

Socio-Religious Movements in 19th-20th Centuries

Socio-Religious Movements and Organisations

Important Socio-Religious Reformers

Swami Sahajanand (1781-1830) : His original name being Gyanashyama, founded the Swaminarayan sect in Gujarat, which believed in a theistic God and prescribed a moral code for its followers.

Raja Rammohan Roy (1772-1833) : Born in 1772 at Radhanagar in Burdwan district (West Bengal) founded Atmiya Sabha in Calcutta in 1815 to propagate monotheism and reforms in the Hindu society. The Atmiya Sabha was named Brahmo Sabha and finally Brahmo Samaj in 1828, Launched a movement for the abolition of Sati through his journal Sabad Kaumudi (1819).

Debendranath Tagore (1817-1905) : Took over the leadership of the Brahmo Samaj after Raja Rammohan Roy. Founded Tattvabodhini Sabha in 1839 and published Tattvabodhini Patrika, a Bengali monthly to propagate the ideas of Raja Rammohan Roy. In 1859, the Tattvabodhini Sabha was amalgamated with the Brahmo Samaj. He compiled selected passages from the Upanishads, which came to be known as Brahma Dharma

Keshav Chandra Sen (1838-1884) : Keshav Chandra Sen was the leader of the Brahmo Samaj during the absence of Debendranath Tagore. He started Bamabodhini Patrika, a journal for women. He launched radical reforms, such as giving up of caste names, inter-caste and widow remarriages and launched movement against child marriages. These radical reforms led to to the first schism in the Brahmo Samaj. The original Brahmo Samaj came to be known as Adi Brahmo Samaj and the other, the Brahmo Samaj of India which was established by Keshav Chandra Sen in 1866. Sen formed the Indian Reform Association in 1870, which persuaded the British Government to enact the Native Marriage Act of 1972 (popularly known as Civil Marriage Act) legalising the Brahmo marriages and fixing the minimum marriageable age for boys and girls.

Atmaram Pandurang (1823-1898) : Atmaram Pandurang founded Prarthana Samaj in 1867 in Bombay. M.G. Ranade joined it in 1870.

Swami Dayanand Saraswati (1824-1883) : Swami Dayanand Saraswati, originally known as Mula Shankar founded the Arya Samaj in 1875 in Bombay, wrote Satyarth Prakash (in Hindi) and Veda-Bhashya Bhumika (partly in Hindi and partly in Sanskrit).

Blavatsky (1831-91) and Olcott (1832-1907) : Madam H.P. Blavatsky, a Russian woman and Col. H.S. Olcott, an American, founded the Theosophical Society in New York in 1875, but shifted the headquarter of the Society to Adyar near Madras in 1882.

Swami Vivekanand (1863-1902) : Swami Vivekanand (originally Narendranath Dutta), founded the Ramakrishna Mission in 1887 as a social service league which was registered as a Trust in 1897.

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