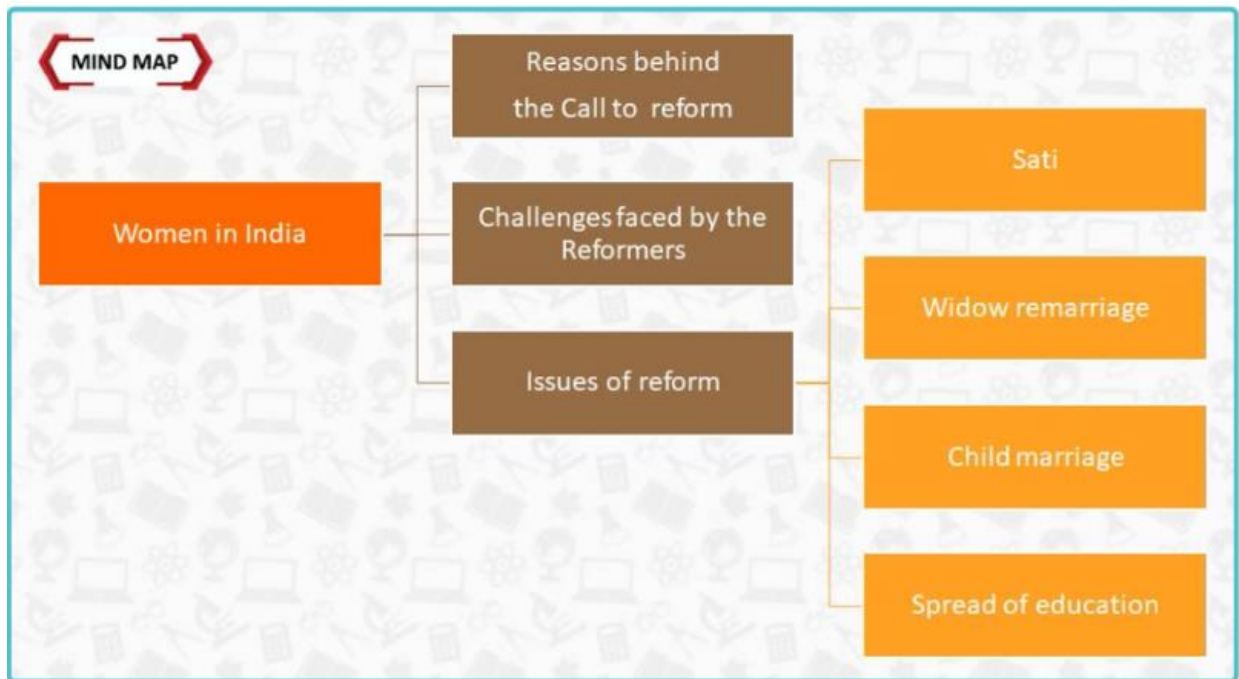


**DELHI PUBLIC SCHOOL, MANDLA ROAD, JABALPUR**  
**CLASS NOTES ON HISTORY**

**CHAPTER 8 – WOMEN AND SOCIAL REFORM**

**BASIC CONCEPTS**



**I. CHOOSE THE CORRECT OPTION.**

1. c. 19th
2. b. 1829
3. c. Pandita Ramabai
4. d. 1891
5. a. Savitribai Phule

**II. WRITE WHETHER TRUE OR FALSE.**

1. True
2. False
3. True
4. False
5. False

**III. FILL IN THE BLANKS.**

1. Revolt of 1857
2. Sati
3. Lord William Bentinck
4. Child Marriage Restraint (Amendment)
5. Savitribai Phule, Jyotirao Phule

**IV. ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN ONE OR TWO SENTENCES.**

1. What were the practices which made the lives of women in India miserable?

Practices such as child marriage, purdah system, sati and the ill-treatment of widows along with lack of educational opportunities made the lives of women miserable.

2. Who was the Governor-General responsible for the abolition of sati?  
The Governor-General responsible for the abolition of sati was Lord William Bentinck.

3. Who initiated the widow remarriage movement in south India?  
In south India, the reform movement in support of widow remarriage was initiated by Kandukuri Veerasalingam.

4. Name three acts that dealt with the issue of child marriage in India.  
Age of Consent Act (1891), Child Marriage Restraint Act (1929) and Child Marriage Restraint (Amendment) Act of 1978 dealt with the issue of child marriage in India.

5. Who was J E D Bethune?  
J E D Bethune was the President of the Council of Education. He founded a girls' school, called Hindu Balika Vidyalaya in Calcutta.

**V. ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IN BRIEF.**

1. Define sati. Discuss the contribution of Raja Ram Mohan Roy towards the abolition of sati in India.  
Sati was the practice of widows burning themselves, either voluntary or by force, in the funeral pyre of their husbands. It was supported by some orthodox elements of the Hindu society.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy played a very important role in the movement for the abolition of sati.

- He wrote against sati, describing instances of sati as murders, and further argued that it was inhumane in nature.
- He also reinterpreted the scriptures and pointed out that they did not support the practice of sati.
- He wrote a pamphlet on the subject of abolition of sati to educate general public and organised a committee to ensure that the government regulations were followed.

2. Discuss the widow remarriage movement in India.

Widow remarriage movement gained momentum by the efforts of the following:

- Pandita Ramabai discussed the life of Hindu widows in her book, *The High Caste Hindu Woman*.
- Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Dayanand Saraswati and Swami Vivekananda advocated widow remarriage so that widows could re-enter family life.
- Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar launched a powerful movement in favour of widow remarriage.
- A large number of petitions from Bengal, Madras, Bombay, Nagpur and other cities of India were presented to the government, pressuring it to pass an act legalising the remarriage of widows. This led to the passing of the Hindu Widows Remarriage Act in 1856.
- In south India, the reform movement was initiated by Kandukuri Veerasalingam, who made widow remarriage and female education the key points of his social change movement.

3. Discuss how social reformers in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries dealt with the issue of child marriage in India.

Child Marriage was popular among many castes and communities in India. Young girls were married at the tender age of four to five years for various reasons. 19th century reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Dayanand Saraswati and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar opposed this practice since children, especially the girls, were too young to take their own decision and were forced by their families into getting married. It also discouraged the growth of education among girls and

harmed their health, in case they bore children at a tender age. The reformers therefore put constant pressure on the British government to enact a law on this subject. In 1891 CE, the Age of Consent Act was passed by the government, which merely stated that until a girl turned 12 years old, she could not be forced to have a physical relationship with her husband. Finally, in 1929 CE, the Child Marriage Restraint Act was passed by the government, raising the marriageable age to 14 years for girls and 18 years for boys. This age bar was further raised to 18 and 21 respectively, with the passage of the Child Marriage Restraint (Amendment) Act 1978 by the Indian government.

4. What were the reasons behind denying education to women before 19<sup>th</sup> century?

Following were the reasons why girls were denied education before the 19th century.

- It was believed that educating a woman would lead to her husband's death, which is why it was better to deny education to women.
- Girls belonging to the upper-caste families were not allowed to travel to schools because that would mean they would have to cross public spaces, which was not acceptable.
- It was argued that women who acquired education would no longer be interested in household chores and duties. In other words, getting an education would 'corrupt' their minds.
- The women who received education at home were mostly taught subjects such as moral education, home science and needlework, which would help women to be good wives, mothers and companions.

5. Discuss the contribution of the following personalities towards encouraging the spread of education among women.

a. *Savitribai Phule and Jyotirao Phule:*

They focused on providing education to girls in western India. Savitribai, the first woman teacher in modern Maharashtra, along with her husband, opened five schools for girls in and around

Pune in 1848. They opened a separate school for girls belonging to the underprivileged groups.

*b. Pandita Ramabai:*

She was a reformer from Western India and her writings were inspirational for women.

*c. Begum Rokeya Sakhawat:*

She played a major role in inspiring women to put forth their demands. She established the first Muslim girls' school at Calcutta in 1911.

**I DO, I UNDERSTAND, PAGE 79 OF THE TEXTBOOK (to be done by students) :**

Child marriages still occur in many parts of India. Find out more about this problem and the various steps the government has taken to tackle it. You can use recent articles in magazines and newspapers the internet and the books in your school library to gather information. Prepare a report based on your findings.

**VALUE CHECK, PAGE 79 OF THE TEXTBOOK (to be done by students) :**

Religion has often been used to justify certain practices and customs that can only be considered evil and barbaric. Can you think of any such practices that exist even today? If yes, what should be done to stop these?