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An Institute for Civil Services

MAINS TEST SERIES 2023

GS MAINS Q&A

TOPICAL TEST - 06

(5 QUESTION)

HISTORY

Social reforms in British India

HISTORY - 3

Time Allowed: 50 Mins. *Max. Marks: 75*

1. **How 19th social reform movements helped in emancipation of women? Assess the role of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar in this regard.**
2. **"The Aligarh movement emphasised reconciliation of Islamic teachings with the needs of the modern age". Highlighting the role of Aligarh school of thought in reforming Islam in India, throw light on the various other Islamic reform movements in 19th century and their nature.**
3. **Critically analyze the values that helped Ramakrishna Mission to stand the test of time.**
4. **What were the various changes introduced in the fabric of Indian society in the 19th century due to the various Socio-Religious Reform Movements?**
5. **The legacy and effect of Jyotiba Phule on anti-caste campaigns and other social reforms have lasted throughout the years. Elaborate.**

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HISTORY - 3

1. How 19th social reform movements helped in emancipation of women? Assess the role of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar in this regard.

Approach

1. ***Introduce by briefly describing the advent of social reform movements for emancipation of women (40 words)***
2. ***Discuss the different reformative initiatives take for emancipation of women (100 words)***
3. ***State the contributions of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar in improving the condition of women (70 words)***
4. ***Conclusion (40 words)***

Hints:

The urgent need for social and religious reform began to manifest itself from the early decades of the 19th century and it emerged in response to the contact with Western culture and education. The degraded condition of women in society was evident to educated Indians who started to work systematically for their removal.

The women suffered from some of the very degrading practices at the hands of a patriarchal and orthodox society such as female infanticide, child marriage, sati pratha, ban on widow remarriage, restrictions on girl education and polygamy.

The social reformers attacked a number of traditional, authoritarian, and hierarchical social institutions and launched social reform initiatives to liberate the Indian women from their shack-les in the following way:

- Rammohan Roy fought relentlessly against social evils like sati, polygamy, child marriage and female infanticide. He organised a movement against the inhuman custom of sati and helped William Bentinck to pass a law banning the practice (1829). It was the first successful social movement against an age old social evil.
- Prarthana Samaj in Maharashtra campaigned against child marriage and the purdah system, preached widow remarriage and emphasised female education. In order to reform Hinduism, Justice Ranade started the Widow Remarriage Association and the Deccan Education Society.
- In 1839, Debendranath Tagore founded the Tatvabodhini Sabha advocate for widow remarriage, the abolition of polygamy and women's education in Bengal region.
- Asserting that the Vedas made no mention of untouchability, child marriage and the subjugation of women, Swami Dayanand attacked these practices vehemently through the Arya Samaj.
- Pandita Rama Bai wrote about the unequal treatment meted out to the women of India. She founded the Arya Mahila Sabha in Pune and opened the Sarda Sadan for helping destitute widows.
- Behramji M. Malabari, founded the Sevasadan in 1885. The organization specialized in taking care of those women who were exploited and then discarded by society.

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- The initial efforts in the direction of female education were made by the Christian missionaries. Prof. Karve founded several educational institutions in Maharashtra, the most notable being India's first Women's University in Bombay in the early 20th century. The spread of female education led to several other social reforms of great consequences, such as, the abolition of purdah, which further led to the participation of women in the freedom struggle.

A mention ought to be made in this regard of the efforts of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar who devoted his life for emancipating the women from the shackles of patriarchy.

- Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar was a great social reformer who sought to improve the condition of widows by legalizing widow remarriages. The first Hindu Widow Remarriage Act was introduced in 1856 owing to of Vidyasagar's relentless efforts.
- Vidyasagar also protested against child-marriage and campaigned against polygamy.
- Importantly, he was a champion of women's education. His efforts in this direction were praise worthy. As government inspector of schools, he helped organize thrity-five girls' schools many of which he ran at his own expense. As secretary of Bethune School (established in 1849), I.C. Vidyasagar was one of the pioneers of higher education for the women in India

Conclusion:

Recently, 200th birth anniversary of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar was commemorated by promoting his values of gender equality and empowerment and his courageous acts of freeing women from orthodox and oppressing social customs to raise their status in the society as equals.

2. *"The Aligarh movement emphasised reconciliation of Islamic teachings with the needs of the modern age". Highlighting the role of Aligarh school of thought in reforming Islam in India, throw light on the various other Islamic reform movements in 19th century and their nature.*

Approach

1. ***Briefly describe the goals of Muslim reform movements (40 words)***
2. ***Discuss the role of Aligarh movement (100 words)***
3. ***Discuss various other reform movements among Muslims (70 words)***
4. ***Conclusion (40 words)***

Hints:

The major concern of Muslim reformers was the removal of social and educational backwardness among the Muslims and the inferior status accorded to women such as rigid religious orthodoxy, purdah system, polygamy and lack of education among the girls. Muslim leaders believed that Islam in India had been degenerated and need to be urgently reformed.

Role of Syed Ahmad Khan and Aligarh school of thought in reforming Islam:

- The most important socio-religious movement among the Muslims came to be known as the Aligarh Movement, organised by Syed Ahmad Khan. The Aligarh Movement proved to be an important step towards social and political awakening among the Muslims.
- Syed Ahmad Khan tried to interpret the Quran in the light of reason and spoke out against fanaticism and ignorance. His progressive social ideas were propagated through his magazine Tahdhib-ul-Akhlaq (Improvement of Manners and Morals)
- Syed Ahmed Khan believed that the religious and social life of the Muslims could be improved only by imbibing modern western scientific knowledge and culture. Throughout his early life, he advocated the study of English language even against the opposition of the orthodox Muslims. He considered that only modern education could lead Muslims towards progress.

- Khan established an English school in Ghazipur and started the Mohammadan Anglo-Oriental College (M.A.O.) at Aligarh in 1875 which later developed into the Aligarh Muslim University. Aligarh University provided education in humanities and science through English medium
- Aligarh movement campaigned against the purdah system, polygamy and the Muslim system of divorce. It emphasised the need for removing irrational social customs while retaining the essence of Islam and encouraging a rational interpretation of the Quran.

Other reform movements in Islam religion:

- The Mohammedan Literacy Society of Calcutta was founded by Abdul Latif in 1863. It was one of the earliest organisations that promoted modern education among the upper and middle class Muslims.
- Shariatullah of Bengal, leader of the Faraizi movement in Bengal, took up the cause of the peasants and condemned the evils of the caste system among the Muslims. It aimed at the eradication of social innovations current among the Muslims of the region.
- Mirza Ghulam Ahmed founded the Ahmediya Movement in 1899. It described itself as the standard bearer of Mohamedan Renaissance, and based itself, like Brahmo Samaj, on the principle of Universal religion of all humanity. Under this movement, a number of schools and colleges were opened all over the country. They favoured the unity among Hindus and Muslims.
- Deoband Movement was established by Mohammad Qasim Nanautavi and Rashid Ahamd Gangohi as a revivalist movement. In contrast to the Aligarh Movement which aimed at the welfare of Muslims through western education and support of the British government, the aim of Deoband Movement was moral and religious regeneration of the Muslim community.

Conclusion:

The Islamic reform movements introduced modern education guided the Indians Muslims towards a scientific and rational approach to life. It broke the myth of a timeless monolith Muslim society overshadowed by religious ritualism and rigidities and ushered in a broader perspective towards human beings and the world.

3. Critically analyze the values that helped Ramakrishna Mission to stand the test of time.

Approach

1. ***Briefly introduce with the Ramakrishna Mission (40 words)***
2. ***Discuss the ideological values of Ramkrishna mission (100 words)***
3. ***Also discuss their relevance in contemporary times (50 words)***
4. ***Bring out popular debates which shows ideological limitation of Ramakrishna mission (60 words)***

Hints:

Ramakrishna mission (RKM) is a religious and spiritual organisation which forms the core of a worldwide spiritual movement known as the Ramakrishna Movement or the Vedanta Movement. The mission is named after and inspired by the Indian saint Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and founded by Ramakrishna's chief disciple Swami Vivekananda .The organisation mainly propagates the Hindu philosophy of Vedanta–Advaita Vedanta and four yogic ideals–jnana, bhakti, karma, and Raja Yoga.

The ideological values of Ramkrishna mission

- **Compassion:** Ramkrishna mission has been involved in many compassionate works which make them hold their ground among common people. Ex. Relief work during cyclone, flood, famine, medical and educational services

- **Humanism:** They believe that humans are potentially divine. Thus service to men is service to god. They are involved in rehabilitation work of destitute of disasters, services towards downtrodden tribal people. They believe in philosophy of "Daridra Narayan"
- **Spiritualism:** Weakness of self is the main cause of sufferings. He/she who knows his strength and happiness can earn happiness. They propagate spiritual ideals to help depressed to find true meaning of life.
- **Secularism:** Different spiritual path lead to same god. They support harmony among all religions which helps to maintain peace in society.
- **Work is worship:** They believe that work is spiritual discipline and perceive it as service to god. It teaches common men to have pride in whatever righteous means of livelihood he/she has.

All these values give the organization strength to keep working towards welfare of humanity. Due to these universal values people join Ramakrishna Mission for rendering services and also for providing financial help.

However there has been certain loopholes that show inconsistency in their ideology as follows:

- **Dichotomy in Ideals:** They believe that universe arises from infinite consciousness of Brahmin which directs us towards supremacy of Brahmins. This idea is inconsistent with humanity which vouches for equality.
- **Racial Essence:** Supremacy of Brahman shows racial attitude towards others creeds. It also suggests their belief in caste which contradicts with idea of modern INDIA.
- **Religious Conservatives:** They are alleged to be anti-Muslims due to their Hinduism propaganda, which suggest biasness towards other religions.

Conclusion:

Despite these allegations Ramakrishna Mission stand with their ideological values and work towards humanity which make them stand the test of time. It has been more than 100 years that Ramakrishna Mission is working successfully.

4. What were the various changes introduced in the fabric of Indian society in the 19th century due to the various Socio-Religious Reform Movements?

Approach

1. ***Briefly introduce the spread of western ideas by Britishers and about the static and decadent Indian society. (50 words)***
2. ***Mention about the major personalities and organizations associated with Socio-Religious Reform Movements. (70 words)***
3. ***Analyse the orientation and impact of Socio-Religious Reform Movements on Indian society. (90 words)***
4. ***Conclusion (40 words)***

Hints:

Indian social milieu in the 19th century suffered from the caste system which led to inequality and social disunity. The Hindu social system practiced Sati, female infanticide, child marriage, and believed in superstitions. The status of women deteriorated and widows could not marry. Muslims were also divided due to various differences.

The Britishers who conquered India brought with themselves the novel intellectual currents that were produced in Europe during the age of enlightenment. These tools were science, reasoning, humanism, objectivity, logic, etc. Britishers presented a picture of stagnant Indian civilization characterized by static and decadent society.

Major personalities and organizations associated with Socio-Religious Reform Movements:

The foremost social problem that attracted enlightened opinion was the need for a better deal for women in society. Various reformers like Rammohan Roy, Ishwar Vidyasagar made consistent efforts to eradicate social malaises. Their actions brought fruits in the form of-

- Abolition of Sati and infanticide
- Condemnation of child marriage and polygamy
- Popularisation of widow remarriage
- Caste restriction and the degrading position of lower castes especially untouchables
- **Spirit of self-reliance and determination:** It was an obvious counter-reaction in the form of the emergence of a few revivalist movements which helped in the regeneration of lost pride of the Hindu religion. For e.g., **Arya Samaj** by **Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Ramakrishna Mission,** etc.
- **Attack on the rigidities of the caste system:** These reform movements worked for the welfare of the lower castes and improving their status in society. Social reform organizations such as **Satysodhak Samaj** by **Jyotibha Phule** worked for the upliftment of lower castes.

Orientation and impact of Socio-Religious Reform Movements on Indian society:

- In social life, the reform movements aimed at the abolition of castes, child marriage, and other legal and social inequalities. In religion, they attacked bigotry, superstition and the hold of the priestly class. Social and religious reforms gradually became an integral part of the struggle for political freedom resulting in the national movement.

  Reform legislation and attitudinal changes among Indians were the major impacts of the reform movements.
- In the field of the emancipation of women, legal measures were introduced to abolish sati and female infanticide. Permission was given for widow remarriage and the marriageable age of girls was raised to ten years.
- This new spirit of intellectual awakening based on objectivity produced a tendency among many Indians where they **started questioning the social evils** that for so long got its approval from religion and ancient tradition.
- However, Indian intellectuals **refused to break away from Hinduism** clinically and instead they made rigorous efforts to imbibe positive western values to challenge the irrationality of Indian religions.
- They were stimulated by the new knowledge, sought to reform Hinduism from within and sought **to purge it of superstitious beliefs and practices**. Idolatry, image worship, the practice of pilgrimages came up for close scrutiny and consequent reform.

  There was an emergence of a tendency to discard traditional beliefs and practices which cannot stand the test of modern knowledge.
- It brought a great **change in the concept of purity and pollution** which formed an integral part of the traditional Hindu religion. The educated persons could see no logic behind labelling certain forbidden vegetables such as garlic, onion, as impure; rather food value of vegetables received more importance.
- Domestic rituals underwent a change. For example, the attainment of puberty by girls was no longer any occasion for elaborate rituals and it began to be looked upon as a natural stage in the process of growth.

Conclusion:

Social and religious reform movements arose among all communities of the Indian people to lay the foundations of modernization. They also paved the way for the growth of national consciousness and a national movement aimed at the independence of the country and at the reconstruction of society. These reform movements added scientific temper to the Indian freedom struggle which was given its due place by enshrining in the constitution of independent India.

5. The legacy and effect of Jyotiba Phule on anti-caste campaigns and other social reforms have lasted throughout the years. Elaborate.

Approach

1. ***Briefly introduce about Jyotiba Phule. (40 words)***
2. ***Explain work of Jyotiba Phule towards rights for all, women empowerment, and education. (90 words)***
3. ***Established relationships between work of Jyotiba Phule and subsequent Social reformes and educational development. (80 words)***
4. ***Conclusion (40 words)***

Hints:

Jyotirao Govindrao Phule was an Indian social activist, thinker, anti-caste social reformer and writer from Maharashtra. His work extended too many fields, including eradication of untouchability and the caste system and for his efforts in educating women and lower caste people.

Equal rights for all:

- **Jyotiba Phule** attacked the orthodox Brahmins and other upper castes and termed them as "hypocrites".
- **Jyotiba Phule** also wrote the "GULAMGIRI" by describing about the domination and oppression of Brahmins.
- **Mahatma Jyotiba Phule** urged the "peasants" and "proletariat" to refuse to obey the restrictions imposed upon them.
- **Jyotiba Phule** also supported by some Brahmin friends who extended their support to make the movement successful.

Efforts for Women and Education:

- **Jyotiba Phule** was supported by his wife Savitribai Phule.
- In year 1851, **Mahatma Jyotiba Phule** established a girl's school and asked his wife to teach the girls in the school. Later, he opened two more schools for the girls and an indigenous school for the lower castes.
- **Jyotiba Phule** realised the pathetic conditions of widows and established an ashram for young widows and eventually became advocate of the idea of Widow Remarriage.
- **Mahatma Jyotiba Phule** was pained by their plight and established an orphanage in 1854 to shelter these unfortunate souls from perishing at the society's cruel hands.
- Jyotirao and Savitribai Phule recognised that education was one of the central planks through which women and the depressed classes could become empowered and hope to stand on an equal footing with the rest of the society.
- Phules also started the Literacy Mission in India between 1854-55

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Jyotiba Phule's legacy and effect on anti-caste campaigns and women empowerment have lasted throughout the years.

- **Jyotiba Phule** was married as a young boy to Savitribai who was just nine years old. His wife fully supported his idealistic views and became a feminist and social activist in her own right. Savitribai Phule is considered to be one of the pioneers of the feminist movement in India. Jyotirao Phule, her husband, was one of the pillars of support to her in her journey to spreading awareness about the importance of women's education and uplifting the status of women and India.
- His well known books include Gulamgiri (Slavery) and Shetkarayacha Aasud (Cultivator's Whipcord) which continued to inspire the lower caste movements.
- Phule is credited with introducing the Marathi word dalit (meaning broken, crushed) to describe those outside the varna system. In the 1970s, the term was made popular by the Dalit Panthers.
- King Shahu was influenced by the works of Jyotiba Phule, and long patronized the Satya Shodhak Samaj, formed by Phule. The association sought to secure political rights for non-Brahmins and invite their equal participation in politics. Shahu made great efforts to abolish the concept of caste segregation and untouchability. He introduced (perhaps the first known) reservation system in government jobs for untouchable castes.
- Phule inspired BR Ambedkar, India's first law minister and architect of our Constitution. Ambedkar not only acknowledged Phule as one of his three gurus but also drew inspiration from him.

Conclusion:

Mahatma Jotirao Phule laid the foundation of the mass movement for justice, equality and liberation in modern India. He was the first person to create a strong ideological and social movement for the total independence of peasants, labourers and Untouchables – the Shudras and Ati-Shudras – and women in the country. His solutions to problems facing Indian society were comprehensive and revolutionary. Addressing social, cultural, religious and economic issues and emphasizing the role of education, he sought to bring about a fundamental change in society.

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