

ST. ANDREWS SCOTS SR. SEC. SCHOOL
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Session: 2025-2026

CLASS: VIII

SUB: SOCIAL SCIENCE

TOPIC: HISTORY

CH-7

Reforms in Indian Society

A. Tick (✓) the correct option.

1. What was the Brahmo Sabha later popularised as?
(ii) The Brahmo Samaj
2. Who among the following set up a home for widows in Pune?
(iv) Ramabai Ranade
3. Who was known as 'Vidyasagar of South India'?
(iii) Kandukuri Veeresalingam

B. Fill in the blanks with appropriate word/words.

1. The lower caste people were called **Shudras**.
2. **Vishnu Shashtri** in western India worked for improving the status of women.
3. Reform organisations of the **Sikhs** were known as Singh Sabhas.
4. **Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain** was a female social reformer who opened schools for Muslim girls in Calcutta and Patna.

C. Write 'T' for true or 'F' for false statements.

1. Shudras were not allowed inside the temples. **True**
2. Raja Ram Mohan Roy is called the Father of Modern India. **True**
3. Mahadev Govind Ranade and Ramakrishna Bhandarkar founded the Prarthana Samaj in Bombay in 1867. **False**
4. Swami Dayanand Saraswati founded the Ramakrishna Mission. **False**

D. Short answer questions.

1. Write a note on Jyotirao Phule.

Jyotirao Phule was one of the important reformers belonging to lower caste. He openly opposed the Brahmins on their claim of being superior

to others because of being the descendants of Aryans. He claimed that Aryans were foreigners, not the original inhabitants of India and the people of lower caste were the original inhabitants of this country. He urged the lower caste people to unite and eradicate the system of caste-based discrimination.

2. Write about the contributions of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar as a social reformer.

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar was a supporter of women's education and opened several schools for girls in Bengal. He worked to improve the pathetic condition of widows in society. He stood up to support widow remarriage in Bengal. Despite huge opposition from orthodox thinkers, he continued his efforts. His determination resulted in the formation of the Hindu Widow Remarriage Act of 1856.

3. Write a short note on the Arya Samaj.

Swami Dayanand Saraswati founded the Arya Samaj in 1875 in Bombay. He worked to promote equal rights for women, such as the right to education. He encouraged reading of Indian scriptures. He is famous all over the world for his intuitive commentary on the Vedas. The Arya Samaj established several homes for widows and supported widow remarriage.

4. What was Child Marriage Restraint Act?

In 1929, the Child Marriage Restraint Act was passed which stated that no man below the age of 18 years and no woman below the age of 16 years could marry.

E. Long answer questions.

1. State different types of discrimination that existed in the Indian society in the nineteenth century.

In the nineteenth century, the society was suffering from discrimination of various forms such as:

- Men were given more importance in the society. Women were not given access to education and their rights to own a property were also limited.
- Boys and girls were married at an early age. If a wife died, her husband could remarry. Polygamy was practised by both Hindu and Muslim men.

But in case a husband died, his wife was supposed to withdraw from the society. In some parts of the country, widows chose death by burning themselves on the funeral pyre of their husbands or were forced to do so.

- Caste was another basis of discrimination in the society. The society was divided into four different varnas—Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. People belonging to shudra caste were considered untouchables by the upper caste. They couldn't draw water from the same well as those of the upper caste. They couldn't bathe in the pond or lake where the upper caste bathed. They were also not allowed to enter into temples.

2. What was the role of Raja Ram Mohan Roy in reforming Hinduism?

Raja Rammohan Roy was a learned man. He founded the Brahmo Sabha, later known as Brahmo Samaj, in 1828, in Calcutta. He urged people to make changes in the way of life and abandon following old practices. He wanted to create equality for women in society and wanted them to be free from unjust restrictions. He was in favour of women education. He worked towards the abolition of Sati by presenting arguments against it on the basis of Shastras. He was supported by sir William Bentinck and Sati pratha was declared illegal by law in 1829. He also supported widow remarriage and property rights for women. Raja Rammohan Roy was called the Father of Modern India for his contributions towards the development of the society.

3. When and how did the reformist movements begin?

The reformist movements started in the first half of the nineteenth century. The introduction of new forms of communication played a major role. People were able to express their views through printed newspapers, books, magazines, etc. The new means of communication were more widely accessible as they were cheaper than the previously used manuscripts. Thus, they could be afforded by more people for reading as well as writing their views in their own languages. People used these means to discuss various religious, economic, social and political issues and these discussions reached a wide group of people which helped in raising awareness and creating a social change. These discussions or debates were often started by Indian reformers or reform groups.

4. Write briefly about the contribution of Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar for the uplifting the lower caste people.

Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar experienced the prejudice of being a lower caste at an early age. In 1919, he worked extensively for the upliftment of lower castes. He wrote about the oppressive powers of the upper caste in the Indian society. He eradicated untouchability in the society. Earlier, people of lower caste were not allowed to enter in the temples. Ambedkar raised his voice against the oppression of the lower caste people by demanding their entry into the temples. He led three temple entry movements between 1927 and 1935. He founded the All India Scheduled Castes Federation in 1942 to improve the status of those belonging to lower castes.