian freedom movement and advocated for political reforms and social justice. Gokhale emphasized the need for education and believed in the importance of constitutional methods to achieve self-governance for India. Gokhale played an important role in shaping the early political ideologies of Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi considered Gokhale his political guru and learned many important principles of nonviolent resistance and constructive work from him. His commitment to social progress and political advancement laid the foundation for the Gandhian principles of non-violence and civil disobedience that would become central to India's freedom struggle. He firmly believed in achieving self-governance for India through constitutional means and advocated for greater political representation and responsible government. Gokhale was also emphatic in advocating socio-economic reforms, particularly in the realm of education and poverty alleviation.

Gokhale was a prominent member of the Indian National Congress and worked tirelessly to bridge the gap between moderate and extremist factions within the party, emphasizing a pragmatic and gradual approach towards independence. He is among many who worked tirelessly to uplift the nation through education, social change, and political reform. Gokhale's life and work continue to be celebrated for his enduring commitment to peaceful and constitutional methods in the pursuit of India's independence.



Gopal Krishna Gokhale

Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866-1915) was a prominent Indian leader during the British Raj. Gokhale was born into a poor Chitpavan Brahmin family in Kotluk village, Ratnagiri district, Bombay Presidency. Despite his humble beginnings, Gokhale received a good education and graduated from Elphinstone College, Bombay, in 1884. He then worked as a school teacher and professor before entering politics. Gokhale joined the Indian National Congress (INC) in 1889 and quickly became one of its leading figures. He was elected President of the INC in 1905. In 1905, Gokhale founded the Servants of India Society (SIS), a non-profit organization dedicated to social service and the upliftment of the poor and marginalized.

The Servants of India society worked to upliftment of the poor and marginalized. The Society's members committed themselves to a life of service to the nation and to living on a simple and frugal lifestyle. It played a key role in promoting education, healthcare, and rural development

in India. The society was also has involved in a number of social reform movements, such as the campaign against untouchability and the movement for women's empowerment.

He was a moderate nationalist who believed in working within the existing British system to achieve reform. Gokhale was a strong advocate for Indian self-rule, but he also believed that social and economic reforms were essential for the country's progress. He was also a skilled negotiator and he played a key role in securing the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909. The Morley-Minto Reforms were the first significant concessions made by the British to the Indian people, and they paved the way for further reforms in the years to come.

Gokhale was a moderate nationalist who believed in working within the existing British system to achieve reform. Some critics argued that he was too moderate and that he should have taken a more radical approach to the struggle for independence

#### **3.4.1. Social Views**

Gopal Krishna Gokhale was deeply committed to social and educational reforms in India. He believed that education was essential for uplifting the masses and advocated for modern education in vernacular languages. He supported causes like women's education, sanitation, and upliftment of the lower castes. He supported efforts to improve access to education for women and worked towards eliminating societal barriers to their education.

In 1905, Gokhale founded the "Servants of India Society," an organization dedicated to social service, education, and political reform. The society aimed to train dedicated and selfless individuals who would work for the betterment of the country. He supported efforts to abolish child marriage, promote widow remarriage, and eradicate untouchability. He believed that traditional social practices were hindering India's progress and that reform was essential for the nation's advancement. Gokhale believed in economic self-sufficiency and self-reliance for India. He emphasized the need for industrialization and economic development to uplift the masses from poverty. was committed to promoting harmony among different religious and caste groups in India. He believed that unity among Indians, regardless of their diverse backgrounds, was essential for achieving the nation's goals.

Gokhale also led the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha, which was formed by Mahadev Govind Ranade in 1870. Like many other Sabhas founded in Bombay presidency during later 19<sup>th</sup> century, Poona Sarvajanik Sabha worked to promote education, social reform, and political representation in British Indian Councils, for Indians. The Sabha worked to improve the lives of the poor and marginalized, and it campaigned against social ills such as untouchability and child marriage. The Sabha also played a key role in the development of the Indian National Congress (INC).

One of the most important social reforms that Gokhale championed was the abolition of untouchability. Untouchability is a Hindu practice that condemns certain castes to a life of social and economic discrimination. Gokhale believed that untouchability was a barbaric practice that had no place in a civilized society. He campaigned against untouchability and worked to improve the social and economic status of untouchables.

Gokhale was also a strong advocate for women's education. He believed that education was essential for the empowerment of women. He campaigned for the opening of schools and colleges for girls, and he worked to promote women's literacy.

In addition to his work on untouchability and women's education, Gokhale also worked on a number of other social reforms. He campaigned for the upliftment of the poor and marginalized, and he worked to improve the lives of peasants, workers, and tribals. Gokhale was a strong believer in social harmony and religious tolerance. He worked to promote understanding and respect between different religions and castes. He also campaigned against religious discrimination and persecution.

Gokhale's work on social reform was not without its critics. Some conservatives argued that his reforms were too radical and that they would undermine traditional Indian values. Others argued that he was too focused on social reform and that he should have focused more on political reform.

Despite these criticisms, Gokhale's work on social reform had a lasting impact on Indian society. He helped to lay the foundation for the social reforms that were carried out after independence.

### 3.4.2 Political Views

While Gopal Krishna Gokhale focused more on social and educational reforms, he also recognized the importance of political rights for Indians. He believed in a gradual approach to political reforms, emphasizing the need for educating and preparing the masses for responsible self-government. Gokhale was associated with the Indian National Congress, which was a prominent platform for advocating Indian rights and self-governance during British colonial rule. Gokhale joined the INC in 1889 and quickly became one of its leading figures. He was elected President of the INC in 1905. Gokhale played a key role in shaping the INC's policies and strategies. He was a strong advocate for Indian self-rule, but he also believed that social and economic reforms were essential for the country's progress. Gokhale's work in the INC helped to transform the organization from a small group of elitist intellectuals into a mass movement with a broad base of support. He also helped to build bridges between different factions within the INC and to unite the Indian people in their struggle for independence.

He petitioned for self-rule, expansion of legislative councils and introduction of Indian-government in the provinces.

He emphasized the importance of constitutional methods and political negotiations to achieve reforms. Gokhale was known for his moderate and constructive approach toward British authorities. He advocated for increased Indian representation in legislative bodies and sought to achieve this through dialogue rather than confrontational methods. Gokhale supported the idea of Indians having a greater role in the governance of the country through increased representation in the legislative councils. He saw this as a means to influence policies and laws that directly affected the Indian population. He supported the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909, which introduced limited elective representation for Indians in legislative bodies. While some criticized these reforms as insufficient, Gokhale saw them as a step in the right direction.

He believed in engaging with the British government through dialogue and petitions to achieve gradual political reforms. Gokhale differed from the "extremist" faction within the Indian National Congress, led by leaders like Bal Gangadhar Tilak. He believed that their more confrontational approach could lead to violence and hinder progress. Instead, he stressed the importance of moderation and avoiding actions that could provoke the

British authorities. Gokhale emphasized the principles of non-violence and social harmony. He believed that the path to progress should be pursued through peaceful means, avoiding conflicts and violence. He promoted cooperation and understanding among different communities. Gokhale's ultimate goal was to secure self-government for India within the British Empire. He believed that Indians should gradually prepare themselves for responsible self-governance by acquiring the necessary skills, education, and experience.

The mood in India when the British planned to partition Bengal in 1905 was one of widespread outrage and opposition. Even Rabindranath Tagore returned knighthood honoured by British for his exemplary literary work. The decision to partition Bengal was met with vehement protests, as it was perceived as a deliberate attempt to divide and rule by the British colonial authorities. People from all walks of life, including political leaders, intellectuals, and the general public, were united in their opposition to the partition. Massive rallies, public meetings, and acts of civil disobedience were organized to express dissent. The "Swadeshi Movement" and the boycott of British goods were launched in response to the partition, demonstrating the intensity of public sentiment against this move. The mood during this period laid the groundwork for India's nationalist movement, as it marked a strong collective response to colonial policies. While he opposed the British government's decision to partition Bengal, Gokhale advocated a more moderate and constitutional approach to addressing this issue. He believed in engaging in discussions and negotiations with the colonial authorities to reverse the partition, emphasizing the importance of dialogue and peaceful protest. Gokhale's stance reflected his commitment to achieving Indian self-governance through constitutional means, promoting cooperation with the British government, and seeking a solution that upheld the rights and interests of the Indian people.

### **Check You Progress**

- a. What were some of the key socio-political issues in India that Gopal Krishna Gokhale actively worked to address during his lifetime?
- b. How did Gokhale advocate for the social and educational reforms in India and what were some of the notable initiatives in this regard?



- c. What role did Gokhale play in bridging the gap between moderates and extremists factions within the Indian national congress, and how did this influence the political landscape of the time?
- d. Can you explain Gokhale's approach to achieving Indian self-rule through constitutional means, and how did it differ from more radical approaches?
- e. What was the impact of Gokhale's advocacy for greater representation of Indians in the British parliament and his efforts to convey India's grievances to the British government?
- f. How did Gokhale's mentorship and influence shape the political ideologies of mahatma Gandhi, and what aspects of Gandhi's approach can be attributed to Gokhale's teachings?
- g. In what ways did Gokhale's contributions to socio-political reform leave a lasting legacy in India, and how are his principles and ideas relevant in the present day?

#### Fill in the Blanks

- a. Gopal Krishna Gokhale was a prominent Indian..... and social reformer in the late 19th and early 20th centuries
- b. He was strong advocate for ..... within the Indian society, particularly for the issues related to education and social welfare.
- c. Gokhale was a prominent member of the ..... And played a significant role in shaping the party's policies and approaches.
- d. He often is remembered for bridging the gap between the ..... and .....factions within the Indian national congress.
- e. Gokhale strongly believed in achieving Indian self-rule through..... means, advocating for a gradual and pragmatic approach.
- f. His mentorship of Gandhi significantly influenced his commitment to non-violence and -----disobedience.
- g. He founded..... society in 1905.

### 3.5 Bal Gangadhar Tilak: Views on Social Reforms and Militant Nationalism.



Bal Gangadhar Tilak

Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920), also known as Lokmanya Tilak, was born in Ratnagiri, Maharashtra, in 1856. He came from a middle-class family and received a traditional Hindu education. After completing his schooling, Tilak went on to study law at the Deccan College in Pune. After graduating from law school, Tilak began practicing law in Pune. However, he soon became more interested in politics and social reform. In 1881, Tilak founded the Kesari, a Marathi-language newspaper. He also founded the English-language newspaper, The Mahratta. Despite his flaws, Tilak remains one of the most revered figures in Indian history. He is remembered for his courage, his commitment to independence, and his dedication to the upliftment of the poor and marginalized.

## An Over View

Bal Gangadhar Tilak, often referred to as 'Lokmanya Tilak' was a prominent Indian nationalist leader, social reformer, and played a significant role during India's independence movement against British colonial rule. He was one of the founding fathers of the Indian independence movement and is considered one of the most influential figures in Indian history. Bal Gangadhar Tilak was a strong advocate of swaraj, or self-rule, for India. He believed that Indians should have the right to rule themselves and that they should not be subject to British rule. Tilak also believed in the importance of mass mobilization and direct action in the struggle for independence. He was one of the first Indian leaders to use mass protests and boycotts to challenge the British colonial government. He coined the slogan "swaraj is my birth right and I shall have it". Tilak was arrested and imprisoned by the British government on several occasions. However, he continued to fight for independence until his death in 1920.

Tilak promoted Hindu nationalism, but his approach differed from the later concept of 'Hindutva'. Tilak's advocacy for Hinduism was rooted in cultural and nationalistic pride, aiming to use Hindu festivals and symbols to unify Indians in their quest for independence from British colonial rule. He popularized the celebration of festivals like Ganesh Chaturthi to foster a sense of national identity. While Tilak's efforts were culturally and politically significant, the term 'Hindutva' came into prominence later and evolved into a more exclusionary and divisive ideology, advocating for a Hindu-only identity, which differs from Tilak's inclusive nationalist vision.

He edited newspapers like Maratha and 'Kesari' to propagate and reach masses his nationalist ideas. Tilak was a complex and controversial figure. Along with Bipin Chandra Pal and Lala Lajpat Rai he formed a triumvirate of assertive nationalist. During Bengal partition they mobilised Indians across country and advocated for swadeshi movement in 1907. Tilak was a brilliant intellectual and a charismatic leader. However, he was also known for his extremist views and his willingness to use violence in the struggle for independence. Bal Gangadhar Tilak, known for his assertive nationalist stance, adopted a softer approach later in his political career due to changing circumstances and evolving political strategies. After his release from prison in 1914, he recognized the need for political cooperation, unity, and conciliation. Tilak understood the potential benefits of collaboration with other leaders within the Indian National Congress, which had a more

moderate approach. This change in stance was also influenced by the changing policies of the British government, which sought Indian support during World War I. Tilak's commitment to the larger cause of Indian independence led him to choose a more diplomatic path, emphasizing the importance of a united front in the struggle for self-rule.

### 3.5.1. Social Reforms

While his focus was primarily on political activism and nationalistic endeavours, he also had some influence on social reforms. Tilak believed that fostering a strong sense of nationalism and unity among Indians was crucial for their liberation from British rule. He emphasized the need for Indians to unite irrespective of their religious or cultural differences, as a way to strengthen the overall movement for independence. He recognized the importance of education in creating a well-informed and empowered citizenry. He encouraged the spread of education among the masses, advocating for vernacular languages to be used as mediums of instruction. He believed that education would not only empower individuals but also contribute to the growth of a strong nationalistic sentiment. He believed that understanding and preserving India's cultural heritage and traditions were essential for strengthening the country's identity and resistance against colonialism. He celebrated festivals like Ganesh Chaturthi and Shivaji Jayanti as occasions to mobilize people and build a sense of pride in Indian history and culture. While Tilak's primary focus was on political and nationalist activities, he expressed his concerns about social issues, including untouchability. He encouraged social harmony and condemned discriminatory practices, but his efforts in this area were not as extensive as those of some other social reformers of the time such as Mahatma Gandhi or Dr. Ambedkar.

Tilak's views on Hinduism were deeply rooted in his belief in the importance of preserving and revitalizing India's cultural and spiritual heritage. He saw Hinduism as a vital force in the country's social and political awakening. Tilak believed that the essence of Hinduism, with its rich history, mythology, and rituals, could inspire a sense of national pride and unity among Indians. He encouraged the celebration of traditional festivals and rituals to foster a sense of community and cultural identity. Tilak's interpretation of Hinduism wasn't just religious; it was a powerful tool for mobilizing the masses in the struggle for independence and for nurturing a sense of patriotism and self-reliance among the Indian people.

His love for motherland, can be encapsulated her, 'I regard India as my Motherland and my Goddess, the people in India are my kith and kin, and loyal and steadfast work for their political and social emancipation is my highest religion and duty'.

Bal Gangadhar Tilak held somewhat traditional views on women's roles in society. He believed in women's education but within the confines of their domestic roles. While he recognized their role as educators in the family, he didn't actively advocate for their broader participation in public life or the workforce. His outlook was more conservative compared to some of his contemporaries in the Indian independence movement. However, it's essential to consider the historical context in which Tilak lived, as societal norms and expectations regarding women's roles were evolving during the late 19th and early 20th centuries in India.

### 3.5.2. Militant Nationalism

Militant nationalism refers to an extreme form of nationalistic sentiment or ideology characterized by an aggressive and often confrontational approach to advancing the interests and objectives of one's own nation. It often involves a fervent belief in the superiority of one's nation or culture and a willingness to use force, coercion, or radical tactics to assert or defend that superiority. Militant nationalists may advocate for aggressive foreign policies, territorial expansion, and may support violence or military action to achieve their goals.

Non embodies this trait than Bal Gangadhar Tilak. He was absolute nationalist and strived to pursue other national leaders to take up hard stand in order to expel British from India.

The Indian National Congress (INC) was split in 1907, often referred to as the Surat Split. The split occurred during the Surat session of the INC, held in Surat, Gujarat, in 1907. The primary reasons for the split were ideological differences between the two prominent factions within the INC, the "Extremists" and the "Moderates". Extremist led by Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal, advocated for a more radical and assertive approach in the fight for independence. They believed in mass mobilization, civil disobedience, and the use of cultural and religious symbols to unite and motivate the Indian masses. Moderates, led by Dadabhai Naoroji and Gopal Krishna Gokhale, favoured a more gradual

and constitutional approach. They believed in negotiations, petitions, and reforms within the existing British administrative framework.

During the Surat Session, the ideological divide became apparent, and the split was triggered by disagreements over the selection of the party president. The Extremists wanted Tilak to become the president, while the Moderates supported Rash Behari Ghosh. The ensuing tensions led to a physical altercation at the session, resulting in the split. As a result of the Surat Split, the INC was divided into two factions, and for a period, it weakened the unity of the Indian national movement. However, it also demonstrated the diversity of thought within the Congress and eventually contributed to the evolution of a more comprehensive approach to the struggle for Indian independence, as both Extremist and Moderate ideas were important in shaping the movement.

After spending years in prison, Tilak was convinced that the way to realized self-rule is through constitutional means rather than the extremes that only hinders not hastens the process. A new conviction rose to re-join the Indian national Congress along with the nationalists.

The reconciliation between the Moderates and Extremists within the Indian National Congress (INC) in 1916 marked an important development in the Indian independence movement. It was a step toward unifying the two factions that had split during the Surat Session in 1907. Annie Besant and Bal Gangadhar Tilak played key roles in bringing about reconciliation. They recognized the importance of cooperation and worked to bridge the gap between the two factions.

This reconciliation culminated during the Lucknow Session of the INC in 1916. The Extremists, represented by Tilak, and the Moderates, represented by Annie Besant and others, joined forces. The session saw the historic Lucknow Pact, an agreement that outlined a cooperative strategy for pursuing constitutional reform and greater self-governance.

Unlike other leaders of Indian national congress, who advocated the approach of petition and mediation to pressurise the British for concessions, Bal Gangadhar Tilak was a key figure in extremist faction of INC, along with Lala Lajpat Rai and Bipin Chandra Pal formed a famous triumvirate. He was a fervent nationalist with excessive pride in the cultural heritage of India. His goal was "Swarajya" or self-rule for India. He believed that Indians should have the right to govern themselves and make their own decisions without British interference.

His nationalist activities, especially his writings in newspapers like Kesari, were critical of British policies and galvanized the Indian masses. In 1908, Tilak was arrested and tried for sedition due to his alleged involvement in the planning of a revolution. He was subsequently sentenced to six years in prison. While in prison he wrote 'Gita Rahasya' and money made out of copies sold was donated to the cause of independence movement. Tilak's trial and imprisonment further solidified his reputation as a steadfast and fearless freedom fighter. His advocacy for self-rule and his willingness to endure incarceration for his beliefs left an enduring impact on India's independence movement. His ideas and actions left a significant impact on the trajectory of the Indian freedom struggle and marked him as a proponent of a more assertive form of nationalism, even though he was not advocating violence as the primary means to achieve it.

He was a strong advocate of the Swadeshi movement, which was started after 1905 Bengal partition. The movement aimed to promote indigenous industries and products and boycott foreign goods. The movement included various forms of protests, such as public meetings, processions, and symbolic bonfires of foreign goods. These protests served as a way to gather public support and express resistance against British rule. He believed that economic self-sufficiency was essential for India's progress and that boycotting British goods would weaken the colonial economic structure.

One of Tilak's significant contributions was the Home Rule Movement, founded in 1916, which was initiated to demand self-governance for India within the British Empire. Tilak and Annie Besant, representing different factions of the Indian National Congress, popularized the movement. They called for "Home Rule," which signified greater autonomy and governance of Indian affairs by Indians. This was a response to the British government's call for Indian support during the war. The movement involved political agitation, speeches, and the promotion of self-governance ideals. Although it didn't immediately lead to independence, it marked a significant phase in India's quest for self-rule and contributed to the country's eventual liberation in 1947. This movement aimed to mobilize public support for India's autonomy and put pressure on the British government to grant more rights to Indians.



Bal Gangadhar Tilak strongly opposed the Rowlatt Act of 1919 and the Simon Commission of 1927 as manifestations of British oppression and disregard for Indian interests. The Rowlatt Act empowered the British government to arrest and detain Indians without trial, infringing on civil liberties. Tilak vehemently criticized it, leading to widespread protests. The Simon Commission, which came to India to review the functioning of the Government of India Act, did not include any Indian members. Tilak and others boycotted it, asserting that Indians should have a say in any reforms affecting their country. Tilak's stance reflected his unwavering commitment to Indian self-governance and his opposition to British-imposed measures.

Tilak was a skilled writer and orator. He utilized newspapers and magazines, particularly his Marathi newspaper "Kesari" and the English newspaper "The Maratha," to spread nationalist ideas and inspire people to join the freedom movement. His writings played a crucial role in awakening a sense of pride and unity among Indians. Tilak believed in mass mobilization and people's active participation in the freedom movement. He organized public gatherings, processions, and festivals as platforms for raising awareness about political issues and building a strong nationalist sentiment. He festivals like Ganesh Chaturthi to serve as occasions for mass gatherings and political mobilization. He encouraged people to celebrate these festivals publicly and use them as opportunities to express their patriotic feelings and unit

He also emphasized the importance of civil disobedience and non-cooperation as tools of protest against British oppression. He believed that Indians should peacefully resist unjust laws and policies through nonviolent means, such as strikes, boycotts, and non-cooperation.

### **3.6. Summary**

The nineteenth-century socio-political reform movements in India were a response to the complex challenges posed by British colonial rule, traditional societal practices, and the need for modernization. These reforms aimed to bring about social justice, equality, education, and rational thought. These reforms were motivated by the desire to create a more just, equitable, and progressive society. It laid the groundwork for later political movements and had a lasting impact on shaping India's path towards independence and modernization.



These three leaders played complementary roles in the Indian independence movement. Naoroji, a founding member of Indian National Congress and served as its president in 1886 and 1893, provided the intellectual foundation for the movement with his Drain Theory of Indian Poverty. Gokhale, an Eloquent and charismatic leader committed to social reform, worked to build the INC into a mass organization and to promote social reform. Tilak mobilized the Indian masses and radicalized the independence movement. Known for his fiery speeches and his commitment to swaraj, or self-rule advocated for mass mobilization and direct action in the struggle for independence. He was proponent of Hindu nationalism and served as INC president in 1906.

These three leaders are giants of Indian history, and their contributions to the independence movement are immense. Their legacy continues to inspire people around the world who are fighting for freedom and justice.

### 3.7. Keywords

Drain Theory, Militant nationalism, Swadeshi and Swaraj

### Check Your Progress

- a. What were the key socio-political issues that Bal Gangadhar Tilak actively addressed during his leadership in the Indian National Congress and other movements?
- b. How did tilak use cultural and religious symbols, such as Ganesh Chaturthi, to promote socio-political awareness and mobilize the Indian masses?
- c. What were the primary objectives and methods of Tilak's 'home rule' movement, and how did it contribute to the boarder freedom struggle in Indian?
- d. Can you explain tilak's role on bridging the gap between extremist and moderates factions within the Indian national congress during the early 2-th century?
- e. What was the significance of Tilak's publications, particularly his newspapers Kesari and Maratha, in promoting socio-political consciousness and nationalist sentiment?
- f. How did Tilak's advocacy for Swaraj (self-rule) impact his socio-political movements, and what strategies did he employ to attain this goal?

- g. What was the legacy of Bal Gangadhar Tilak's socio-political movements in India, and how do his ideas and actions continue to influence the nation's political landscape and cultural identity today?

### Fill in the Blanks

- a. Bal Gangadhar Tilak was a prominent leader in the ..... during the Indian independence movement.
- b. He is often referred to as Lokmanya, which means..... of the people due to his popularity and influence.
- c. Tilak was a fervent advocate for the use of cultural and religious symbols, such as Ganesh Chaturthi, to foster..... And nationalism.
- d. One of his notable newspapers,....., was known for its fiery and uncompromising stance against British colonialism.
- e. Tilak's advocacy for Swaraj reflected his unwavering commitment to India..... and self-rule.
- f. He played a significant role in bridging the gap between the extremist and moderates factions within the ..... National Congress.
- g. Bal Gangadhar Tilak's socio-political activities left an enduring impact on India's struggle for independence and its..... Identity.

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