



## **Social and Religious Reform Movements**

The intellectual skill among the English educated middle class prompted a group of people to introspect about the backwardness of Indian society and the way and means to overcome that. The zeal to eradicate these social evils and superstitions which had become part of the religious belief of 19th century India, led to a series of reform movements.

### **Rise of the Movements**

- Introduction of Western education and Ideas played an important role in bringing the knowledge of some advanced ideas of the Western world and of modern science to India.
- From the late 18th century, a number of Indian scholars began the study of ancient India's philosophy, science, religion and literature It helped the reformers in their work of religious and social reform. For their struggle against social evils, superstitions and inhuman practices and customs, the reformers used the authority of ancient texts.
- Thus, Indian religious and social reformers made use of their knowledge of Western ideas as well as of ancient learning.
- Press acted as a medium of communication and was used as an instrument for building an opinion, e.g. from Raja Ram Mohan Roy to Gandhiji, everyone used the medium of press.

### **Characteristics of the Movements**

- Base of social reforms was newly emerging middle class and Western educated intellectuals.

- These movements emerged in different periods of time in different parts of India but having considerable similarities in their objectives. Religious reformat or, was a pre-condition for social reformation.
- There was cultural ideological struggle against backward element of traditional culture. The movement could not reach to the masses of peasantry and urban poor.

### **Major Issues of the Movements**

- Religious Sphere To revitalise religion in the li
- 'ght of modern science and religion. As there was no aspect of Indian life which, religion didn't influenced.
- Social Sphere Poor position of women and evil of caste system.
- Political Sphere Generating political opinion of the people by vernacular pamphlets, newspapers etc.

### **Brahmo Samaj**

- The Brahmo Samaj was the first important organisation of religious reform. It forbade Idol worship and discarded meaningless rites and rituals. The samaj also forbade its members from attacking any religion. To propagate the monotheistic doctrine of Hindu scriptures, Raja Ram Mohan Roy founded the Atmiya Sabha (1815-19). In 1828, he established the Brahmo Sabha, later the Brahmo Samaj. The Brahmo Samai beieved that God is the cause and source of all that exists; so that nature, the Earth and heaver all, are his creations.
- In the Brahmo conception of God, there a no place for such doctrines as incarnation and meditator. It does not recognise any specialty privileged priestly class as mediators between God and man.
- In Brahmo Samaj, no sacrifice was permitted. The Brahmo religion laid emphasis on the love of mankind, irrespective of colour, race or creed and upon the service of humanity the highest rule of life.
- Raja Ram Mohan Roy gave enthusiastic assistance to David Hare, who founded the famous Hindu College in Calcutta Established a Vedanta College (1825), in which courses both in Indian and Western social and physical sciences were offered.

- Roy and his associates had to face the bitter enmity and ridicule from the orthodox Hindus. The influence of Brahma Samaj, however spread and branches of the samaj were open different parts of the country. Though, the Brahma samajists were never large in number, they represented the new spirit of rationalism and reform.
- They attacked caste rigidity, started taking their food with the people of the so-called lower castes and those of other religions, opposed reductions about food and drink, worked for improving the status of women in the society, devoted their lives to the spread of education and condemned the old Hindu opposition of sea voyages.

### **Adi Brahma Samaj and Brahma Samaj of India**

In 1866. there was a split In the Brahma Samaj. Devendranath Tagore founded Adi Brahma Samaj and Brahma Samaj of India was founded under leadership of Keshab Chandra Sen.

Kashab Chandra Sen and his group held views which were more radical than those of other Brahma samajists. They proclaimed freedom from the bondage of caste and customs and from the authority of scriptures. They advocated and performed intercaste marriages and widow remarriages, opposed the custom of purdah and condemned caste divisions. These radical view led to the split in 1886. Keshab Chandra Sen established Tab eracle of New Dispensation and Indian Reform Association.

### **Arya Samaj**

- Another influential movement of religious and social reform in Northern India was started by Dayanand Saraswati.
- At the age of 14, he became a rebel by rejecting idol worship Soon after, he left home and led the life al wandering scholar in search of knowledge During this period, he acquired mastery over Sanskrit language and literature.
- In AD 1853, Dayanand started preaching his doctrine- there is only one God and he should worshipped not in the form of Images, but as a spirit. He held that the Vedas contained all the knowledge imparted to man by God and essentials of modern science could also be traced there.

- He looked on the Vedas as India's Rock and Ages. The true original seed of Hinduism. His motto was India for the Indians.
- He said 'Go back to Vedas', by this, he meant revival of Vedic learning and Vedic purity of religion and not revival of Vedic times. With this message, he went about all over the country and in 1875 founded the Arya Samaj in Bombay. Dayanand preached and wrote in Hindi.
- The Satyarth Prakash was his most important book. The use of Hindi made his ideas accessible to the common people of Northern India. He wrote three books- Satyarth Prakash. Veda- Bhashya Bhumika and Bhashya.
- The members of Arya Samaj were guided by ten principles, of which the first one was studying the Vedas. The rest were tenets on virtue and morality.
- Dayanand framed for them a code of social conduct in which there was no room for caste distinctions and social inequality. The Arya samajists opposed child marriages and encouraged remarriage of widow.
- A network of schools and colleges for boys and girls was established throughout Northern India to promote the spread of education.
- In 1886, Lala Hardayal instituted the Dayanand Anglo Vedic School of Lahore, which soon developed into a premier college of Punjab, set the pattern for such institutions. Here, instruction was given through English and Hindi on modern lines.
- Those among his disciples who wanted to maintain the original spirit of Dayanand, founded the Gurukul at Haridwar. This was set-up on the pattern of ancient ashrams.
- Dayanand, asserted the infallibility of Vedas. The influence of Dayanand and Arya Samaj, however, in the promotion of education, uplift of the position of woman, and weakening the hold of the caste system was deeper than that of many other reform movements.

### **Shuddhi Movement**

- Dayanand tried for reconversion of those Hindus who had been converted to other religions, like Islam and Christianity. For this purpose, a purificatory ceremony called shuddhi was organised by him.

## **Ramakrishna Mission**

- Another important reformer of the latter half of the 19th century was Ramakrishna Paramshansa (1836-86) who was a priest in a temple at Dakshineswar, near Calcutta.
- After coming in contact with the leaders of other religions, he accepted the sanctity of all faiths.
- Almost all religious reformers of his time, including Keshab Chandra Sen and Dayanand, called on him for religious discussions and guidance.
- The contemporary Indian intellectuals, whose faith in their own culture had been shaken by the challenge from the West, found reassurance from his teachings
- In order to propagate the teachings of Ramakrishna and put them into practice, Ramakrishna Mission was founded in 1897 at Belur Math near Calcutta by his favourite disciple-Vivekananda. The mission stood for social service. 'The best way to serve God is to serve mankind' was its motto.
- Ramakrishna Mission, since its beginning, has grown into a very powerful centre of numerous public activities. These include organising relief during floods, famines and epidemics, establishing hospitals and running educational institutions.
- Vivekananda (1883-1902) (Original name— Narendarnath Dutta) had a character altogether different from that of his master. He studied deeply Indian and Western philosophies, but could not find peace of mind, until he met Ramakrishna. He was, however, not content just with spirituality. The question that constantly agitated him was the degenerated condition of his motherland.
- After an all India tour, he found everywhere "poverty, loss of mental vigour and no hope for future" He frankly stated, "it is we who are responsible for all our misery and all our degeneration". He urged his countrymen to work for their own salvation. For this purpose. Vivekananda took upon himself the task of awakening his countrymen and reminding them of their weaknesses.

- He inspired them “to Struggle unto life and death to bring about a new state of things—sympathy for the poor and bread to their hungry mouths, enlightenment to the people at large”. A band of workers devoted to this cause were grained through the Ramakrishna Mission.

### **Parliament of Religions, 1893**

- Vivekahanda’s activities outside India helped in promoting an understanding of Indian culture abroad. In 1893, he participated in the All World Religious Conference (Parliament of Religions) at Chicago in the USA. His address there made a deep impression the people of other countries and thus, helped to raise the prestige of Indian culture in the eyes of the world

### **Young Bengal Movement**

- David Hare, an associate of Ram Mohan, founded Hindu College for modern education. He was basically a watch— maker Derozio taught in Hindu College from 1826 to 1831. Derozio took inspiration from French Revolution. Because of his radical ideas, he could not have strong base, even though his ideas were much modern that of Roy’s.
- Because of radical ideas Derozio was dismissed from Hindu College. Derozio edited the paper Calcutta Gazette and India Gazette. Like Roy, he spread political consciousness through newspaper, pamphlets etc.

### **Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar**

The Sanskrit College in Calcutta, of which Ishwar Chandra was the Principal for a few years, conferred on him the title of Vidyasagar. He introduced the study of modern Western thought in the Sanskrit College and admitted students belonging to the so-called lower castas to study Sanskrit.

He was attacked by the orthodox Hindus for his powerful support to the cause of widow remarriage as well as for his efforts at promoting education of the girls .

When, in 1855 he was made special inspector of schools he opened 35 schools operated completely from his pocket. He was closely associated with Bethune, who had started the first school for girl’s education in Calcutta In 1849. The school was named Bethune School and he became its Secretary.

### **Prarthana Samaj**

- Beginning in Bengal, the religious and social reform movements spread to other parts of India.
- In 1867, the Prarthana Samaj of Bombay was founded with the aim of anti-caste and women upliftment.
- Two of its chief architect was Mahadev Gobind Ranade and Ramakrishna Bhandarkar. The readers of the Prarthana Samaj were influenced by the Brahmo Samaj. Ranade believed that without social reforms, it was not possible to achieve any progress in the political and economic fields,
- He was a great advocate of Hindu-Muslim unity and declared that in this vast country, no progress is possible unless both Hindus and the Mohammedans join hands together.

### **Gopal Hari Deshmukh and Jyotiba Phule**

Two other great reformers in Western India were Gopal Hari Deshmukh, popularly known as Lokhitwadi and Jyotirao Govindrao Phule, popularly known as Jyotiba.

G H Deshmukh supported reorganisation of society on the principle of modernity, secularism and humanism. Mahatma Phule dedicated himself to the cause of the oppressed sections of society and of woman's upliftment. In 1848, he started a school for the girls of the so-called lower caste and educated his wife; so that she could teach in that school. In 1873, he founded the Satyashodhak Samaj, which was open to everyone without any distinction of caste and religion. Its aim was to work for winning equal rights for the people of the oppressed castes. Jyotiba was given the title of Mahatma for his work for the cause of the oppressed.

### **Theosophical Movement**

- The Theosophical society was founded by Westerners, who drew inspiration from Indian thought and culture. Madame HP Blavatsky (1830-91) laid the foundation of the movement in the United States in 1875. Later Colonel MS Olcott (1832- 1907) joined her in New York.
- In 1882, they shifted their headquarters to India at Adyar, in Madras. The members of this society believe that a special relationship can be established between a person's soul and God by contemplation, prayer, revelation etc.

- The society accepts the Hindu beliefs in reincarnation, karma and draws inspiration from the philosophy of the Upanishads and Samkhya, Yoga and Vedanta school of thought. It aims to work for universal brotherhood of humanity without distinction of race, creed, Sex, caste or colour.
- The society also seeks to investigate the unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in man. The Theosophical Movement gave a sense of pride to Indians by praising India culture.
- In India, the movement became popular with the election of Mrs Annie Besant as its President Mrs Besant was well approach acquainted with Indian thought and culture and her approach was vedantic as is very evident from her remarkable translation of the Bhagavad Gib.
- Besant, in the foundation of the Central Hindu College in Banaras, in 1898 where both the Hindu religion and the Western scientific subjects were taught The college became the nucleus for the formation of Banaras Hindu University in 1916 Mrs. Besant also did much for the cause of female education She also formed the Home Rule League on the pattern of Irish Home Rule Movement.
- The Theosophical society provided a common denominator for the various sects and fulfilled the urge of educated Hindu Its impact was limited to a small segment of the Westernised class.

### **SNDP Movement**

- Shr. Narayana Dharma Paripalna Yogam or SNDP Movement (1902-03), a significant movement for the emancipation of the oppressed sections of society was started by Sree Narayana Guru in Kerala Narayana Guru was born 1854 in an Ezhava family. The Ezhavas were considered untouchables. Narayana Guru acquired Sanskrit education and devoted himself to the uplift of the Ezhavas and other oppressed people.
- He started establishing temples in which Gods or their images had no place. He founded his first temple by installing a stone from the nearby stream Narayana Guru, in 1903, founded the Shri Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam, which became an important organisation for social reform Narayana Guru considered differences based on caste and religion as meaningless and advocated what he called One caste. One Religion and One God for all.

### **Temple Reform Movements**

- Many reformers in Southern India concerned themselves with the reform of certain practices connected with Hindu temples. They advocated the ending of Devadasis who were attached to the temples. They also wanted that the wealth of the temples, some of which were very rich, should not be amassed by the priests, but that the public should exercise control over it. In many temples, people of the so-called lower castes were not allowed to enter and sometimes even some roads leading to the temples were barred to them.
- The reformers launched powerful movements for temple entry and against other evil practices which had become associated with temples. Unfortunately, in spite of the work done by reformers, since the 19th century, even now there are instances in some parts of the country when some people are debarred entry into the temples on grounds of caste.

### **Muslim Reform Movements**

- Among the Muslims, the first signs of awakening appeared in the early 19th century, under the leadership of people like Syed Ahmed of Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh and Shariatullah of Bengal. They held that because of the degeneration of Islam in India, it had fallen into the hands of British. They set themselves to the task of purifying and strengthening Islam and purifying Islamic learning.
- The influence of Western ideas and modern education spread among the Muslims, later than among some sections of Hindus.
- Most of them kept themselves away from it because of the attitude of the attitude of the ulema who were traditional custodians of Islamic learning and the unwillingness of the upper class Muslims to reconcile themselves to British rule.
- The British had gradually robbed both these groups of their influence and rendered them powerless. Deprived of English education and its social and economic advantages, a middle class did not grow among the Indian Muslims for a long time.
- The ill feeling between the British and the Muslims greatly increased as a result of the Revolt of 1857, in which Muslims had actively participated. But later, few sections of Muslims were used by Britishers against rising nationalism.

- A few movements were also launched aiming at the spread of modern education and removing social abuses, like purdah and polygamy. The Mohammedan Literary Society of Calcutta founded in 1863 by Nawab Abdul Latif, was one of the earliest organisations to take steps in this direction

### **Wahabi Movement**

- The earliest organised Muslim response to Western influences appeared in the form of the Wahabi Movement, which was popularly known as Walliullah Movement.
- It was essentially a revivalist movement and was inspired by the teachings of Shah Walliullah. Shah Wallullah (1702-62) was the first Indian Muslim leader of the 18th century, who expressed concern at the degenerate which had set in among Indian Muslims. He tried to organise the Indian Muslims around the two-fold ideals of this movement.
  - **Firstly** the desirability at creating harmony among the four school of Muslims jurisprudence, which had divided the Indian Muslims. He sought to integrate the best elements of the four schools.
  - **Secondly**, the recognition of the role of individual conscience in religion. He held that in cases where the Qiram and the Hadis provide conflicting interpretations, the individual could make a decision on the basis of his own judgement and conscience.
- Initially, the movement was directed against the Sikhs in Punjab, but after the British annexation at Punjab (1849), the movement was directed against the British. The movement was suppressed by the superior military force of the British in the 1870s.

### **Titu Mir's Movement**

- Mir Nithar Ali popularly known as Titu Mir, was a disciple of Syed Ahmed of Rae Bareli, the founder of Wahabi Movement. Titu Mir organised the Muslim peasants against the Hindu landlords and the British indigo planters

- The movement was not as militant as the British records made it out to be only in the last year of Titu Mir's life was there a confrontation Between him and the British police. He was killed in action in AD 1831.

### **Faraizi Movement**

- The movement, also called the Faraizi Movement because of its emphasis on the Islamic faith, was founded By Haji Shariat-Allah.
- The movement was popular in East Bengal and aimed at eradication of social innovations prevalent among the Muslims of the region Under the leadership of Haji's son Daou Mian, the movement became revolutionary from AD 1840 onwards.
- Dadu Mian gave the movement an organisational system from village to the provincial level with a Khalifa or authorised deputy at every level The Faraizi also organised paramilitary forces to tight the Hindu landlords and even the police

### **Aligarh Movement**

- The most important movement for the spread of modern education and social reform among Muslims was started by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (1817-98).
- Syed Ahmed Khan was deeply concerned at the depressed position of the Muslims and raising them from their backwardness became his lifelong passion. He strove hard to remove the hostility of the British rulers towards the Muslims and to persuade the Muslims to accept the religious and educational reforms.
- He appealed to the Muslims to return to the original Islamic principle of purity and simplicity.
- He advocated English education for the regeneration of Muslims in India. For this, Syed Ahmed Khan had to face opposition from the orthodox section of Muslims. However, with courage and wisdom, he overcame these obstacles.
- In 1861, he founded the Translation society which was later renamed as Scientific society. The society was located at Aligarh. It putted Urdu translations of English books on scientific and other subjects and an English Urdu journal for spreading liberal ideas on social reform.

- His greatest achievement was the establishment of the Mohammedan Anglo Oriental College at Aligarh in 1875. In course of time, this college became the most important educational institution of Indian Muslim. It provided for education in humanities and science through English medium. The college received support from the leading Muslims throughout India and the British showed much interest, both officially and otherwise in its development.
- The **Mohammedan Anglo Oriental (MAO)** College, which later on became the **Aligarh Muslim University (AMU)** fostered a modern outlook among the generators of students that studied there.
- Though, Syed Ahmed Khan opposed the Indian National Congress, he emphasised the unity between Hindus and Muslims.
- In AMU, not only Muslims students, there were Hindu students also moreover, it had Hindu professor also, one of them teaching Sanskrit.
- Syed Ahmed Khan opposed the activities of the Indian National Congress. He believed, like many other leaders at that time, that Indians were not yet ready to govern themselves and that their interest would be best served by remaining loyal to the British rule.
- He wanted more time for the Indian Muslims to organise and consolidate their position and thought that this could be best done by maintaining good relations with the British rulers.

### **Ahmadiyya Movement**

- This movement was founded by Mriza Ghulam Anmed - 1889. The movement was based on liberal principles.
- It described itself as the standard bearer of Mohammedan Renaissance and based itself, like the Brahmo Samaj, on the principle of universal religion of all humanity, opposing Jihad (sacred war against non-Muslims). The movement spread Western liberal education among the Indian Muslims.

## Deoband Movement

- The Deoband Movement was organised by the orthodox section among the Muslim ulema.
- It was a revivalist movement whose twin objectives were as follows.
  - To propagate among the Muslims, the pure teaching of the Quran and the Hadis
  - To keep alive the spirit of Jihad against the foreign rulers.
- The ulema under the leadership of Muhammad Qasim Nanolavi (1832 - 80) and Rashid Ahmed Gangohi (1828- 1905) founded the school at Deoband in Saharanpur, district of UP in 1866. The objective was to train religious leaders for the Muslim community.
- In the school, the instruction was imparted in original Islamic religion. The aim was moral and religious regeneration of the Muslim community. The school curriculum did not include English education and Western culture.
- Thus, in contrast to the Aligarh Movement, which aimed at welfare of the Muslim community through Western education and support of the British Government the **Deoband School** preached Islamic faith.
- Similarly, on the political front, the Deoband School welcomed the formation of Indian National Congress in 1885. In 1888, the Deoband ulema issued a religious decree (fefwa) against Syed Ahmed Khan's originations— The United Patriotic Association and the Mohammedan Anglo Oriental Association.
- Shibli Numani, a supporter of Deobend School, favoured the inclusion of English language and European sciences in the system of education. He founded the **Nadwatal Ulema** and **Darul Ulum** in Lucknow in 1894-96. He believed in the idealism of Congress and Cooperation between the Hindus and Muslims of India to create a state in which both could live peacefully.
- Together, they started a journal Rast Goftar, for the purpose and played an important role in the spread of education.

## **The Ahrar Movement**

### **(Majlis-i-Ahrar-i-Islam)**

A number of nationalist Muslims of Punjab, mainly religious leaders, called themselves Ahrars, who organised Majlis-i-Ahrar-i-Islam. They were former members of the provincial branch of the All India Khilafat Committee. The first Ahrar conference convened on 31st July, 1931 declared to achieve independence for the country, make better communal relations among different communities; establish an Islamic system in the country and uplift the Muslim masses to acquire their lost glory of the past.

## **Sikh Reform Movements**

### **Nirankari Movement**

- Founded in 18405 by **Baba Dayal Das**. He preached against the practice of Hindu ceremonies that were being performed by Sikhs. He denounced idol -worship and rejected rituals. He emphasised the worship of Geo as nirankari (formless God) and asked his disciples to obey the shabad (preaching) of the Guru and to serve their parents and avoid bad habits. Eating meat consuming liquor were also forbidden.

### **Namdhari Movement**

- It was founded as an offshoot of Kuka Movement that was funded by Balak Singh. In 1857, Balak Singh's disciple Baba Ram Singh formally inaugurated Namdhari Movement.

### **Singh Sabha**

- It was founded in 1875 at Amritsar under the guidance of **Thakur Singh Sandhawalia** and **Giani Gian Singh** Two main objectives, were:
  - To bring to Sikh Community, the benefits of Western enlightenment Through Western education.
  - To counter Hindu and Christian, the missionaries that were influencing the Sikh community at large and to revive the community by publishing historical text, religious books and to propagate knowledge. The Sabha opened Khalsa school /college.

### **Akall Movemont**

- It was an offshoot of **Singh Sabha Movement**, mainly founded with the objective of fighting the prevalent corruption amongst the community, especially that of the Mahantas. **Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee** was elected in 1920. In 1921. Mall launched a Non-Cooperation Satyagraha Movement against the Mahantas.

### **Other Reform Movements**

#### **Dharma Sabha**

- It was an orthodox society founded by Radhakont Deb (1794-1876) in 1830. They opposed the abolition of Sati, out they played very active rote n promoting Western education, even among girls.

#### **Paramhansa Mandall**

- Founded by Dadoba Pandurang and Bal Shastri Jambhekar in 1849 Members took food cooked by lo caste people Believed in permitting widow remarry and in education of women.

#### **Rehnumai Mazdayasan Sabha**

- The Rehnumai Mazdayasan Sabha was founded in 1851 for the “regeneration of the social conditions of the Par and the restoration of the Zoroastrian religion to its pure form” The movement had Naorofi Furdonji, Dadabt Naoroji, KR Cama and SS Bengalee as leaders.

#### **The Radhaswami Movement**

- This movement was founded in 1861 by a Banker Agra. Tuisi Ram. popularly known as Shiv Dayal Sahi or Swamlji Maharaj The Radhaswami believes in one supreme. The sect recognises no temples, shrine sacred places. Works o’ faith and charity, the spirit service and prayer, are laid down as necessary duties. The sect admires company of pious people.

#### **Deccan Education Society**

- Founded by MC. Ranade, VG Chibdonkar, GG Agarkar in Pune 1884. Objective was to contribute to the cause of education and culture in Western India The society founded the Ferguson College.

### **Self Respect Movement**

- It was a radical movement founded in Tamil Nadu in 1925 by EV Ramaswami Naicker popularly known as Periyar who opposed Brahman domination and advocated simple marriages without Brahman priests and rituals, forcible temple entry, burning of Manusmriti etc.

### **The Bharat Dharma Mahamandala**

- This was an All India Organisation of the orthodox educated Hindus, who rose in defence of orthodox Hinduism against the teachings of the Arya Samaj, the theosophists and the Ramakrishna Mission.

### **Lokhitawadi**

- Started by Gopal Hari Deshmukh. Believed in reorganisation of Indian society on rational principles and modern, humanistic, secular values.

### **Indian National Social Conference**

- Founded by MG Ranade and Raghunath Rao in Bombay in 1887. Focus was to abolish polygamy and Kulinism and promote intercaste marriages. The conference is also referred to as the social reform cell of INC.

### **The Deva Samaj**

- This sect was founded in 1887 at Lahore by Shiv Narain Agnihotri, who was earlier a follower of Brahma Samaj. The teachings of the Samaj were compiled in a book called Deva Snantra, which emphasises on the supreme being, eternity of soul, the supremacy of the Guru and emphasis on good action.

### **Aravippuram Movement**

- This movement was launched in 1888 by Sree Narayana Guru, a great socio-religious reformer of Kerala. He was opposed to the Brahmin priestly domination and was of the view that even a person of the lower caste could consecrate an image and act as a priest in the temple.
- On the Snivaratri festival in 1888, Sree Narayana Guru, in spite of belonging to a lower caste, installed the image of Shiva at Aravippuram, which was the beginning of this movement.

### **Poona Sava Sadan (1909)**

- It was established by GK Devadhar and Ramabai Pande in Pune. Its objectives were economic uplift and employment of women.

### **Niskam Karma Math (1910)**

- It was established by Dhondo Keshav Karve and objectives were social reform, selfless service to mankind, educational progress in women. It was founded as India's first women university in Pune, 1916.

### **The Social Service League**

- Narayan Malhar Joshi, one of the leading members of the Servants of Indian Society, founded the Social Service League in 1911. The league opened a number of day and night schools, libraries, dispensaries and started boys' clubs and scouts corps.

### **The Servants of Indian Society**

- It was founded in 1915 by Gopal Krishna Gokhale to build a dedicated group of people for social service and reforms. In the time of famine relief, union organisation, cooperatives and uplift of tribal and depressed, the society did a very commendable work.

### **The Indian Women's Association (1917)**

- Started by Annie Besant in Madras, for the upliftment of women

### **Justice Party Movement (1915-1916)**

- By T. T. Nair, P. Tyagaraj Chettiar and C. N. Mudaliar in Chennai (Tamil Nadu). Protest against the domination of Brahmins in government service, education and in the political field. The newspaper Justice, was their main organ for expressing views and opinions,

### **Bahiskrit Hitkarini Sabha**

- It was founded by B. R. Ambedkar in 1929 in Bombay to propagate social equality among Hindus and untouchables and demanded constitutional safeguard for the depressed classes.

### **Harijan Sevak Sangh (1932)**

- It was started by Mahatma Gandhi at Pune for the removal of untouchability and social discrimination against untouchables.

## **British Initiatives for Social Reforms**

### **Abolition of Female Infanticide**

- The practice of killing female infants immediately after birth was common among upper class Bengalis and Rajputs, who considered females to be an economic burden.
- The Bengal Regulations XXI of 1795 and III of 1804 declared infanticide illegal and equivalent to murder. Similarly, an act was passed in 1870 which made it compulsory for parents to register the birth of an babies. The Act of 1870 also provided for verification of female children for some years after birth particularly in areas where the custom was resorted to in utmost privacy.

### **Abolition of Sati**

- Enlightened Indian reformers led by Raja Ram Mohan Roy urged William Bentinck to take necessary steps and declare the practice of Sati illegal. The loss of his sister in law by Sati had stirred Ram Mohan Roy to action and he had published a number of articles condemning the practice,
- Finally, Regulation XXII of December 1829 declared the practice of Sati or of burying alive of widows legal and punishable by the criminal courts as culpable homicide.
- The Regulation of 1829 was applicable in the first place to Bengal presidency alone, but in 1830 was extended in slightly modified forms to Madras and Bombay presidencies.

### **Suppression of Thugi**

- Another great reform to the credit of William Bentinck is the suppression of thugs. The thugs, i.e. cheats were a sect of hereditary assassins and robbers, who lived by preying upon innocent and defenseless travellers.
- A more appropriate name for thugs was pansigar. derived from the scarf and noose used by the thugs to strangle their victims. The public opinion solidly supported the government measures to suppress Thugi in 1830.
- These thugs belonged to both the Hindu and Muslim religions and whipped the Hindu Goddess like Kali, Durga or Bhawani, to whom they offered the heads of their victim as sacrifices. The thugs were hardened criminals and were particularly active in the entire area from Oudh to Hyderabad and in Rajoutana and Bundelkhard.

- The thugs believed that Thugi was ordained means of livelihood for them and their victims were ordained to die at their hands.
- The operations against thugs were put in charge of Colonel William Sleeman. Colonel Sleeman arrested as many as 1500 thugs and sentenced them to death or imprisonment for life.
- Thugi or an organised scale ceased to exist after 1837.

### **Abolition of Slavery**

- Slavery was another institution which came attack in British India Evangelical propaganda against slavery led by Wilbeforce helped in focusing public attention in Britain on the evils of slavery in India.
- Though Britain abolished slave trade in her dominions in 1820, the company in India acknowledged the legality of slavery on the grounds that it was a traditional practice with religious sanction.
- However later a clause was inserted in the Charter Act of 1833 requiring the Governor-General in Council to abolish slavery in India Finally, the Act V of 1843 declared slavery illegal in India and all existing slaves were emancipated without any compensation to slaw owners.

### **Widow Remarriage**

- The Brahmo Samaj had the issue of widow remarriage high on its agenda and did much to popularise it. Later, the efforts were made by Pandit Vishnu Shastn, who founded the Widow Remarnage Assertion in the 1850s.
- Another prominent worker in this field was Karsondas Mulji, who started the Satya Prakash in Gujarati in 1852 to advocate widow remarriage But it was mainly due to the efforts of Pandit Ishivar Chandra Vidyasagar (1829- 91), the principal of Sanskrit College. Calcutta, that the Hindu widow's Remarriage Act. 1856, which legalised marriage of Widows and declared issue from such marriages as legitimate, was passed by the government.
- Though the issue of widow remarriage got try; legal sanction by the act, it still needed the social acceptance. Thus, the social reformers continued their task of popularising the issue.

- In Western India. Professor DK Karve took up the cause of widow remarriage and in Madras, Veerasalingam Pantulu made efforts in the same direction.
- Professor Karve started his career as a teacher in the girl's college at Bombay and in 1891, became a professor at Fergusson College, Pune.
- Karve devoted his life to the cause of upliftment of Hindu widows and became the Secretary of Widow Remarriage Association. He himself married a widow in 1893 and in 1899. He opened a widow's home in Poona to provide vocational training to the high caste widows. He crowned his work by setting up an Indian Women's University at Bombay in 1916.
- The right of widows to remarriage was also advocated by BM Malabari, Justice Govind Mahadeo Ranade and K Nataraan among others.

### **Prohibition of Child Marriage**

- Legislative action in prohibiting child marriage came in 1872 when by the Native Marriage Act, the marriage of girls below the age of 14 and boys below 18 years were forbidden.
- The act was popularly known as Civil Marriage Act. This act however had a limited impact. Later the relentless efforts of a Parsi reformer, BM Malabar), were rewarded by the enactment of the Age of Consent act, 1891 which forbade the marriage of girls below the age of 12.
- The Sharda Act, 1929 further pushed up the marriage age and provided for penal action in marriages of boys below 18 and girls less than 14 years of age.
- In free India, the Child Marriage Restraint (Amendment) Act, 1978 raised the age of marriage for girls to 18 years and for boys to 21.

### **Various Social Legislations Under British Rule**

- 1795 Abolition of infanticide by British Regulation
- 1802 Addition of infanticide by Lord Wellesley.
- 1811 Abolition of slavery under Regulation X by Bengal Government
- 1829 Abolition of Sati by Loard William Bentinck (under Regulation XVIII. Pioneering efforts in this direction were made by Raja Ram Mohan Roy.
- 1831-37 Abolition of Thugi by William Bentinck, operation Willian Sleemen.
- 1843 Abolition of slavery by lord Ellenborough.
- 1844-48 Lord Hardinge suppressed the practice of making human sacrifice that had prevailed among the tribes of Gonds.
- 1856 Approval of widow remarriage by Hindu Widow's Remarriage Act by the efforts of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar
- 1872 Banning of the child marriage Act
- 1891 Age of marriage for the girls was increased to 12 years by Age of Consent Act, by the efforts of Behramji Malabari.
- 1929 the age of marriage was increased to 18 years in the case of boys and 14years m the case of girls by the Child Manage Restrain Act commonly known as Sharda Act.
- 1931 Banning of child marriage by Infant Marriage Prevention Act.
- 1937 Right to properly given to women