

Social-Religious Movements

These notes are your ultimate revision weapon to revise Social-Religious Movements history. We've distilled years of previous exam questions (PYQs) into one powerful, concise resource. Everything you need to know, nothing you don't.

- **PYQs, Decoded:** All key concepts from past exams, organized and simplified.
- **Revise in Record Time:** Short, precise, and designed for last-minute review.
- **Focus on What Matters:** Master high-probability topics and boost your confidence.

19th Century Socio-Religious Reform Movements in India

Nature and Impact

- **Overall Significance:** A period of significant cultural and social revival.
- **Guiding Principles:** Based on **rationalism** and **scientific temper**.
- **Result:** Credited with the **modernization of India**.
- **Social Reach:**
 - **Primary Influence:** Intellectuals, urban upper castes, and liberal princes.
 - **The educated Hindu middle class** was the first group influenced by Western ideas.
 - **Exclusion:** The **poor ordinary classes** were largely excluded.

Major Movements and Personalities

A. Brahmo Samaj & Associated Societies

Aspect	Details
Founder	Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Dwarkanath Tagore.
Founded	As Brahmo Sabha on August 20, 1828, in Kolkata.
Core Beliefs	Strict monotheism; opposition to idol worship, polytheism, and priestly domination.
Social Reforms	Protested against the Sati system, child marriage, and idolatry.
Stance on Education	Strongly supported the introduction of Western education and sciences.
Key Figures	Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Dwarkanath Tagore, Devendranath Tagore, Keshav Chandra Sen.
Precursor Society	Atmiya Sabha (1815): First society by R.R. Roy to promote monotheism.
Associated Societies	-Tatvabodhini Sabha (1839): Founded by Devendranath Tagore to propagate Roy's ideas. -Calcutta Unitarian Committee: Founded by R.R. Roy, D. Tagore, and William Adam. -Tabernacle of New Dispensation: Established by Keshav Chandra Sen. - Indian Reform Association (1870): Established by Keshav Chandra Sen (he became its president).
Splits	- 1865/66 Split: After Devendranath Tagore removed Keshav Chandra Sen as Acharya. - Adi Brahmo Samaj: Led by Devendranath Tagore. - Bharatiya/Neo Brahmo Samaj: Led by Keshav Chandra Sen.

	• 1878 Split: Led to the formation of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj by Anand Mohan Bose and Shivanth Shastri.
--	---

B. Arya Samaj

Aspect	Details
Founder	Swami Dayanand Saraswati (Original name: Mool Shankar Tiwari).
Founded	April 7, 1875, in Mumbai. Headquarters established in Lahore (1877).
Core Principle	"Back to the Vedas". Promoted the doctrine of the infallibility of the Vedas.
Social Reforms	Campaigned against child marriage and the caste system.
Key Initiatives	• Started the Shuddhi Movement for reconversion to Hinduism. • Split (1892-93): - Anti-Western Faction (Gurukul): Led by Swami Shraddhanand. Established Gurukul in 1902. - Pro-Western Faction (D.A.V.): Led by Lala Lajpat Rai & Hansraj. Established D.A.V. College.
Impact	Gave self-confidence and self-reliance to Hindus and undermined belief in the superiority of the White race.
Nationalist Ideas	• First to use the term Swaraj. • Accepted Hindi as the national language. • Advocated for Swadeshi. • Coined: "India is only for the Indians" and "Good Government is no substitute for Self-Government".

C. Prarthana Samaj

Aspect	Details
Founder	Dr. Atmaram Pandurang.
Founded	1867 in Bombay. Inspired by Keshav Chandra Sen (Brahmo Samaj).
Key Leader	Mahadev Govind Ranade (Chief director in Maharashtra).
Objectives	Opposing the caste system, raising the marriage age, promoting widow remarriage, and encouraging women's education.
Initiatives	• Widow Remarriage Association (Vidhwa Ashram Sangh): Started by Ranade and D.K. Karve to educate widows.

D. Ramakrishna Mission



Aspect	Details
Spiritual Guru	Ramakrishna Paramahansa (Wife: Sharada Devi). A mystic who emphasized multiple paths to God.
Founder	Swami Vivekananda (Disciple of Ramakrishna).
Founded	1897. Headquarters at Belur, Kolkata.
Role	Promoted Neo-Hinduism globally. Not a political mission, but helped develop a spirit of patriotism.
Global Event	Represented India at the World Parliament of Religions, Chicago (1893).
Key Works	Jnana Yoga, Karma Yoga, Raja Yoga, Bhakti Yoga.

E. Other Reform Movements & Societies

Society/Movement	Founder	Year	Place	Key Details
Satyashodhak Samaj	Jyotiba Phule	1873	Pune	Anti-caste movement for upliftment of Shudras/Ati-Shudras. Key Publication: Gulamgiri (1872). Savitribai Phule led women's section.
Dev Samaj	Shiv Narayan Agnihotri	1887	Lahore	Previously a Brahmo. Scripture: Devshastra. Popularity declined after 1913.
Radha Swami Satsang	Shivdayal Sahab (Tulsiram)	1861		
Theosophical Society	Madame H.P. Blavatsky & Col. H.S. Alcott	1875 (NY) 1882 (India)	Adyar, Chennai	Annie Besant was a prominent leader who joined in 1889 and arrived in India in 1893.
Indian National Social Conference	M.G. Ranade & Raghunath Rao	1887		Addressed social issues nationally. Held sessions alongside the INC.
Servants of India Society	Gopal Krishna Gokhale	1905		First secular organization for national service and rural welfare.

F. Orthodox Opposition Groups

Group/Publication	Founder /Leader	Year	Purpose
Dharma Sabha	Raja Radhakant Deb	1830	To oppose reforms like the abolition of Sati.
Samachar Chandrika	Bhavani Charan Bandyopadhyay	1822	Newspaper started to oppose the ideas of Raja Ram Mohan Roy.

Key Reformers and Their Titles

Reformer	Titles & Key Facts
Raja Ram Mohan Roy	• 'Father of the Indian Renaissance' • 'Father of Modern India' • 'First Modern Man' • 'Paigambar of Indian Nationalism' • 'Bridge between past and future' / 'Yugadoot' • Adorned with the title 'Raja' by Mughal Emperor Akbar II (1830). • Died on September 27, 1833, in Stapleton, England, from meningitis.
Keshav Chandra Sen	• Appointed Acharya of the Brahmo Samaj by Devendranath Tagore.
Devendranath Tagore	• Credited with giving the Brahmo Samaj a theistic direction.
Mahadev Govind Ranade	• "Father of the cultural renaissance in western India".
Gopal Hari	• Popularly known as 'Lokahitvadi'. Wrote

Deshmukh	'Lokahitawadinchi Shatapatre' (108 articles on reform).
Swami Vivekananda	• Regarded as the best representative of Neo-Hinduism. • Described as the 'spiritual father of the modern nationalist movement' and a 'Patriot Saint'.
Swami Dayanand Saraswati	• Known as the 'Martin Luther of India'.
Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar	• Famously stated he had "no time to think about God as there was too much work to be done on earth."

Legislative Reforms & Acts

Act	Year	Provisions & Key Figures
Sati Prohibition Act	1829	Banned the practice of Sati. Declared illegal by Lord William Bentinck.
Act V	1843	Made the practice of slavery illegal in India.
Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act	1856	Legalized the remarriage of Hindu widows. Drafted by Lord Dalhousie, passed under Lord Canning. Campaigned for by Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar.
Native Marriage Act	1872	Also called the Brahmo Marriage Act. Set min. age: 14 for girls, 18 for boys. Legalized inter-caste marriage and banned polygamy. Associated with Keshab Chandra Sen.
Age of Consent Act	1891	Raised the age of consent, forbidding marriage of girls below 12. Result of campaigns by Behramji M. Malabari.
Child Marriage Restraint Act (Sharda Act)	1929	Set min. age: 14 for girls, 18 for boys (later amended to 18 for girls, 21 for boys).

Miscellaneous Facts

- **Jury Act of 1826:** Considered discriminatory as it stated only Christians could be jurors in trials involving Christians. **Raja Ram Mohan Roy strongly opposed it.**
- **Language Proficiency:** Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, and Dayanand Saraswati were all proficient in **Sanskrit.**
- **Women's Education:** **Jyotiba Phule** is a pioneer; opened the first school for girls in **1848.**
- **Widow Remarriage in Maharashtra:** Campaign led by **Vishnu Parashuram Pandit** (founded society in 1850).
- The **Hali System** was a system of **bonded labor.**
- The **Tarkeshwar Movement (1924)** in Bengal was against corruption by temple priests (*Mahants*).
- **Nadars** demanded temple entry rights, leading to a riot in **Tirunelveli (1899).**
- **Untouchability:** **Bal Gangadhar Tilak** vehemently opposed it.
- **Mahatma Gandhi** was born in **Porbandar.**

Know More About Social-Religious Movements:

- [Social-Religious Movements – Old Year Questions and Answers](#)
- [Social-Religious Movements One Liner Questions & Answers](#)