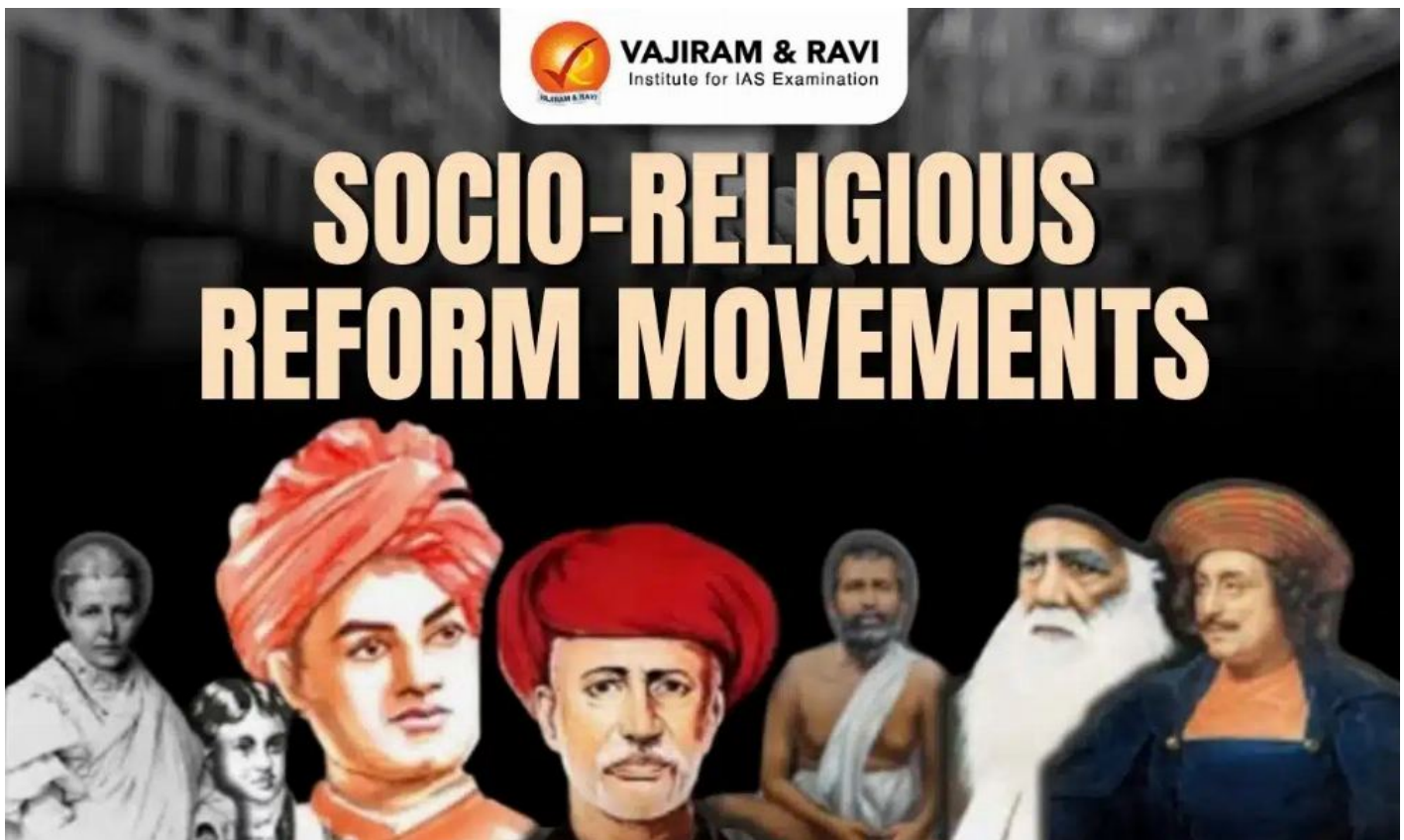


Socio-Religious Reform Movements, Causes, Leaders, Features

July 4, 2026 • vajiramandravi.com



A number of **Socio-Religious Reform Movements** were carried out throughout India in the 19th century. These socio-religious reform movements aimed to modernise Indian society through social restructuring. The Socio-Religious Reform Movements and their leaders were characterised by a recognition of the interconnection between religious and social issues. The British invasion of India in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries exposed some significant flaws and shortcomings in Indian social institutions.

As a result, a number of people and movements worked to change social and religious customs with the goal of reforming and reviving society. This also has to do with how Indian society was changing and how new classes were emerging. According to this viewpoint, the socio-religious movements represent the social aspirations of colonial India's newly emerging middle class.

Factors Leading to Socio-Religious Reform Movements

The impact of modern Western education soon gave birth to a new awakening in India.

- **Western conquest exposed the weakness and decay of Indian society. They exposed practices such as sati, infanticide, child marriage etc**
- The British rule in India created **conditions favourable to intellectual growth**. For example, **the freedom of press** made it possible to educate society about evil social practices.
- **Thoughtful Indians** began to look for the defects of their society and for ways and means of removing them through legislation as well as social work.
- While a **large number of Indians refused to come to terms with the West** and still put their faith in traditional Indian ideas and institutions, **others gradually came to hold that modern Western thought provided the key to the regeneration of their society**.
- They were **particularly impressed by modern science and the doctrines of reason and humanism**.
- Moreover, the new social groups, the capitalist class, the working class, the modern intelligentsia etc., demanded modernisation due to their own interests.

Features of Socio-Religious Reform Movements

The nineteenth-century Socio-Religious Reform Movements advocated for religious reform for political advantage and social comfort. They recognised the interconnection between religious and social issues and used religious ideas to change social institutions and practices, such as eradicating caste distinctions.

Reformers / Reform Movements	Features of Socio-Religious Reform Movements
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Raja Rammohun Roy, regarded as the first great leader of modern India, played a key role in the awakening.

- He was distressed by the stagnation and corruption of caste and convention-driven Indian society at the time.

- He represented a synthesis of Eastern and Western thought.

- **Atmiya Sabha (1814):** Founded by Rammohun Roy with a band of young men in Bengal, mainly to debate philosophical topics such as monotheism in Hindu texts.

- He waged a tenacious battle against the social and religious injustices that Bengali Hindus were notorious for.
- He was particularly opposed to idolatry, caste rigidity, and the prevalence of pointless religious rituals.
- He criticised the priestly class for promoting and fostering these customs.
- He believed that monotheism, or the worship of one God, was taught in all of the major ancient Hindu texts.
- To support his claims, he published Bengali translations of the Vedas and five of the most important Upanishads.

- He was the earliest propagator of modern education.

- **Hindu College (1817):** Roy gave the most enthusiastic assistance to **David Hare** in the foundation of the college.
- **English School in Calcutta (1817):** Roy maintained the school at his own cost.
- In this school, mechanics and Voltaire's philosophy were taught alongside other subjects.
- **Vedanta College (1825):** Founded by Rammohun Roy, in which courses both in Western social and physical sciences were offered.

- **Brahmo Samaj (1828):** New religious society founded by Rammohun Roy.

- Its objectives were to preach monotheism and purify Hinduism.
- Based on twin pillars of,
 - Reason
 - Vedas and Upanishads.
- Additionally, the teachings of other religions were to be included.
- It placed a strong emphasis on human dignity, condemned idolatry, and criticised social ills like Sati.

- He is known as a pioneer of Indian journalism.

- **Sambad Kaumudi (1821):** A Bengali weekly started by Raja Rammohan Roy.

- It emphasised issues such as the Indian demand for a jury trial in provincial courts.
- It became the main vehicle of Raja Rammohan Roy's campaign against Sati.
- It paved the way for the rise of nationalist journalism in India.

- **Mirat-ul-Akhbar (1822):** It was India's first Persian weekly started by Roy.
- It was primarily concerned with the political events of the time.

Young Bengal Movement	Young Anglo-Indian Henry Vivian Derozio was its leader. - This Socio-Religious Reform Movement was part of a radical trend in Bengal that arose in the late 1820s and the 1830s. - From 1826 to 1831, he taught at Hindu College. - He gave students the inspiration they needed to think critically and freely, to challenge all forms of authority, to value liberty, equality, and freedom, and to admire truth. - Old and decadent customs, rites, and traditions were attacked by the Derozians. • Derozians advocated for women's rights and demanded education for them. • Social conditions were not yet ripe for Derozians ideas to flourish, thus they failed to create a movement. • Derozians failed to take up the peasant's cause. • Also, their ideas were ahead of their time, which no social class was able to absorb. • Derozians did not succeed in maintaining their links with the people. - Public agitation on public questions was carried on by the Derozians, such as, • The revision of the Company's Charter • Freedom of the Press, • Indian labourers to be treated properly in British colonies abroad. • Trial by jury • Protecting ryots from oppressive zamindars, and • Employing Indians in the higher grades of services.
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Debendranath Tagore	Debendranath was imbibed with traditional Indian learning and the modern thoughts of the West. - Tattvabodhini Sabha (1839): Founded by Debendranath Tagore to propagate Rammohun Roy's ideas independent of the Brahmo Samaj. • It countered the rapid progress of Christianity in India • It advocated the development of Vedantism. • Under its aegis, the emphasis on indigenous language and culture became much more pronounced. ◦ Bengali texts in all subjects were published. • With time, it included most of the prominent followers of Rammohun and Derozio • Other independent followers included Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Akshay Kumar Dutt. • A systematic study of India's past in the Bengali language was promoted by its organ Tatvabodhini Patrika. • It spread a rational outlook among the intellectuals of Bengal. - Debendranath Tagore reorganised the Brahmo Samaj in 1843 and put new life into it. • The Samaj actively supported, ◦ the movement for widow remarriage, ◦ abolition of polygamy, ◦ women's education, ◦ improvement of the ryot's condition and temperance. • He repudiated the doctrine that the Vedic scriptures were infallible.
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Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar	He endured hardship to further his education and became principal of the Sanskrit College in 1851. - He put in place the study of Western thought in the Sanskrit College. - He opened the gates of Sanskrit College to non-Brahmin students. - He wrote a Bengali Primer and helped evolve a distinct modern prose style in Bengali. - He contributed largely to the field of female emancipation. • It was due to his active mobilisation of support that the Widows' Remarriage Act was passed in 1856, legalising all widow remarriages. • Under Vidyasagar's supervision, the first legal Hindu widow marriage among the upper castes in India was celebrated in 1856. - Bethune School (1849): With Vidyasagar's help, John Elliot Drinkwater Bethune established the first permanent girls' school in India. • As Secretary to the Bethune School, he was instrumental in leading the movement for women's education. - He also campaigned against child marriage and polygamy.
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Jyotiba Phule

He was a prominent social reformer and thinker of nineteenth-century India.

- **Emancipation of human beings:** He dedicated his entire life to relentlessly fighting against social domination by the majority and striving for the freedom of all people who were oppressed by this social inequality.

- **Enlightenment:** In his views, the enlightenment of women and lower castes was the sole solution to combat social evils.

- **Girl's school:** He established a girls' school along with Savitribai in 1851 and later opened two more schools for the girls and an indigenous school for the lower castes, especially for the Mahars and Mangs.

- **Widows and abandoned women:** He also established an ashram for **young widows** and advocated for Widow Remarriage, as society was patriarchal and women were often left without family support.

- **Orphanage:** In 1854, Jyotiba established an orphanage to shelter these widows and abandoned women from perishing at the hands of society.

- **Opposed authoritarianism:** He opposed upper-caste authoritarianism and urged peasants to resist restrictions.

- **Gender equality:** He believed in gender equality and involved his wife in all his social reform activities.

- **Accusations:** The orthodox Brahmins of the society were furious at his activities and accused him of acting on behalf of the **Christian Missionaries**.

- He, however, was supported by **Brahmin friends** to make the movement successful.

- **Satya Shodhak Samaj (Society of Seekers of Truth):** He formed this in 1873 to educate society about caste prejudice and to free downtrodden lower-caste people from the stigmas created by Brahmins.

- Membership to the Samaj was open to all, irrespective of caste and class.
- **Dalit term:** Jyotiba coined the term 'Dalit' to apply to all people considered **lower caste and untouchables** by the Brahmins.

- **His works:**

- **Gulamgiri (Slavery):** It critiques the **social and political structure** of Indian society under British colonialism.
 - It argues against the domination of the Brahmin caste and addresses the issues of social inequality, caste-based discrimination, and the exploitation of the lower castes.
- **Sarvajanik Satyadharma Pustak:** Published in 1879, this work emphasises the principles of equality, justice, and human rights.
 - It criticises the hierarchical social order, arguing for the equal treatment of all individuals regardless of caste or gender.
- **Satyashodhak Samaj Prakash:** This book provides an overview of Phule's social reform organisation, the Satyashodhak Samaj.

Savitribai Phule	Social reformer and poet who played an important role in women's education and upliftment in the nineteenth century. - Mahila Seva Mandal: Started in 1852, it aimed to raise awareness among women about their rights, dignity, and social issues. • She actively worked towards empowering women and fighting against customs like shaving the heads of widows. • She successfully organised a barbers' strike in Mumbai and Pune to oppose this practice. - Night School and Stipends: In 1855, Jyotiba and Savitribai established a night school for agricultural labourers and workers who could not attend during the day. - Balhatya Pratibandhak Griha (1863): An infanticide prohibition home started with Jyotiba. - Satya Shodhak Samaj: She led the women's section after the demise of Jyotiba Phule. • After that, she became the chairperson of the Samaj. - Famine relief: She and her husband worked dauntlessly during the famines starting in 1876, distributing free food in different areas and persuading the British government to initiate relief work during the 1897 drought. - Gender discrimination: She also raised her voice against caste and gender discrimination. - Literary works: • Kavya Phule (1934) and • Bavan Kashi Subodh Ratnakar (1982)
Bal Shastri Jambhekar	One of the first reformers in Bombay. - Attacking Brahmanical orthodoxy, he tried to reform popular Hinduism. - The Darpan (1832): A weekly started by Jambhekar. • Objective: 'Chasing away the mists of error and ignorance which clouded men's minds, and shedding over them the light of knowledge, in which the people of Europe have advanced so far before the other nations of the world'.

Paramahansa Mandali (1849)	- Founded in Maharashtra by Durgaram Mehtaji and Dadoba Pandurang. - The Mandali carried out its activities secretly. - Its founders believed in one God and were primarily interested in breaking caste rules. - It fought against idolatry and the caste system - Members of the Mandali shared food cooked by low-caste people. - It advocated women's education and widow remarriage. - Branches of the Mandali were formed in Poona, Satara, and other towns in Maharashtra.
Gopal Hari Deshmukh	- He was a champion of social reform and new learning in Maharashtra. - Famous by the pen-name 'Lokahitawadi'. - Broadening the scope of the social movement was his main contribution. - In the Prabhakar, a Marathi Weekly, he wrote his hundred letters, the famous 'Shatpatre', between 1848 and 1850. • All letters are comprehensive in dimension. • Very few aspects of society are untouched by these letters. - He also said that 'if religion did not sanction social reforms then religion should be changed, for after all religion was made by human beings'.

Socio-Religious Reform Movements after 1858

Many Indians realised that social and religious reformation was an essential condition for the all-round development of the country on modern lines and for the growth of national unity and solidarity. Later on, the movements got strengthened because of the following factors:

- Growth of nationalist sentiments
- The emergence of new economic forces
- Spread of education
- Western ideas and culture
- Increased awareness of the world.

Thus, after 1858, the earlier reforming tendency and efforts were given a broader shape and strength.

Reformer / Movement	Features of Socio-Religious Reform Movements
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Ramakrishna Paramhansa, and Swami Vivekananda	Ramakrishna Paramhansa (1834-86) was a saintly person who sought religious salvation in the traditional ways of renunciation, meditation, and devotion. - In search of religious truth and the realisation of God, he lived with mystics of other faiths, Muslims and Christians. - He emphasised that there are various paths to salvation and man's service as the embodiment of God. - He advocated for the preservation of Hinduism's rituals and beliefs as well as the universality of all religions. - Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902): A great disciple of his, he popularised his religious message and attempted to adapt it to the requirements of modern Indian society. - Swami Vivekananda stressed social action. - During his travels from 1893 to 1897, he promoted spiritual Hinduism in America and Europe. - He established the Ramakrishna Mission in 1897 to carry out humanitarian relief and social work. - He set up a Math at Belur - Vivekananda opposed superstitions, rigid caste systems, untouchability, religious degeneration, and other issues. - He remarked, "There is a danger of our religion getting into the kitchen. We are neither Vedantists, most of us now, nor Pauranics nor Tantrics. We are just 'don't touchists'. Our religion is in the kitchen. Our God is in the cooking pot, and our religion is 'Don't touch me, I am holy'. If this goes on for another century, every one of us will be in a lunatic asylum." - He made an effort to establish Hindu spiritual superiority over the arrogant West. - However, he believed that India had to learn work ethics, forms of organisation and technological advances from the West. - He believed in the Indian philosophical tradition's superior approach and subscribed to Vedanta, which according to him, was a fully rational system. - Regarding liberty of thought, he said, "Liberty in thought and action is the only condition of life, growth and well-being: Where it does not exist, the man, the race, and the nation must go down".
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Veda Samaj (1864)	It was an extremely important social reform in Southern India. - Established in Madras by Sridharalu Naidu and Keshab Chandra Sen. - It was highly inspired by Brahmo Samaj, at least in their theistic principles. - It considered marriage and funeral rituals as matters of routine, irrespective of religious significance. - Strong voices were raised in favour of eliminating all sectarian beliefs, gradually eradicating caste distinctions, and tolerating the viewpoint of outsiders. - Samaj was against polygamy and child marriage and supported widow remarriage.
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Arya Samaj (1875)

Founded in Bombay by **Swami Dayanand Saraswati** (1824-1883), earlier known as Mool Shankar.

- The important task of this Socio-Religious Reform Movement was reforming the Hindu religion in North India.
- It promoted social reform.
- It made an effort to better women's conditions.
- It promoted social equality while combating untouchability and the rigidities of the hereditary caste system.
- He made his ideas accessible to the people of Northern India by the use of the Hindi language in which he wrote and preached.
- Arya Samaj also played a significant part in the national movement by inculcating the idea of self-respect and self-reliance.
- The Arya Samaj played a commendable role in encouraging education among the masses.

- **Swami Dayanand Saraswati:**

- Vedas were considered infallible and the foundation of all knowledge by him.
- Any religious thought which was in conflict with the Vedas was rejected by him.
- He gave the slogan "**Back to the Vedas**".
- As per his beliefs, every Individual had the right to direct access to God.
- Shuddhi Movement was started by him with the aim of bringing back those Hindus who had converted to Islam and Christianity.
- Satyarth Prakash was his most important book.
- Swami opposed idolatry, polytheism, Brahmin-sponsored religion, and superstition.
- He advocated for female education and inter-caste marriages.
 - However, his inclination towards the Vedas gave his teachings an orthodox flavour.

- His followers' work:

- They started a network of schools and colleges in the country to impart education on Western lines.
- Lala Hansraj was the principal of Dayanand Anglo-Vedic School.
- Gurukul was started by Swami Shradhananda.
- He propagated traditional ideals in education.

-The leaders who opposed Anglo-Vedic education included Swami Shraddhanand, Gurudatt, Lekh Ram and others.

- They **insisted that** the Samaj's focus must be on Sanskrit, Aryan ideology and Vedic scriptures.

- The militant branch believed that Dayanand's words were infallible and that the meaning of Satyarth Prakash was infallible.

Prarthana Samaj (1876)	Founded by Atmaram Pandurang and Mahadev Govind Ranade. - This Socio-Religious Reform Movement was founded with the intention of revising Hindu religious doctrine and practises to reflect current understanding. - It advocated for the devotion of a single God and worked to rid religion of priestly dominance and caste orthodoxy. - The Samaj opposed polytheism and condemned idolatry, priestly dominance, and caste rigidities. - It drew inspiration from Buddhism and Christianity in addition to Hindu sects. - It sought truth in all religions. - Ranade aimed to establish the idea of a single compassionate God by drawing inspiration from the Maratha Bhakti saints of the mediaeval era. - R.G. Bhandarkar, the famous Sanskrit scholar, was one of its great leaders. - The Brahmo Samaj had a significant impact on it. - Viresalingam, a Telugu reformer, was responsible for its activities spreading to South India.
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Theosophical Society	The history of Indian society, religion, and culture has been significantly influenced by Theosophical society. - Madame H.P. Blavatsky, a Russian spiritualist, and Col. H.S. Olcott, an American, founded it in the United States in 1875. - The goal was to promote ancient religions, philosophies, and science and establish a universal brotherhood. - Introduced in India in 1879, its headquarters were set up at Adyar near Madras in 1886. - It spread its influence under Annie Besant, who played an important role in India's struggle for freedom. • She and her associates advocated the revival and strengthening of the ancient religions of Hinduism, Zoroastrianism and Buddhism. • They recognised the doctrine of the transmigration of the soul. • They also preached the universal brotherhood of man. • They contributed to instilling a sense of national pride in the educated Indians. • The Westerners who promoted Indian religious and philosophical traditions were the leaders and backers of Annie Besant's movement. ◦ This helped Indians recover their self-confidence. • The work done by the Theosophical Movement to awaken the Indians was remarkable, despite the fact that it did not enjoy widespread popularity. - The society promoted the advancement of women and fought against untouchability. - Annie Besant spent her entire life advancing Indian society. • She described her mission in these words: "The Indian work is first of all the revival, the strengthening and uplifting of the ancient religions. This has brought with it a new self-respect, pride in the past, belief in the future, and as an inevitable result, a great wave of patriotic life, the beginning of the rebuilding of a nation". - Branches of the Theosophical Society were opened all over India, and its Journal Theosophist had a wide circulation. - The Central Hindu School at Benaras, which Madan Mohan Malaviya later transformed into the Benaras Hindu University, was one of Besant's numerous accomplishments in India.
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Deccan Education Society (1884)	Deccan Education Society was an influential social reform and political organisation formed in the Pune district in Maharashtra. - The establishment of the New English School in Pune resulted in the foundation of the Deccan Education Society by Gopal Ganesh Agarkar and Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak. - It was an unprecedented move because the only organisations involved in mass education were governmental institutions and Christian missionaries. - As a fervent reformist, Agarkar took a keen interest in social reform initiatives. - Tilak was a Puritan when it came to social reforms. • Once political freedom was attained, he thought, laws could implement such social reform measures. - Other leaders of the Society: • Vishnushastri Chiplunkar • Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade • Mahadev Ballal • Namjoshi • V S Apte • V B Kelkar • M S Gole and • N K Dharap - Society established Fergusson College, Pune's first higher education institution.
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Dev Samaj (1887)	Founder: Pandit Shiv Narayan Agnihotri Place of establishment: Lahore - Dev Samaj rejected contemporary Hinduism. - Its rituals and deities were replaced by worship of the true 'guru', Dev Bhagvan Atma. - All caste restrictions were rejected. - Dev Samaj members were expected to practice inter-dining and inter-caste marriage. - It advocated the education of both men and women. • To further this end, it opened a coeducational school at Moga, which later became the Dev Samaj High School. • In 1901, the Samaj opened a separate girls' school, the Dev Samaj Balika Vidyalaya. - Dev Samaj emphasised morality, prohibiting lying, theft, cheating, bribery, and gambling. - Pandit Shiv Narayan Agnihotri: • Initially, he accepted the reformist ideology of the Brahmo Samaj. • He advocated for marriage reform, opposed child marriage, and supported vegetarianism. • He defended Brahmo ideals against the new Arya Samaj. • Agnihotri defended Sikhism against Arya Samaj attacks in 1888-89. • Factional strife made Agnihotri part its ways from Brahmo Samaj and led to the founding of Dev Samaj. • With time, it moved away from Brahmo Samaj and made guru-ship as the central principle.
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Veeresalingam	In the South of India, a leading light of the Socio-Religious Reform Movement in the early stages was Kandukari Veeresalingam. - By profession, he was a school teacher. - Proficient writer, authored numerous tracts and pamphlets on this Socio-Religious Reform Movement in Telugu, thus considered the father of modern Telugu prose literature. - He became the father figure of the subsequent generation of Andhra social reformers due to his missionary zeal on issues like the remarriage of widows, female education, the advancement of women, and the elimination of social vices. - In 1874, he started a school in Dowlaiswaram. - He is frequently compared to Raja Rammohun Roy in Andhra because he built the "Brahmo Mandir" in Rajahmundry in 1887.
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Socio-Religious Movements Among Muslims, Sikhs and Parsis

Such Socio-Religious Reform Movements were late in emerging among Muslims. The Muslim upper class tended to avoid contact with Western education and culture which led to:

Reformer / Reform Movement	Features of Socio-Religious Reform Movements
Wahabi Movement (1830-1860)	- Leader: Syed Ahmed Barelvi of Rae Bareilly - He was greatly influenced by the teachings of Abdul Wahab of Arabia and Shah Waliullah, a Delhi saint. - The roots of this Socio-Religious Reform Movement were primarily religious. - Patna served as the key hub for the Wahabi movement in India. Additionally, it had missions in Bombay, Bengal, UP, Hyderabad, and Madras. - In some places, particularly Bengal, it quickly took on the characteristics of a class struggle. - Regardless of communal differences, peasants banded together to fight their landlords.

Faraizi Movement (1838-48)	- Shariatullah Khan and Dadu Mian spearheaded the first-ever anti-tax campaign against the British government. - Their volunteer group bravely engaged the armed band of zamindars and indigo planters. - It united all of Bengal's farmers in opposition to landlord tyranny and unlawful extractions. - In the districts of Dhaka, Faridpur, Barisal, Mymensingh, and Comilla, the Faraizi movement was well received.
The Mohammedan Literary Society of Calcutta	- Founded by Abdul Latif in 1863. - It aimed to spread modern education and remove social practices like polygamy among upper and middle-class Muslims - It was crucial in advancing Hindu-Muslim unity.
Deoband Movement (1866)	The Dar al-Uloom Deoband was a revivalist movement founded in Deoband, United Province, British India, by Muhammad Qasim Nanautavi and Rashid Ahmad Gangohi. - In general, the Deobandis have been outspoken opponents of Sufi devotional practices. - This Socio-Religious Reform Movement spread among Muslims the clear teachings of the Quran and the Hadis. - It opposed the thoughts propagated by the Aligarh Movement. - It was aimed at the moral and religious regeneration of the Muslim community. - The formation of the Indian National Congress was welcomed by it.

**Sayyid Ahmed Khan and
the Aligarh School**

Only after the 1860s, the Indian Muslims started the Socio-Religious Reform Movements.

- Sayyid Ahmed Khan (1817-98) **urged the Muslims to reject the decadent mediaeval thought and to imbibe modern scientific knowledge and outlook.**

- He supported the abolition of purdah and the expansion of women's education while denouncing the practice of polygamy.

- He advocated for freedom of thought and tolerance in the populace.

- He spent his entire life working to advance modern education because it was a cause that deeply concerned him.

- In order to spread Western education, he established the **Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College in Aligarh in 1875.**

- This eventually became the Aligarh Muslim University.

- He believed that for Muslims, the Quran is the most authoritative and rational religious text.

- He spoke out against religious fanaticism and bigotry while valuing all religions.

- Some of his supporters chose not to participate in the growing national movement because they thought the two groups might grow in different directions.

- The liberal, social and cultural movement started by him among the Muslims is known as the **Aligarh Movement**, as it originated in Aligarh.

- The ensuing Muslim revival was largely brought on by the Aligarh Movement.
- For the dispersed Muslim population spread across the nation, it served as a focal point.
- It provided them with a shared knowledge base and a language, namely Urdu.
- A Muslim press was established for the collection of Urdu-language works.

- He demanded that European science and technology be studied.

- In 1866, he formed the **British Indian Association at Aligarh.**

- He wrote '**The Causes of the Indian Revolt**' (1858), in which he criticised the British for their aggressive expansion into India and their ignorance of Indian culture.

- In order to create a bridge between India and their British rulers, he argued for Indian representation in governance and for the education of the Indian populace.

Muhammad Iqbal (1876-1938)	He was one of the greatest poets of modern India. - Through his poetry, he had a significant impact on both Hindus and Muslims of younger generations in terms of their philosophical and religious outlook. - He emphasised the necessity of ongoing change and nonstop action while decrying resignation, introspection, and peaceful contentment. - He urged people to adopt a progressive mindset that would contribute to world change. - He was basically a humanist. • In actuality, he elevated human action to the rank of a fundamental virtue. • He asserted that instead of submitting to nature or the powers that be, man should exert constant control over this world. - The passive acceptance of things as they were, in his opinion, was the greatest sin. - He urged men to work for and find happiness in this world of the living by denouncing ritualism, asceticism, and otherworldly attitudes. - He praised patriotism in his earlier poetry, but later he promoted Muslim separatism.
Ahmadiyya Movement (1889)	Founded in Punjab by eminent scholar and defender of Islam Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. - Through this Socio-Religious Reform Movement, numerous schools and colleges across the nation were opened as a result of this movement. • They emphasised the universal and humanitarian character of Islam. • They favoured unity among Hindus and Muslims. - Hazrat Mirza established a Muslim movement and community in order, • to defend and spread Islam throughout the entire world and • to awaken the Islamic principles of mercy, forgiveness, and compassion for all people. - He named it Ahmadiyya, after the Holy Prophet Muhammad's other name Ahmad which symbolises the qualities of tenderness, gentleness, love and mercy.

Sikhs, too, worked hard to eradicate the evils of the caste system, infanticide, early marriage etc., through several religious reform movements.

Reformer/ Reform Movement	Features of Socio-Religious Reform Movements
Kuka Movement (Namdhari Movement, 1872)	Leaders: Bhagat Jawaharmal and Baba Balak Singh - This Socio-Religious Reform movement became a powerful force of religio-political revival among the Sikhs under Baba Ram Singh, a disciple of Baba Balak Singh. • Baba Ram Singh particularly enjoined upon his followers the worship of one God through prayer and meditation. • All of his followers were urged to be involved in worshipping God at all times by the Rehatnamas (moral codes) he created and enforced. • He also preached against social evils such as the caste system, infanticide, early marriage and barter of daughters in marriage and popularised simple and inexpensive Anand Marriage. • The teachings of Baba Ram Singh seem to have had a wide appeal to the Sikh masses. - The rising popularity of Baba Ram Singh's mission was of great concern to modern European officials.

Singh Sabha Movement (1873)	The year following the persecution of the Kukas and the suppression of their movement saw the birth of this Socio-Religious Reform Movement. - Its activities had a much wider appeal among the Sikh masses and, consequently, made a far greater impact. - The majority of the Singh Sabha movement's supporters, who were from the educated middle class, also had ties to other social and religious movements in Punjab. - Through the dissemination of education, the Singh Sabha primarily sought social and religious reform. • Hence they consciously refrained from discussing political questions. - The Singh Sabha leadership did not want to offend the British authorities, either because of their own vested interests as large landholders or because of their conception of the 'interests of the Sikhs'. - They contrasted the current deplorable state of the Sikhs with the past sufferings under the Mughals, citing the prosperous times of Ranjit Singh's rule in Punjab. - The major contribution of the Singh Sabha leadership lay in the creation of a network of Khalsa schools, colleges and other centres of learning. • The founding of Khalsa College in Amritsar in 1892 contributed to the advancement of Punjabi literature, Sikh education, and Gurmukhi. ◦ British assistance was used to establish the college.
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Akali Movement (1920-1925)	The formation of the two Singh Sabhas at Amritsar and Lahore in the 1870s was the beginning of this Socio-Religious Reform Movement among the Sikhs. - It rose in Punjab in 1920. • The Akalis' main aim was to clean up the administration of the Gurudwaras, or Sikh shrines. • These gurudwaras had been heavily endowed with land and money by devout Sikhs, but they had come to be managed autocratically by corrupt and selfish mahants. • A powerful Satyagraha against the mahants and the government, which supported them, was launched by the Sikh masses under the leadership of the Akalis in 1921. • A new Sikh Gurudwaras Act was passed in 1922 as a result of pressure from the Akalis. ◦ It was later revised in 1925. • In a few instances, with the aid of this Act, and more through direct action, the Sikhs gradually turned out of the gurudwaras, the corrupt mahants.
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Likewise, many Parsi intellectuals worked diligently for the reforms of their socio-cultural evils like

Reformer / Reform Movement	Features of Socio-Religious Reform Movements
The Rehnumai Mazdayasan Sabha by Dadabhai Naoroji	Leading social reform society of Bombay. - Also known as the Religious Reform Association, it was started by Naoroji Furdonji, Dadabhai Naoroji, S.S. Bengalee and others. • It waged a campaign against the deeply ingrained orthodoxy in the religious community. • It started the modernisation of Parsi social customs relating to women's education, marriage, and general social status. • It agitated for uniform laws of inheritance and marriage for the Parsis. - In the course of time, the Parsis became socially the most Westernised section of Indian society.

Nature of Socio-Religious Reform Movements

These movements were characterised by rationalism and humanism. The humanist aspect of the reform movement could be seen in the form of rejection of priestly domination.

- **Foremost importance to education:** The movements considered education to be the foremost instrument for bringing about social change.

- Illiteracy, in general, and among women, in particular, was criticised.
- **No sharp change in the society:** Reformers did not advocate a sharp rupture in the social structure but only wanted to remove distortion and evil that had crept into the society.
- **Limited appeal:** Despite the efforts of reformists, their message was limited to the urban educated middle class.
 - Thus, a vast number of Indians remained untouched by the movements.
- **Revivalist character:** Some of the movements and leaders turned to revivalism.
 - This led to unnecessary glorification and distortion of the past.
- **Trendsetters:** It is important to keep in mind that the importance of the nineteenth-century reformers lay less in their sheer numbers than in the fact that they set the trends.
 - It was their thoughts and activities that were to have a decisive impact on the making of a new India.

Other Related Posts	
Socio-Religious Reform Movements	Faraizi Movement
Raja Ram Mohan Roy	Deoband Movement
Brahmo Samaj	Ahmadiyya movement
Swami Vivekananda	Akali movement
Ramakrishna Mission	Kuka Movement
Arya Samaj	Jyotiba Phule
Dayanand Saraswati	Savitribai Phule
Young Bengal Movement	Paramahansa Mandali
Henry Vivian Derazio	Pandita Ramabai
Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar	SNDP Movement
Prarthana Samaj	Justice Party
Gopal Hari Deshmukh	Self Respect movement
Dharma Sabha	Temple Entry Movement
Theosophical Society	Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar
Aligarh Movement	Gandhi vs Ambedkar
Wahabi Movement	Mahad Satyagraha

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