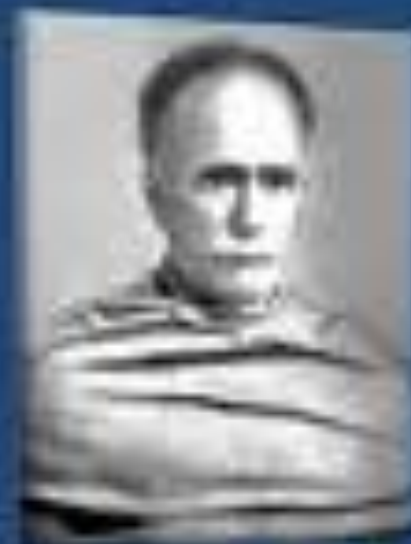


HISTORY

CHAPTER 9

WOMEN, CASTE AND REFORM



Women, Caste and Reform



PROBLEMS

- 200 years ago things were very different
- Most children were married off an early age
- Both Hindu and Muslim men could marry more than one wife
- Widows were praised if they chose death by burning themselves on the funeral pyre of their husbands
- Most women had virtually no access to education
- Many believed if women will get education, she would become a widow
- People were divided into high and low caste
- Upper caste also treated many of these groups at the bottom as “untouchable”
- Lower caste were considered as inferior human beings

WORKING TOWARDS CHANGE

- **It was initiated by Indian reformers and reform groups**
- **One such reformer was Raja Rammohun Roy (1772-1833)**
- **He founded a reform association known as the Brahmo Samaj in Calcutta**
- **Rammohun Roy felt that changes were necessary in society and unjust practices needed to be done away**
- **He wanted to spread the knowledge of western education in the country and bring about greater freedom and equality for women**

**Raja Ram
Mohan Roy**
A Great Reformer



CHANGING LIVES OF WIDOWS

- **Rammohun Roy was particularly moved by the problems widow faced in their lives**
- **He began campaign against the practice of sati**
- **He tried to show through his writings that the practice of widow burning had no sanction in ancient texts**
- **Many British officials had also begun to criticise Indian traditions and customs**

THE MAN WHO ABOLISHED SATI.



HE DID NOT
BELONG TO
ANY CASTE

Was against idol
worship & orthodox
Hindu rituals



He studied Hindu
philosophy deeply
(in Varanasi)

CAMPAIGNED
FOR WOMEN'S
RIGHTS



By the age of 15, this
polyglot had learnt Bengali,
Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit

This maker of modern
India formed the Atmiya
Sabha through which he
instilled social and religious
reform in the society

In 1828, he founded
the Brahma Samaj
through which he
wanted to expose
religious hypocrisy



IN 1822,
HE FOUNDED
A SCHOOL
BASED ON
ENGLISH
EDUCATION

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1828

BRAHMO SAMAJ WAS STARTED

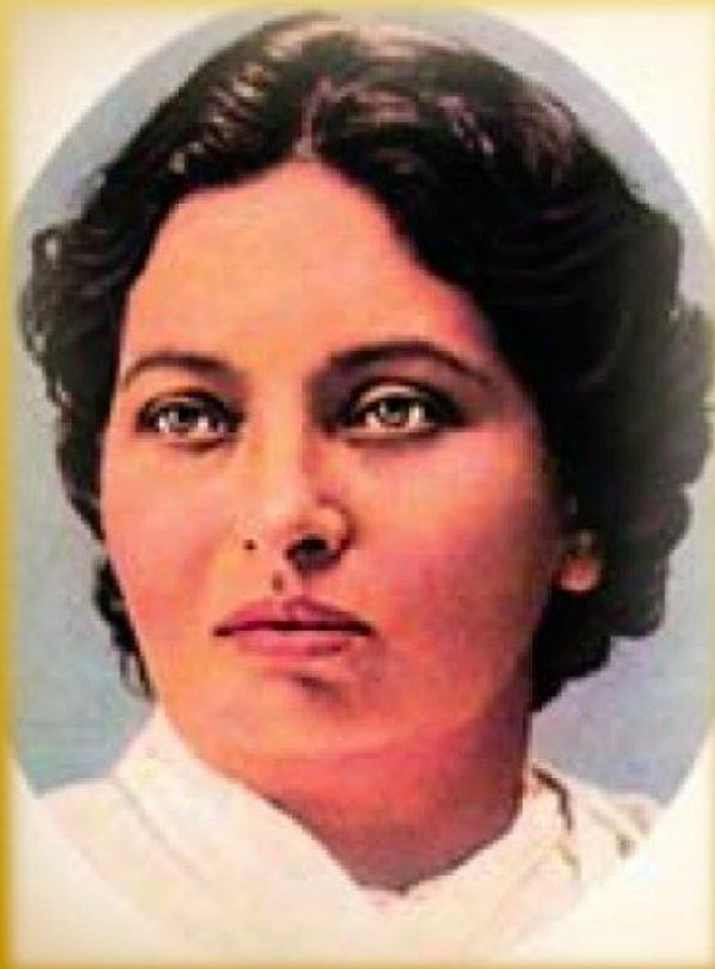
MOVEMENTS AND REFORMERS

- **Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar- he suggested widow remarriage and law was passed in 1856 for the same**
- **Veerasailingam Pantulu- formed an association for widow remarriage**
- **Swami Dayanand founded the reform association called Arya Samaj and also supported widow remarriage**
- **He also felt education for girls was necessary in order to improve the condition of women**
- **Mumtaz Ali reinterpreted verses from the Koran to argue for women's education**
- **Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain started school for Muslim girls in Patna and Calcutta**
- **Tarabai Shinde started publishing books and criticising social difference between men and women**

PANDITA RAMABAI

- **She was a great scholar of Sanskrit, felt that Hinduism was oppressive towards women**
- **She wrote a book about the miserable lives of upper caste Hindu women**
- **She founded a widow's home at Poona to provide shelter to widows who had been treated badly by their husbands relatives**
- **Here women were trained so that they could support themselves economically**

Pandita Ramabai



- ✦ 23 April 1858 – 5 April 1922
- ✦ Social Reformer
- ✦ Pioneer in education and emancipation of women
- ✦ First woman to be given the title of “Pandita” as a sanskrit scholar and “Sarasvati” after being examined by the faculty of University of Calcutta
- ✦ One of the 10 women delegates of the Congress session of 1889
- ✦ Keshab Chandra Sen gave her a copy of the Vedas to read

CASTE AND SOCIAL REFORM

- **Rammohun Roy translated an old Buddhist text that was critical of caste**
- **Prarthana Samaj adhered to the tradition of Bhakti that believed in spiritual equality of all castes**
- **In Bombay, the Paramhans Mandali was founded in 1840 to work for the abolition of caste**
- **Christian missionaries began setting up schools for tribal groups and lower caste children**
- **There was great demand for equality and justice**
- **In second half of the 19th century people from within the Non-Brahman castes began organising movements against caste discrimination**

Ghasidas, Haridas Thakur and Shri Naryana Guru

- **Guru Ghasi Das (1756–1850) was an advocate of the Satnami sect of Hinduism in the early 19th century. GhasiDas was a farmer who worked for low-caste Indians, particularly the Leather workers and organised a movement**
- **Haridas Thakur's Matua sect worked in eastern Bengal. He worked among the Chandala cultivators.**
- **Shri Naryana Guru was a guru from Ezhava caste in the modern day Kerala. He argued against unequal treatment of people on the basis of caste. He believed that all human beings belonged to the same caste.**

GULAMGIRI- JYOTIRAO PHULE

गुलामगीरी



जोतीराव गोविंदराव फुले

BHIM RAO AMBEDKAR

- **Ambedkar was born into a Mahar family**
- **As a child he experienced caste prejudice meant in everyday life**
- **In school he was forced to sit outside the classroom on the ground**
- **He was not allowed to drink water from taps that upper-caste children used**
- **In 1927, Ambedkar started a temple entry movement**
- **In which his Mahar caste followers participated**
- **He led three such movements for temple entry between 1927 and 1935**
- **His aim was to make everyone see the power of caste prejudices within society**

2nd March (1930) in Dalit History – Nashik Kalaram Temple Satyagraha started

Kalaram Temple entry movement formed a pivotal role in the Dalit movement in India. B. K (Dadasaheb) Gaikwad and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar led a protest outside the temple on 2 March 1930, in order to allowing Dalits into the temple.

The movement was to have a right to enter temple, it was more towards having equal rights. We don't want to go to temples though but we should have rights.



NON BRAHMAN MOVEMENT

- **In the early 20th century the Non-Brahman movement started**
- **They argued that Brahmans were heirs of Aryan invaders from the north who had conquered southern lands**
- **E.V Ramaswamy Naicker or Periyar convinced that untouchables had to fight for their dignity**
- **He founded self respect movement**
- **He argued that untouchables were the true upholders of an original Tamil and Dravidian culture**
- **He felt that all religious authorities saw social divisions and inequalities as God-given**
- **Periyar was an outspoken critic of Hindu scriptures**

