



## 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 **19<sup>th</sup> 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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