

## **Modern Indian History Class 18**

**23rd November, 2023 at 9:00 AM**

### **INDIAN RENAISSANCES (9:03 AM)**

- **Social reforms-Indian Renaissances/Bengal renaissance.**
- **I- Idolatry**
- **P - Priestcraft**
- **M - marriage -widow/child**
- **I - infanticide**
- **C - caste**
- **P - polygamy**
- **P- polytheism**
- **I- illiteracy**
- **Named Renaissance similar to the 14th-century Renaissance (rebirth ) in Western Europe -**
- **1. Oppressive church and priest.**
- **2. No modern education.**
- **3. High poverty.**
- **4. Birth-based discrimination.**
- **The reasons of 14th century Renaissances -**
- **1. Scientific Revolution.**
- **2. Birth of protestant Christianity.**
- **3. Reformation.**
- **4. Capitalism.**
- **5. Enlightenment.**
- **Solution-**
- **Studied scriptures and later doctrine of logic- for human welfare.**
- **It leads to capitalism, the end of feudalism, modern polity, science and technology revolution.**

## **SOCIAL RELIGIOUS REFORMS (9:49 AM)**

- Religion as a source of social practices.
- Why in the 19th century, social religious reforms take place-
- 1. Post-1813, the British wanted to fulfil the white man's burden via social reforms by law.
- 2. Criticism by the British led to cultural nationalism that they would prove that the past was great and could reverse decay via reforms.
- 3. The doctrine of rationality and humanism led to self-assessment.
- Who provided leadership -
  - 1. Pre -1857-western educated middle-class Indians with government support.
  - 2. Post-1857- by more culturally nationalistic, at times non-western educated middle-class Indians and without government support.
  - 3. Post-1857, high criticism by the British and social reforms to the backseat post-1857.
  - 4. Extremists used cultural nationalism for political nationalism.
- Kinds of reformers -
  - 1. Used only rationality.
  - Young Bengal - Vidya Sagar.
  - 2. Used both rationality and religion- this way was more successful than 1st way as masses were religious-
  - Raja Ram Moham Roy, Swami Dayanand Sarasvati.
  - 3. No mass movement focus -
    - Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Devendra Nath Tagore.
  - 4. Mass movement focus -
    - Keshav Chandra Sen, Swami Dayanand Sarasvati, Swami Vivekananda.
  - 5. Rationality supreme -Pre-1857 reformers as mild cultural nationalism-
    - Raja Ram Mohan Roy.
  - 6. Vedas -supreme-
    - Example post-1857-
      - Swami Dayanand Sarasvati, Swami Vivekananda.
  - 7. Slow pace and smaller first (caste, women later so don't anger masses)
    - Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Devendra Nath Tagore, Prarthana Samaj, Brahmo Smaja.
  - 8. Fast pace and big reforms-

- Young Bengal, Swami Dayanand Sarasvati, Swami Vivekananda, Vidya Sagar.

#### **EVENTS-(10:54 AM)**

- 1803-Lord Wellesley (1905 banned child sacrifice in Sagar island of Bay of Bengal).
- Derozio and Young Bengal (1830s)-
- Derozio was a Eurasian teacher, his students = were Young Bengal.
- Used only reason.
- Questioned everything.
- Pro-western sciences and
- Atheisms
- Great at polity like -Raja Ram Moham wanted -separation of power, press freedom, Indians in civil services, and trial by jury.
- 1838- Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge where they debated and discussed Western sciences and social reforms.
- \* Notice- no focus on mass movement.
- Result -
- Failed to develop any mass movement due to total faith in Western education and disregard for religion, while the target population was deeply religious.
- But became famous due to their radical ideas.

## **RAJA RAM MOHAN ROY AND HIS BRAHMO SAMAJ 1828-(11:05 AM)**

- Roy believed that social reforms were not possible without religious reforms due to the high importance of religion in social life.
- He was called the father of Modern India.
- Student and scholar of Vedas, Christianity, Persian and Sanskrit literature.
- Questioned Christianity's superiority based on his study of Vedanta text and Christianity.
- Believed in universalism that is all religions led to God.
- Therefore Vedas are superior for Hindus but did not focus on conversion.
- His response to British criticism was called to go back to the pure past of Vedantic tradition.
- Therefore accepted -decay in recent times, but also argued that the past was glorious.
- His beliefs -
- The caste divides which is why India lacks modern nationalism and a sense of Indianness.
- Condemned idolatry, priestcraft, child marriage, poor condition of widows, infanticide, casteism, polygamy, polytheism and illiteracy.
- @ polytheism-He translated Upanishad to Bangla to prove that Hindus favour monotheism (That is the idea that all the gods are the same, therefore there is only one god in Hinduism and all gods of all religions are the same that is universalism).
- He was not in favour of otherworldliness- heaven and hell- life after death.
- He was against the doctrine of Karma- acts of past life decide present life.
- He was against the doctrine of incarnation (God's human birth).
- Argues that sati is murder as per every shastra.
- However, for Roy, rationality was supreme and Vedas was not infallible.
- He wanted Western sciences and Western education, not Indian education. (\* imagine a religious scientist).
- Only Western education could modernise India.
- Examples- Roy opposed the government setting up Sanskrit College in 1824 and influenced Macaulay's minutes on education in 1835(died in 1833).
- He set up Brahmo Samaj in 1828.
- But Brahmo Samaj 1828 took no strong stand on the doctrine of Karma and transmigration of the soul as these are central to Hindu religion.
- Therefore, for acceptance of Brahmo Samaj 1828 among the masses.

- Brahmo Samaj worked against idolatry, priestcraft, polytheism, sati, etc.
- He took the help of British authority was social reforms as wanted to use British legislative and executive power.
- Roy also demanded separation of power, press freedom, Indian recruitment in civil services, and trial by jury.

#### **SATI (11:41 AM)**

- **Reasons-**
- In ancient times, practised due to the oneness of the soul, but with degradation in society practised for family respect, the stereotype of the ideal wife and mainly greed of relative@property.
- Therefore, now either suicide or murder and not rooted in spiritualism, not practised widely and mainly by the upper caste in Bengal.
- 1800- lower caste also started practising sati for caste mobility.
- Missioners (1813) opposed sati but failed.
- Scripture-based debates between Brahmo Samaj and Dharma Sabha(Radha Kanta Dev).
- Bentick 1828-35 -Pre-condition that it would be proved that sati is against India's scripture. (\* orientalism)
- Roy proved that sati is murder as per Shastras therefore Sati Abolition Act 1829.

## **BRAHMO SAMAJ - (11:57 AM)**

- It became a major religious movement based on monotheism among the upper caste western educated middle class of Bengal but failed to reach the masses.
- After Roy, Devendranath Tagore gave organisational strength.
- 1860- Bijoy Krishna Goswami reconciled Brahmoism with Vaishnavism.
- Keshav Chandra Sen versus Devendranath Tagore and there was a split in Brahmo Samaj
- Keshav Chandra Sen was a radical reformer while Devendranath Tagore was a gradualist.
- Keshav Chandra Sen reformed @caste and women.
- Keshav Chandra Sen against the domination of Brahmo Samaj by the upper caste - supported inter-caste marriages and attacked the caste system.
- These issues were too sensitive for Devendranath Tagore who feared alienation from the masses.
- Keshav Chandra Sen tried mass movement by spreading Brahmoism among masses outside Calcutta and Bengal.
- Keshav Chandra Sen wanted Brahmoism as a new religion while Devendranath Tagore was against this.
- Differences led to the split, therefore 1866, Keshav Chandra Sen set up Brahmo Samaj of India (BSOI) and Devendra Nath Tagore- Adi Brahmo Samaj.
- Keshav Chandra Sen's efforts led to the Brahmo Marriage Act by Mayo 1869-72.
- Under this, inter-caste marriage and widow marriage were legal but failed as a pre-condition of leaving Hinduism.
- 1878- The split in Brahmo Samaj in 1866 led to Sadharan Brahmo Samaj.
- Reason- Keshav Chandra Sen arranged the marriage of his minor daughter -which led to controversy.
- Therefore Brahmo Samaj 1828, due to multiple splits, ideological and organisational differences.
- Akshay Kumar Dutt 1820-66
- Sighted medical opinion against child marriage (used logic).
- Paramhansa Mandali-Maharsathra (1849)
- It worked like young Bengal.
- Therefore failed like Young Bengal.
- Prarthana Samaj (1867)
- By Atmaram Pandurang with the help of Keshav Chandra Sen.

- Dominated by upper caste middle caste Marathi.
- Major role of M G Ranade, R G Bhandarkar, K T Telang.
- Goals- like Keshav Chandra Sen.
- Methods like Devendra Nath Tagore.
- Opened branches-Gujarat, Madras, Karachi.
- In Telugu areas- Veeresalingam - he made set up for widow remarriage.
- However, reforms in madras were slow due to poor Western education and high casteism.
- M G Rande -
- He was a scholar, author, judge, MLA, editor, and father of Indian economics, setting up Poona Sarvajanik Sabha and the Indian National Social Conference.
- He wrote rise of Maratha power and worked for women's reforms via the Maharashtra Girls's Education Society.
- Prarthana Samaj - Indian National Social Conference.

**THE TOPIC OF THE NEXT CLASS IS THE CONTINUATION OF SOCIAL-RELIGIOUS REFORMS**