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GENDER IN HISTORY: COLONIAL PERIOD

This lesson deals with the gender and social reforms movement during the colonial period. For a student of Gender Studies in India, it is essential to know the history of the renaissance and social reform movements. This period is vital as it deals with social practices such as Sati Pratha, caste-based discrimination, widow remarriage and education of women. It would be interesting to look at these reforms from the women's vantage point and link gender roles and ideas to their impact on the renaissance and socio-religious reform movements. Social reform generally refers to society transforming society from its current stage to another stage. From various social practices and superstitions, resulting in turmoil to an egalitarian, fair and just society as previous practices are abolished.

The Indian society had some barbaric social practices, like, Sati Pratha and child marriage etc., since the late Vedic period that reached its peak during the colonial period. However, every country in its history has had numerous bright individuals who lived and worked for the progress and upliftment of the downtrodden people in society. Due to their effort, it became possible to abolish several social evils. In its long history, India is fortunate enough to have many extraordinary human beings devoted all their lives to society's betterment. They include Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar, Jyotiba Phule, Anne Besant, Mother Teresa, Vinoba Bhave and many more. However, the reformers believed that the social practices derived their strength from religion, so they challenged their religious dogmas and beliefs, which had made the life of people difficult. They were sure that no social reform could be made in India without religious reforms.

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In the initial years, the Britishers were mainly concerned with consolidating their empire in India, protecting the British people's interests and emphasising the reorganisation of administration and regulation of the economy. Their priority was to promote and protect British trade and industry and not to take an interest in Indian social reforms and inhumane practices. Moreover, they thought it would be wise not to impede the religious and socio-cultural life of Indians because these two issues were susceptible and emotionally attached to the Indian people.



OUTCOMES

After studying this lesson, learner:

- analyses the social reform movements from the point of view of gender
- describes the participation of both men and women in the freedom struggle

4.1 STATUS OF WOMEN DURING THE BRITISH RULE

During British Rule, the Indian social structure transformed due to the changing socio-economic and cultural relationships. Though the position of women remained the same, some progressive legislation, namely the Sati Prohibition Act of 1829, Widow Remarriage Act of 1856 and the Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929, were enacted to eliminate social evils like Sati, child marriage and introduce the system of widow remarriage. The social reformer Raja Ram Mohan Roy led a struggle against eradicating the 'Sati Pratha'. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar played an essential role in promoting women's education and widow remarriage.

Jyotiba Phule established the first Dalit School for girls in the present state of Maharashtra. Many women reformers like Pandita Ramabai fought to emancipate women from various societal obstacles. In 1931, the Karachi Session of the Indian National Congress issued a declaration on the Fundamental Rights of citizenship in India, ensuring women's equality. Many women actively participated in the freedom struggle in the pre-independence era of the twentieth century. Women like Sarojini Naidu, Bhikaji Cama, Dr Annie Besant, Vijayalakshmi Pandit, Aruna Asaf Ali, and Sucheta Kriplani played an important India's freedom struggle. During the British period, they witnessed the rise of social reform movements for women's liberation that resulted in the passing of various legislative measures. Even though it did not have a more considerable impact on improving women's condition, it controlled and reduced the incidents of social evils.



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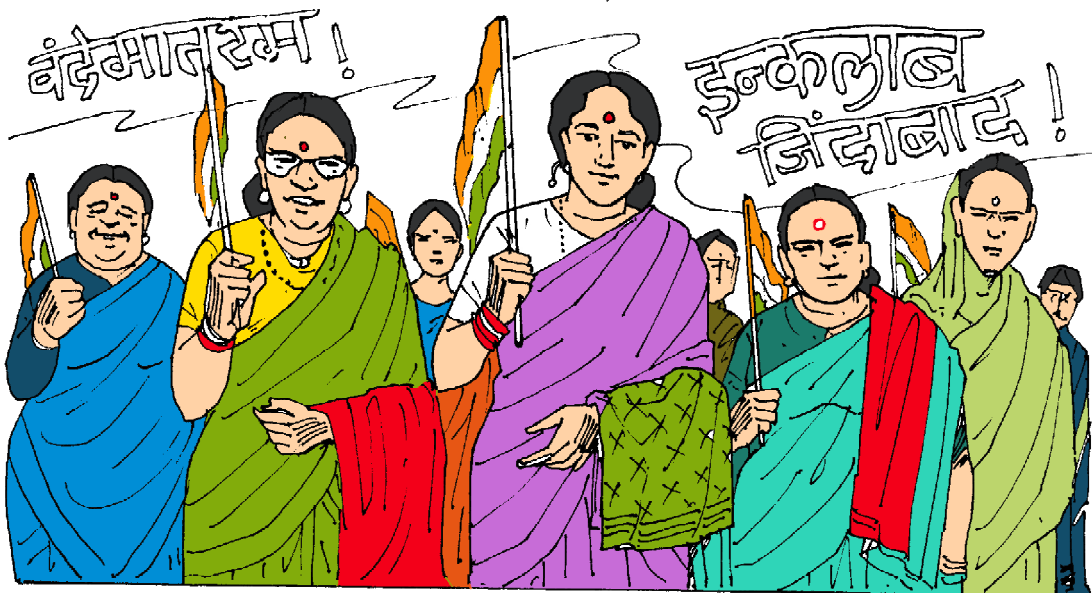


Fig 4.1 Women in the Freedom Struggle

The industrial revolution and the advancement of science and technology encouraged the British to introduce reforms to modernise India on the Western model. New ideas like humanism and rationalism replaced faith and superstition.

4.1.0 Social Reform Movements in Pre -Independent India

"The Social reformers believed in the principle of individual liberty, freedom and equality of all human beings irrespective of sex, colour, race, caste or religion."

In 19th Century India, they witnessed a strong wave of reform activities in religion and society. The educated young Indians tried to end the evils and abuses in religion and society. Western ideas of reason, equality, liberty, and humanity inspired them. They tried to remove the defects in their culture.

They wanted to revive the glory of Indian culture. Hence we call the socio-religious reform movement of 19th century India the Indian Renaissance movement. Raja Rammohan Roy was the pioneer of this movement.

The colonial period saw the rise of social reform movements which took up the issue of gender inequality. As a result, the British government passed certain laws that removed the barriers to women's emancipation. Though widespread changes could not occur, the stage was set for launching a struggle to create a gender-just society.

4.1.1 The Renaissance

Indian renaissance marked the beginning of a new era of socio-spiritual consciousness started by the reformers, which witnessed the spontaneous participation of native intellectuals. The

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territory of Bengal was regarded as the cardinal to this Indian renaissance context, beginning with writers, politicians, historians, freedom fighters and religious saints.

The religious reformers and various organisations played an integral part in ushering Indian renaissance, though they also functioned at regional levels. Brahma Samaj was a society formed by the ideas of developing a universal religion whose ideology, to a large extent, was derived from the Isa Upanishad, a monotheistic Hindu scripture. Ideas behind Raja Ram Mohan Roy's Brahma Movement included abolishing the caste system, dowry, and Sati Pratha and improving the educational system. The leaders of the Indian Renaissance were Raja Mohan Roy, Debendranath Tagore, Keshav Chandra Sen, M.G Ranade, Atmaram Pandurangan, Swami Dayanand Saraswathi, and Swami Vivekananda.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy, pioneered various socio-religious reform movement of the 19th century, and after that, a social movement emerged. He was against traditional social practices and echoed his voice against the Sati system, polygamy, caste rigidity and child marriage. However, his most significant achievement was the prohibition of the "Sati Pratha", a practice in which a widow was made to immolate herself at her deceased husband's funeral. He struggled for years to get this evil legally eradicated.



Fig 4.2: Raja Ram Mohan Roy



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He encouraged women's education and widow remarriage. Raja Ram Mohan Roy began to publish a journal called "Soudha Kumudi" in 1821, aimed at creating public opinion against the Sati system. As a result of his efforts, the first landmark legislation in British India was enacted. Sati system was made a criminal offence in 1829 under the leadership of Lord William Bentinck. However, a distinction was made between the voluntary and forced Sati. The religious fundamentalist and the traditionalist opposed it vehemently. Even the mother of Ram Mohan Roy participated in one of the organised demonstrations to oppose this act. We can easily determine how deeply these practices were rooted in Indian society.

4.1.2 Renaissance and its impact on women's education

Swami Vivekananda vigorously advocated for the upliftment of the masses, particularly women. They recommended that daughters should be brought up and educated just like sons. According to him, any sound national education scheme for India could ill-afford to ignore the masses and women of India. He remarked: "Ignorance is the mother of all the evils and all the misery we see. Let men and women be educated, pure and spiritually strong and educated, then alone will misery cease in the world, not before".

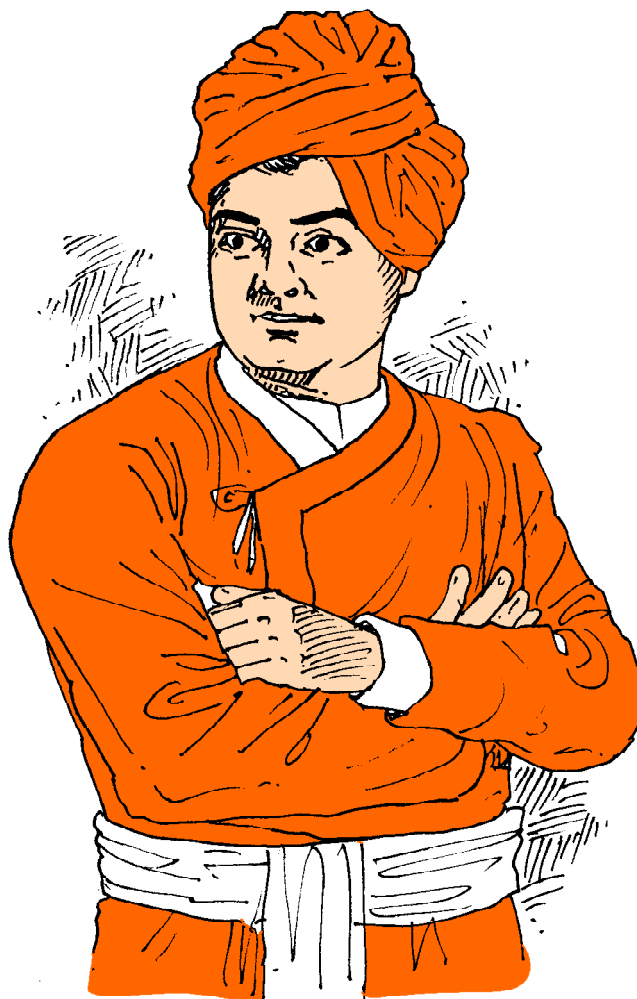


Fig 4.3: Swami Vivekananda

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Swami Vivekananda believed that knowledge resided within the individual. Therefore, everyone is entitled to perfection; education is a means towards this end. So he considered education as a crucial means to regenerate the country. To sum up, the Ramakrishna Mission brought about a spiritual renaissance in the realm of Hindu religion and philosophy, resulting in a widespread national awakening, manifesting itself in a patriotic feeling of pride in the spiritual traditions of the country.

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar is remembered as one of the pillars of the "Bengal Renaissance" for the upliftment and betterment of the status of the Indian woman. He also gave high importance to the widow remarriage concept and helped alleviate the apathy of the Indian Widow.

The widow remarriage Act was passed in 1856. Although there was no significant increase in the number of widow remarriages, the passage of this act paved the way for ending a long-withstanding oppressive custom.

Keshav Chandra Sen of the Brahmo Samaj belonged to Bengal. He advocated women's rights, promoted widow remarriage and attacked the caste system.

Tarabai Shinde was born in 1850 and was a feminist activist who vehemently protested caste and patriarchy in 19th-century India. She is popularly known for her published work known as *Stri Purush Tulana*.

Ramabai founded 'Arya Mahila Samaj' to serve the cause of women. She wrote a book, 'The High Caste Hindu Woman'. In 1889, Ramabai established 'Sewa Sadan'. They were preparing women as efficient citizens of society, and their objective was to make the Ashram a real home for the destitute.

Savitribai Phule and her husband stood up to fight the injustice against women at a time when people hardly identified women's grievances in India. As a result, they have been described as "one of the first-generation modern Indian feminists". Phule and her husband founded the first women's school at Bhide Wada in Pune in 1848.



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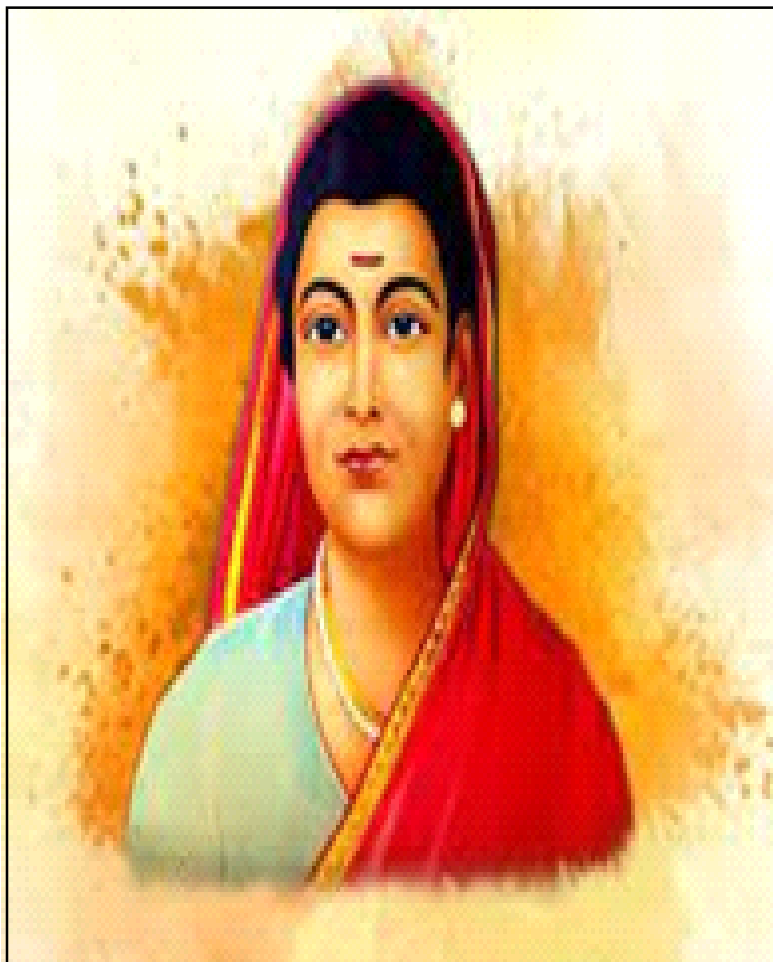


Fig 4.4: Savitribai Phule

4.1.3 Caste discrimination in colonial India

The problem of Untouchability: It is essential to know the nature of the caste system in colonial India to understand the very nature of Indian society. For that, knowing Ambedkar's contribution to Law and Justice is vital. The caste-based Indian society has defined a particular code of conduct for persons belonging to every caste. Similarly, women in every caste have been ascribed a lower status than men from the same caste.

Women's plight was terrible, and they were deprived of education. They were not allowed to voice their opinion about anything. Women were considered for marriage, to produce children & for the sake of society, husband, and family & to meet irrelevant customs in India. Before independence, women were facing discrimination and injustice through various means - such as

1. Polygamy
2. Forced Illiteracy

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3. Burning of widows in certain parts of the country
4. Social rejection of widows
5. Dress codes
6. Child Marriage etc.

In light of the peculiar caste-based social system that existed in India before independence, Ambedkar has proposed several remedial measures and laws to address the exploitative social system and bridge the gap between various castes or social groups in the country. According to Manu, the Hindu's religious codes divide the society into four varnas, namely, 1. Brahmins (the Priestly Class) 2. Kshatriyas (the Warrior Class) 3. Vaisyas (the Trading Class) 4. Sudras (the Servants).

In Indian society, various social reformers from Gautama Buddha have worked against the caste system and untouchability. He challenged the validity of caste and Brahmanism. Many social reformers like Mahatma Jyothi Rao Phule, Sahumaharaj, Periyar, Kabeer, Santh Ravidas, Sri Narayana Guru in Andhra Pradesh Vemana and Pothuluri Vera Brahmam fought against the evils of that time.

4.1.4 Renaissance and its impact on the Abolition of Sati Pratha and Widow Remarriage

In India, a clash of ideas came between the conservatives and the radicals. However, the radicals received strong support from Raja Ram Mohan Ray and other progressive Indians.

In Indian culture, the highest ideal for a woman is virtue, purity, and allegiance to her husband. From this tradition, the custom of Sati emerged. In 'Sati Pratha', the wife immolates herself on the funeral pyre of her deceased husband or by herself with a memento as proof of her loyalty.

Among the age-old customs of India, Sati was the cruellest practice. It was a challenge for any civilised human being. The barbarous and horrifying system of Sati drew the attention of Bentinck.

The Sati system was based on the superstition that a woman would attain divinity and go to heaven by practising Sati. There were socio-economic motives behind this system. Socially, the Sati was revered by the people. Many widows preferred to practice the Sati in the hope of attaining heaven. In earlier times, it was believed that having an unmarried girl in the family was a social dishonour. So, social pressure and custom forced people to go for child marriage and marriage of young girls to old grooms. When a widow was unwilling to practice Sati, her relatives forced her into the funeral pyre. It was simply homicide.

The British government in 1829 prohibited the custom of Sati. British India declared the practice of Sati as illegal and punishable by criminal courts. Such a law revealed much about the British thought and opinion of India and its customs.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 4.1

1. In which year was 'Sati-Pratha' abolished
 - (a) 1829
 - (b) 1833
 - (c) 1964
 - (d) 1875

2. Who was instrumental in setting the widow remarriage bill passed?
 - (a) Raja ram Mohan Roy
 - (b) Swami Vivekanand
 - (c) Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar
 - (d) Keshav Chandra Sen

3. Who had founded Arya Mahila Samaj?
 - (a) Tarabai Shinde
 - (b) Ramabai
 - (c) Savitribai Phule
 - (d) Jyotibha Phule

4. Explain the meaning of Sati Pratha.

4.2 RELIGIOUS ORGANISATIONS THAT LED SOCIAL REFORMS

4.2.1 Arya Samaj

Arya Samaj was a powerful religious movement in India during the nineteenth century. The movement was led by Swami Dayanand Saraswati, who started it in 1875. Arya Samaj had similarities with the Brahmo Samaj in its ideology and mode of operations. Dayanand Saraswati was a Sanyasi (renouncer) who believed in the flawless authority of the Vedas. He advocated the doctrine of Karma and reincarnation. He also emphasised the ideals of Brahmacharya (chastity) and Sanyaas. He founded the Arya Samaj to propagate his ideas among the common people. The Arya Samaj upholds the sanctity of the cow, Samskaras, oblations to fire and social reform, including women's education. The main objective of Arya Samaj was to purify



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Hinduism and save it from degenerating state. Although there was no central organisation for Arya Samaj, each Samaj operated independently in different parts of India. In 1883, soon after the death of Swami Dayanand Saraswati, the members of Arya Samaj took the responsibility to spread his ideas. They started establishing more Arya Samaj centres in different parts of India. They established schools and other institutions to spread the ideas, out of which the Dayananda Anglo-Vedic Trust and Management Society were the most prominent.

The Arya Samaj supported women's education and established a girls' school named the 'Arya Kanya Pathshala' to provide education safe from missionary influence. They also founded the Kanya Ashram, or women's hostel. They further established the Kanya Mahavidyalaya on 14th June 1896, to provide higher education to women. This institution was established with inspiration from the success of Kanya Pathshala. Besides educating the women, the Aryas also actively supported the movement for widow remarriage. They launched societies to support such marriages and put these ideals into practice. The Arya Samaj established itself as one of the significant acculturative movements with its purified Vedic Hinduism. The leadership of the Samaj mostly came from the educated Hindus of the upper castes, and the Arya Samaj did adopt an incredible organisational structure and parliamentary procedures. Both the wings of Arya Samaj created various institutions; offered new forms of worship; introduced proselytism, including paid missionaries, a conversion ritual; and reduced their teachings to a fundamental creed. The Arya Samaj mainly focused on the energies and wealth of its members for the welfare of society. The ideals of the Samaj were put into action rather than only preached.

4.2.2. Prarthana Samaj

K.C.Sen and Dr Atmaram Pandurang founded Prarthana Samaj, a Community wedded to prayerful worship of One True God. Prarthana Samaj aimed at social reforms. They condemned the caste system and preached equality of man. For the upliftment of women, they wanted to impart higher education to women; further, they emphasised the principle of increasing the age of marriage for both boys and girls. They also advocated widow remarriage. R. G. Bhandarkar, Mahadev Govinda Ranade and N. G. Chandravarkar were the prominent leaders of the Prarthana Samaj.

4.2.3 Theosophical society

The Theosophical Society was inspired by the philosophy and mysticism inherent in Hinduism. It came into being through the efforts of the celebrated Russian-born occultist, H.P. Blavatsky and her American colleagues, B.S. Olcott, W.Q. Judge and thirteen others who established the society in New York on 17th November 1875. The main motives of the theosophical society were to work for the brotherhood of humanity without any discrimination. They declared that they were the disciple of an Indian Mahatma, a 'jivanmukta', which refers to a liberated soul who was dwelling in the Himalayas. In 1882 they chose Madras as their headquarter,



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which later became an important pilgrimage centre and a "holy shrine" for all followers. The arrival of Annie Beasant in India not only added to the ongoing freedom struggle but also encouraged more and more women to come out in public and participate in the freedom struggle.

Function adopted by Theosophical Society

- To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without discrimination of race, colour, or creed.
- To promote the study of Aryan and other Scriptures of the world's religion and sciences and to vindicate the importance of old Asiatic literature, namely, of the Buddhist, Brahmanical, and Zoroastrian philosophies.
- To inspect the hidden mysteries of nature and man's supernatural and spiritual powers.

Theosophists have promoted harmony, understanding and mutual respect among the religions. Much of theosophical lecture and literature was concerned with the comparative study of religions, tracing their essential unity and reverentially analysing their teachings. There was much cooperation between these offshoots of the theosophical movement, which was voiced through the monthly journal Theosophists Reunite. It is published in California.

4.2.4 Muslim League

The history of the Muslim League goes back to 1886 when Sir Syed Ahmad Khan established the All-Indian Muhammadan Educational Conferences to uplift Indian Muslims. In 1901, Muslim elites felt the need for a national-level political party for Muslim communities. The meeting held at Lucknow in September 1906 with representatives participation from all over India was the first stage of its formation. It was formally proposed by Nawab Salimullah Khan and supported by Hakim Ajmal Khan, Maulana Muhammed Ali Jauhar, Zafar Ali Khan and others. The Founding meeting was hosted by Nawab Sir Khwaja Salimullah and attended by three thousand delegates. Ameer Ali and Sir Mian Muhammad Shafi were the founding fathers who attended this meeting. The League's constitution was framed in 1907 in Karachi. The objective of the Muslim League was to protect the political and other rights of Indian Muslims.

The relations between Muslim League and Indian National Congress were good, but the relationships strained in 1922 as communalism grew, forcing each side to distance itself from the other.

Impact of reform movements

The reform movements played an important role by setting up a strong background for liberation. Some women reformers like Pandita Ramabai in western India, Sister Subhlakshmi in Madras and Rokeya Sukhawat Hossain in Bengal played significant roles. Child marriage restraint act

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was passed in 1929, by which the minimum age of marriage for girls was fixed at 14. This was also known as Sarda Act. Sati Pratha was also banned. Education for women was encouraged and promoted. Women also came out to participate in the freedom movement.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 4.2

1. The members of the Theosophical Society were the disciple of which Indian Mahatma?
 - a) Swami Vivekananda
 - b) Jivanmukta
 - c) Dayanand Saraswati
 - d) Mahatma Gandhi
2. In which year was the Theosophical Society established?
 - a) 1875
 - b) 1880
 - c) 1874
 - d) 1880
3. Who was the founder of Arya Samaj?
 - a) Vivekananda
 - b) Swami Dayanand
 - c) Jivanmukta
 - d) Anni Beasant
4. Who was appointed the first "All India Muslim League" president?
 - a) Ameer Ali
 - b) Sir Agha Khan III
 - c) Nawab Sir Khwaja Salimullah
 - d) Sir Mian Muhammad Shafi



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5. In which year were the relations between Muslim League and Indian National Congress became strained?
 - a) 1920
 - b) 1919
 - c) 1924
 - d) 1922

6. When did Sir Syed Ahmad Khan establish the All-Indian Muhammadan Educational Conference?
 - a) 1880
 - b) 1886
 - c) 1887
 - d) 1882

7. Who was the founder of Brahmo Samaj?
 - a) Raja Rammohan Roy
 - b) Aurobindo Gosh
 - c) Vivekananda
 - d) Dayanand Saraswati

8. In which year did Lord William Bentinck abolish the Sati system by passing an Act?
 - a) 1831
 - b) 1829
 - c) 1833
 - d) 1828

9. Write the aims of Theosophical Society.

10. Describe the important reform activities of Arya Samaj.

4.3. INDIAN FREEDOM STRUGGLE AND PARTICIPATION OF THE WOMEN

During the freedom struggle, the participation of women was very active, right from the

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Satyagraha movement to the Quit India movement. The participation of women was their involvement in the activities of the Indian National Congress. It was in 1890 that two women, namely, Swarana Kumari Ghoshal, a woman novelist and Kadambari Ganguly, the first woman graduate of the British Empire, went to attend the Indian National Congress meetings as a delegation of women. Sarojini Naidu, better known as the 'Nightingale of India', also actively participated in the freedom struggle.

Women were not far behind their male counterparts in the freedom movement. Women joined men to protest against the British rulers by boycotting foreign goods and resolving to buy only those goods produced in the territory of India.

Women of educated and liberal families and those from rural areas actively joined the Non-Cooperation Movements. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Sucheta Kripalani, Sarla Devi Chaudhurani, Muthulaksmi Reddy, Susheela Nair, and Aruna Asaf Ali are some of the women freedom fighters who participated in the non-violent movement.

At the time of the Dandi March, Indian National Congress led by Gandhi did not choose a single woman for the march. It was later, Sarojini Naidu defied and joined in the march at Dandi at the final stage, and she was the first woman to be arrested in that movement. Soon after the arrest of Naidu, thousands of women joined the salt Satyagraha.

Kumudini Mitra had organised a group of educated Brahmin women who liaised with the revolutionaries in hidings. In December 1931, Shanti Ghose and Suniti Chowdhuri shot a district Magistrate who used to harass the people. Mina Das had attempted to shoot the governor of Bengal, Stanley Jackson.

4.4 THE MODERN PERIOD

The modern period of Indian history can be broadly classified into the British period (1800-1947) and the post-independence period. British colonialism rooted in the soil of India after the establishment of the East India Trading Company in 1600 A.D. Initially, under the regime of the East India Company, no efforts were made to address the issues of caste inequality, gender inequality and the various forms of social oppressions. Thus, Indian society was afflicted with social evils such as sati, oppression of widows, lack of female education and child marriages like in earlier periods. With the advent of the 19th century, the British undertook an initiative to eradicate social evils with the cooperation and support of progressive sections of Indian society.

4.4.1 Status of Women in Post-Independent India

There was a sea of change concerning the role and status of women after two decades of independence. This happened due to the constitutional safeguards against discrimination against



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women, consequently strengthening the dignity and status of women. Besides, the state and central governments instituted various measures for women's empowerment, respectively. Further, various departments, commissions and a separate ministry examined women's affairs. In addition to this, gender budgeting was introduced for the effective implementation of all welfare measures for women.

As a result, there is an increase in the enrolment ratio of women in school and higher education levels, facilitating a surge of women's workforce in different walks of life. They are excelling in every newfound opportunity which comes their way. Women have achieved name and fame in science and technology, defence, sports, literature, music, dance and many more. They now perform the traditional roles of a daughter, wife or mother and effectively assume different occupational roles. However, despite tremendous achievements, women still face challenges on personal and professional fronts. Examples of such epidemic challenges include the gender pay gap, female infanticide, and the ongoing social evil of eve-teasing.



Fig 4.5: Women at modern occupation

Female issues are no longer about the backward aspects of tradition like Sati, child marriage or the ill-treatment of widows. From 1970 onwards, women have been waging a struggle against contemporary issues like rape, domestic violence, sexual harassment in the workplace, acid attacks, honour killing and dowry murders. The female empowerment movements are in full swing to fight for or defend the rights of women.

Despite progressive or liberal measures, one can find that prejudice, bias and stereotypes persist in the mindset of men against women. In the face of the declining sex ratio, a new scheme called "Beti Bachao; Beti Padhao" (save the girl child; educate the girl child) was introduced in 2015 by the central government to generate awareness about the importance of the girl child. There are many such welfare schemes were introduced for women empowerment:

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Schemes	Launch Year	Objectives
Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme	2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To prevent gender-biased sex selective elimination ● To ensure survival & protection of the girl child ● To ensure education and participation of the girl child
Ujjawala	2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To prevent the trafficking of women and children for commercial sexual exploitation. ● To facilitate the rescue of victims from the place of their exploitation and place them in safe custody. ● To provide rehabilitation services with both immediate and long-term to the victims by providing basic amenities/needs such as shelter, food, clothing, medical treatment including counseling, legal aid and guidance, and vocational training.
Nari Shakti Puraskar	2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To strengthen the place of women in society. ● To facilitate institutions that work towards the progress and development of women in society.
Mahila Shakti Kendras (MSK)	2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To create an environment for women where they have access to healthcare, quality, education, guidance, employment, etc. ● To facilitate these opportunities at the block and district level in the country.
Mahila E-Haat	2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To facilitate entrepreneurship opportunities online for women. ● To educate women on various aspects of online selling and helping them establish their venture.
MUDRA Yojana (Micro Units Development and Refinance agency Ltd)	2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To encourage entrepreneurship among the underprivileged sections of the society. ● To provide loans upto Rs. 10 lakh are provided to women entrepreneurs, without any collateral.

Women empowerment is not the only issue in India; there are also regional and class differences. Despite stringent legal measures against the atrocities against women, there is a rise in crime



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against women, indicating the persistence of society's patriarchal nature. Of course, in comparison with the past, there is an improved situation regarding the status of women, but they still have to go a long way. The fight for gender equality is not yet over; it is an ongoing struggle.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 4.3

1. Who was the first women graduate of the British Empire?
 - (a) Swarna Kumari Ghosal
 - (b) Kadambari Ganguly
 - (c) Sarojini Naidu
 - (d) Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur
2. Who had joined the Dandi March after defying congress?
 - (a) Sarojini Naidu
 - (b) Aruna Asaf Ali
 - (c) Sucheta kriplani
 - (d) Susheela Nair
3. Who is known as the 'Nightingale of India'?
 - (a) Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur
 - (b) Sucheta Kriplani
 - (c) Sarojini Naidu
 - (d) Aruna Asaf Ali
4. Describe briefly the importance of "Beti Bachao; Beti Padhao" scheme.
5. Explain the provisions for women under 'Mudra' scheme.



WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

The status of women during British Rule remained the same, though many legislations and social reform movements were undertaken to fight against the prevailing social evils.

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The socio-religious reform movement of 19th century India was known as the Indian Renaissance movement and was pioneered by Raja Rammohan Roy.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy started the Brahmo Movement, which focused on abolishing the caste system, dowry, and Sati Pratha and improving the educational system. He encouraged women's education and widow remarriage. His efforts made the Sati system a criminal offence in 1829 (Bengal Sati Regulation 1829).

Swami Vivekananda started the Ramakrishna mission, which focused on women's education and spiritual renaissance in Hindu religion and philosophy.

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar professed widow remarriage and helped alleviate apathy towards them, resulting in the passing of The Widow Remarriage Act in 1856.

Tarabai Shinde, Ramabai, and Savitribai Phule were notable women during that period and are described as "one of the first-generation modern Indian feminists" who fought against the injustices done to women.

The caste system made women even more vulnerable as women in every caste were ascribed a lower status than the man belonging to the same caste.

One of the major social evils practised in Indian society at that time was Sati, the custom in which a wife immolates herself on the funeral pyre of her deceased husband or by herself with a memento as proof of her loyalty. When a widow was unwilling to practice Sati, her relatives forced her on the funeral pyre. It was simply homicide. The British government in 1829 prohibited the custom of Sati. British India declared the practice of Sati as illegal and punishable by criminal courts.

These social reform movements were also supported by many new religious organisations formed to reorient the Indian society that sanctioned injustices done to women. Arya Samaj, started by Swami Dayanand Saraswati, worked on promoting women's education and widow remarriage. Prarthana Samaj condemned the caste system and preached equality of man. For the upliftment of women, they propagated to impart higher education to women and emphasised increasing the age of marriage for both boys and girls. The Theosophical society focused on working for humanity's brotherhood without any discrimination. Muslim League was started to protect the political and other rights of Indian Muslims.

During the freedom struggle, the participation of women was very active, right from the Satyagraha movement to the Quit India movement.

The modern period of Indian history can be broadly classified into the British period (1800-1947) and the post-independence period. During the British period, there were no efforts to address the issues of caste inequality, gender inequality, and various forms of social oppression.



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However, after about 200 years, they started bringing legislation to ban many social evils.

After two decades of independence, the constitutional safeguards against discrimination against women strengthened the dignity and status of women. Various measures for the empowerment of women were instituted by the state and central governments, respectively. There were various departments, commissions, and a separate ministry to look into the affairs of women.

From 1970 onwards, women have struggled against contemporary issues like rape, domestic violence, sexual harassment in the workplace, acid attacks, honour killing, and dowry murders.



TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. Highlight any two civil evils prevailing in society during the medieval period.
2. Who banned Sati Pratha in India?
3. List the laws framed during the medieval period to stop social evils.
4. Why had the social status of women been inferior during the medieval period?
5. Describe the social reforms undertaken by the following social reformers.
 - (i) Swami Dayanand
 - (ii) Ishwar Chand Vidyasagar
 - (iii) Rama Bai
 - (iv) Jyotiba Phule
6. Describe the contribution of the following organisations in the field of social reforms.
 - (i) Arya Samaj
 - (ii) Theosophical society
 - (iii) Prarthana Samaj



ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

4.1

1. (a) 1829
2. (c) Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar

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Notes

4.2

3. (b) Ramabai
4. The custom in which a wife immolates herself on the funeral pyre of her deceased husband as proof of her loyalty.

1. b) Jivanmukta
2. a) 1875
3. b) Swami Dayanand
4. c) Nawab Sir Khwaja Salimullah
5. d) 1922
6. b) 1886
7. a) Raja Rammohan Roy
8. b) 1829
9. Function adopted by Theosophical Society
 - a. To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without discrimination of race, colour, or creed.
 - b. To promote the study of Aryan and other Scriptures of the world's religion and sciences and to vindicate the importance of old Asiatic literature, namely, of the Buddhist, Brahmanical, and Zoroastrian philosophies.
 - c. Inspect the hidden mysteries of nature and man's supernatural and spiritual powers.
10. The Arya Samaj were supporters of women's education and had established a girls' school, named the 'Arya Kanya Pathshala', to provide education that is safe from missionary influence. They also founded the Kanya Ashram, or women's hostel. They further established the Kanya Mahavidyalaya on 14th June 1896, to provide higher education to women. This institution was established with inspiration from the success of Kanya Pathshala. Besides educating the women, the Aryas also actively supported the movement for widow remarriage. They launched societies to support such marriages and put these ideals into practice. The Arya Samaj established itself as one of the significant acculturative movements with its purified Vedic Hinduism.



Notes

4.3

1. b) Kadambari Ganguly
2. a) Sarojini Naidu
3. c) Sarojini Naidu
4. To generate awareness about the importance of the girl child
5. Provision of loans upto Rs. 10 lakh are provided to women entrepreneurs, without any collateral

MODULE -2

Gender Issues and Social Change

This module familiarizes the learners about the various social institutions like marriage, family and kinship and also helps them to understand the gender differentials prevailing in these institutions. The module also enables the learners to understand various indicators of gender inequality and manifestation of gender inequality in different socio-economic contexts such as inequality in education, inequality in healthcare, discrimination at workplace, dowry, domestic violence and many others. It also highlights the status of women in the domain of employment and economy.

The module is designed to discuss the impact of environmental degradation on human life in general and women in particular and various concerns related to women's health and quality of life due to environmental challenges. It also highlights the role played by humans in conserving natural resources and biodiversity and various environmental movements in India

5. Marriage Kinship and Family
6. Inequalities of Gender
7. Gender and Economy
8. Gender and Environment