



Mains Practice Question

Q. Trace the rise and growth of socio-religious reform movements with special reference to Young Bengal and Brahma Samaj. (150 words)

31 Jan, 2022 GS Paper 1 History

Approach

- Start the answer by briefly mentioning the rise and growth of socio-religious reform movements.
- Mention the contribution of Young Bengal and Brahma Samaj.
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction

The Indian society in the first half of the **19th century was caste-ridden, decadent and rigid**. Various reformers like Raja Rammohun Roy, Ishawarchandra Vidyasagar, Swami Dayananda Saraswati persuaded people to give up degraded age-old traditions like Sati, child marriage, polygamy, female infanticide etc. by adopting a new way of life.

They were keen to spread knowledge of modernization in the country and bring about greater freedom and equality for women and “lower caste” people.

Body

Contribution of Young Bengal and Brahma Samaj

▪ Brahma Samaj & Raja Ram Mohan Roy:

- Raja Ram Mohan Roy is known as the **father of Modern India's Renaissance** and a tireless social reformer who inaugurated the **age of enlightenment and liberal reformist modernisation in India**.
- He founded **Brahmo Sabha in 1828**, whose main aim was the **worship of the eternal God**. However, it was against **priesthood, rituals and sacrifices**.
- The greatest achievement in the field of social reform was the **abolition of Sati in 1829**.
- He **advocated the abolition of polygamy** and **wanted women** to be educated and given the **right to inherit property**.
- This led to the **emergence of rationalism and enlightenment in India** which indirectly contributed to the nationalist movement.
- It was the **forerunner of all social, religious and political movements of modern India**.

▪ Young Bengal & Henry Lui Vivian Derozio:

- He joined the **Hindu College of Calcutta** as a teacher.
- **Derozio promoted radical ideas** through his teaching and by organizing an association for debate and discussions on **literature, philosophy, history and science**.
- He inspired his **followers and students to question all authority**.
- Derozio and his famous followers, known as the Derzians and Young Bengal, were fiery

- patriots.
- They cherished the ideals of the **French Revolution (1789 A.D.)** and the **liberal thinking of Britain**. Derozio died of cholera at the young age of 22.

Conclusion

Apart from attacking social evils like **bigotry, superstition, untouchability, purdah system, sati, child marriage, social inequalities and illiteracy**, the social and religious reform movements also helped in dealing with the racism perpetuated by the **colonial rule**.

This eventually led to the **development of nationalism against the British Government**.

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