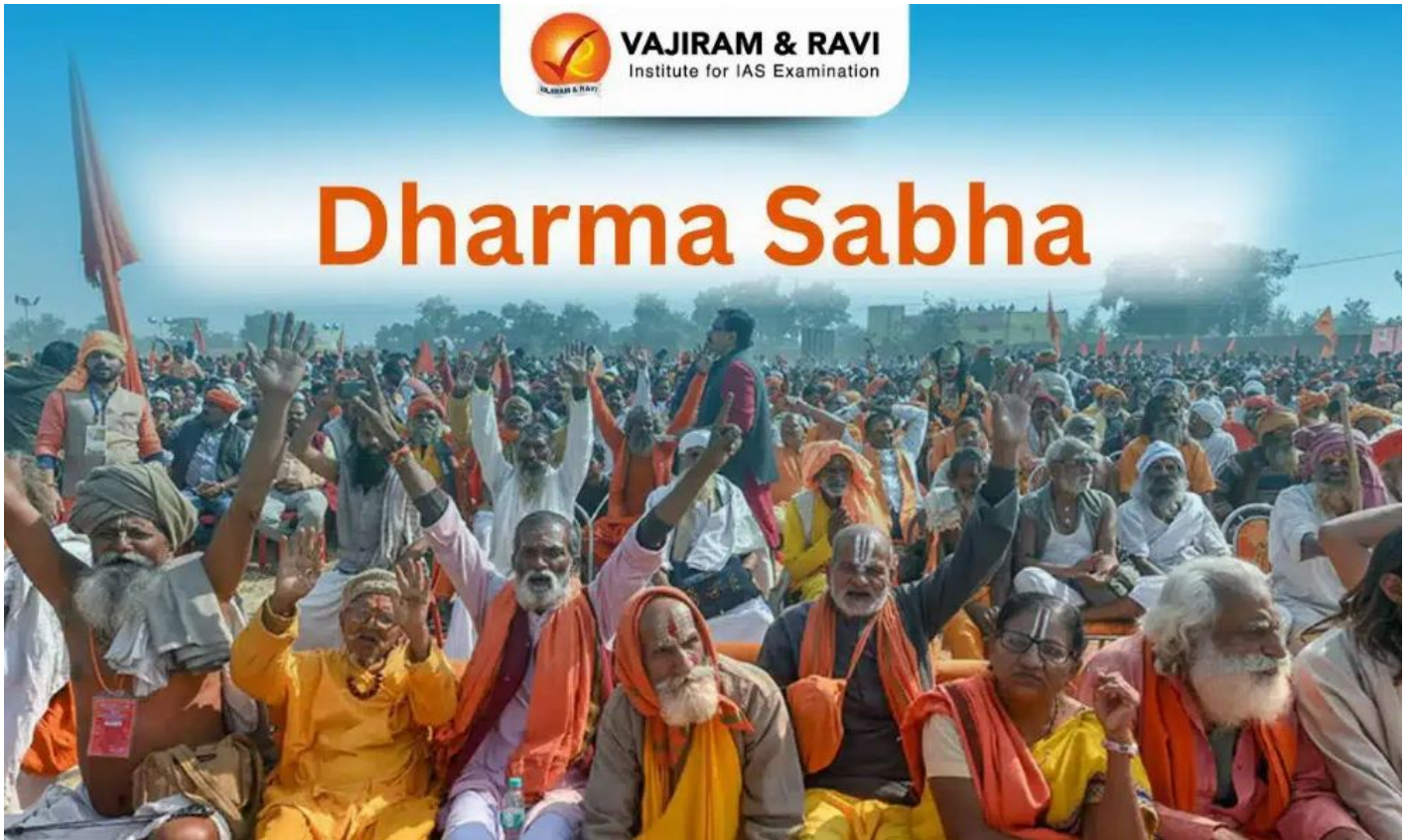


Dharma Sabha, Founder, Objectives, Significance

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The **Dharma Sabha** was founded in 1830 in Calcutta by **Radhakanta Deb**, with the primary goal of opposing the socio-religious reform movements led by figures like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Henry Derozio. Dharma Sabha served as a conservative response to these reform efforts, aiming to protect traditional Hindu values and practices.

Although an orthodox society, the Dharma Sabha supported the promotion of Western education, even for girls. However, the Dharma Sabha strongly opposed social reforms such as the abolition of sati and worked to maintain the existing socio-religious order.

Dharma Sabha Background

The colonial presence in India sparked a new awareness and desire for social and religious reform in the **early 19th century**. As traditional institutions faced challenges from Western culture, a re-evaluation of Indian culture and tradition ensued. As a result, the Dharma Sabha was formed by conservative Hindu groups in response to Western-focused reform movements like the **Brahmo Samaj**.

Dharma Sabha Founder

Radhakanta Deb, a prominent leader of conservative Hindu society in Calcutta, established the **Dharma Sabha** in 1830. A strong advocate for education, he promoted English education among Hindus and supported women's education.

Radhakanta Deb served as the **President of the British Indian Association**. He also supported David Hare and aided in the establishment of the **Hindu College** in Calcutta.

In December 1829, following the government's ban on sati under **Lord William Bentinck**, Radhakanta Deb and other leaders of the Dharma Sabha opposed the legislation, defending traditional Hindu practices.

Dharma Sabha Objectives

The objectives for forming the Dharma Sabha stemmed from a new law introduced by British colonial rule that banned the practice of **sati** (burning of widows alive). The primary focus of the Dharma Sabha was to oppose this law. Some segments of the Hindu community saw it as British interference in their religious practices.

- Additionally, Dharma Sabha aimed to oppose the reformist ideas of **Raja Ram Mohan Roy's** Brahmo Samaj.
- It also aimed to protect and uphold traditional Hindu orthodoxy and customs. It strongly **opposed radical social reforms**, such as the abolition of sati and the promotion of widow remarriage.

Moreover, the sabha also sought to unite conservative Hindus to resist excessive liberalization and Western influence. Despite its orthodox views, the Dharma Sabha supported the spread of Western education, recognizing the importance of modern learning.

Dharma Sabha Activities

The **Dharma Sabha**, established in 1830 by Radhakanta Deb, became a significant organization dedicated to preserving Hindu traditions and resisting reforms that challenged orthodox practices.

- **Challenge to the Sati Ban:** The Dharma Sabha opposed Lord William Bentinck's ban on Sati (1829), arguing it violated George III's assurance of non-interference in Hindu religious practices.
- The matter was taken to the Privy Council, but the appeal was unsuccessful, and the ban was upheld in 1832.
- **Opposition to the Widow Remarriage Act:** The Sabha strongly opposed the Hindu **Widow Remarriage Act** of 1856, presenting a petition to resist the reform.
- Despite their efforts, the bill was passed under Lord Canning's leadership.
- The Act was perceived as a significant breach of traditional Hindu customs at the time.
- The Sabha disseminated its ideas and rallied support through its newspaper, Samachar Chandrika, which focused on defending Hindu orthodoxy.

Dharma Sabha Significance

The Dharma Sabha was formed in opposition to reformist movements like the Brahmo Samaj. It tried to preserve traditional Hindu customs and practices, which contributed to the consolidation of conservative Hindu identity in the face of growing Western influence and social change.

- This conservative stance later led to several similar organizations, such as the **Sanatana Dharma Sabha** (1895), **Dharma Maha Parishad** in South India, and **Dharma Mahamandali** in Bengal, **Bharat Dharma Mahamandala**.

Dharma Sabha UPSC PYQs

Consider the following pairs: **(UPSC CSE 2017)**

1. Radhakanta Deb: First President of the British Indian Association
2. GazuluLa kshminarasu Chetty: Founder of the Madras Mahajana Sabha
3. Surendranath Banerjee: Founder of the Indian Association

Which of the above pairs is/are correctly matched?

- (a) 1 only (b) 1 and 3 only
(c) 2 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (b).

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Brahmo Samaj	Ahmadiyya movement
Swami Vivekananda	Akali movement
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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
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