CHAPTER IV

ORGANISED EFFORTS OF SOCIAL REFORMS

- ROLE OF VARIOUS ORGANIZATIONS
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Organized Efforts of Social Reforms
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ROLE OF VARIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

Introduction:

The process of social change is influenced mainly by three factors i.e. (i) thoughts (ii) personalities or leadership (iii) and associations or organizations of activists and their followers.

The process of social change starts after some major event of far reaching impact. In Indian case the establishment of British rule was responsible for generating the process of social change. Maharashtra was not in any way exception in this regard. The people began to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of British rule in India. Number of institutions in social, education, political field were established in the later half of 19th century in Maharashtra.

In Indian society religion was so much influential that every social problem is linked with religion. Therefore, in Indian case it was difficult to differentiate between nature of social and religious reform activities. No social reform movement could avoid religious beliefs, traditions and customs. Obviously religious renovation was the pre-condition for revising the social structures, and that is why the religious reforms became a part of the broader programme of social reforms. Mrs. Annie Beasant has stated in this regard that the,
"revival of religion was imperatively necessary and no
great popular movement can be made without the help of
religion".

In the last century number of organizations of
social and religious nature played an important role in
bringing social changes in Maharashtra. Though their
ultimate objective was to bring change in the society;
they differ from each other in their composition, method
and background etc. Therefore, in this chapter an
attempt has been made to understand the organized efforts
for social reforms made by the reformists to various
organization in 19th century Maharashtra. For the
purpose of convinience they have been grouped in three
catagories viz:

(A) Reforms Organizations:

In this groups (i) Christian missionary societies
(ii) Paramhansa Sabha and Manav-dharma Sabha (iii) Widow-
remarriage Association (iv) Prarthana Samaj (v) Student's
Literary Society (vi) Satya-Shodhak Samaj (vii) National
Social Conference etc. can be included.

(B) Revivalist Organizations:

In this group includes (i) Arya Samaj (ii) Theoso-
phical Society (iii) Ram Krishna Mission.
(C) **Political Organizations:**

In this group (i) Bombay Association (ii) Sarvajaneek Sabha and (iii) Indian National Congress are included.

I. **Group (A): Reforms Organizations:**

(1) **Christian Missionary Societies:**

19th century is considered as the beginning of modernization of Indian society. Number of western agencies had their influence on the process of moral and material transformation. Christian missionary societies were one of such organizations which created the social consciousness among the people and prepared favourable background for social reform movement in Maharashtra.

Charter Act of 1813 permitted Christian missionaries to enter in India and also authorised them to work for the spread of Christianity in India. Before that the Baptist Missionary Society was founded in 1792 and its agent William Carry and John Thomas landed at Calcutta late in 1793. London missionary society followed the path in 1795, and Church missionary society was established in 1799, American missionary activities began in 1813. The Scottish missionary society began its work in the Bombay Presidency in 1823. The period of initial expansion of American missions between 1813-1870 was marked...
by important pioneering work on their part in several directions.

There were many "Biblical Societies" viz., 'Society for the propagation of Christian knowledge', 'Society for propagating Gospel', 'Society for the protection of Christian liberty' etc. interested in spreading Christianity in India.

II. Objectives and Activities:

The main objective of Christian Missionaries was to spread message of the Christ and conversion of natives to Christianity.

But one cannot ignore positive role played by them in creating favourable background for social reforms.

The work of missionary societies in the field of education, social welfare, upliftment of the backward classes etc. was possibly of greater importance than the actual work of conversion to Christianity. It has been observed in this regard that "... it was Christianity that almost for the first time in the history of country brought the people to a consciousness of their own backwardness and degeneration". The missionaries thought that many religious and social reforms were necessary in the Hindu social structure specially with regard to child marriage, polygamy, female infanticide, Sati etc.
The Christian missionaries were against the cruel traditions and customs of Hindu social order. They were the first to challenge openly the validity of the prevalent caste-system in Hindu society.

Missionaries were first to organize "orphanage" for boys and girls and established widow homes. It was really the first organized social work of its kind in India. They also sent a petition to the House of Commons for abolishing prostitution in Bombay and Calcutta. They were also against child marriages.

For the purpose of removing ignorance they opened large number of schools in the areas where they worked.

The credit for introducing education for women rightly goes to Christian missionaries. The Company Government was quite indifferent towards women's education in India. But the missionary societies had this on their agenda of their work since early years of 19th century. The missionaries like Mr. May, Miss Mary Ann Cooke deserve special mention in the history of women's education during this period. In Bombay American mission society opened a girl school in 1824 and at Ahmadnagar in 1831.

During 1850's there were 284 day schools and 8919 girls were taking education in Bengal, Bombay and North-West province. Besides, 2274 girls were taking education
in 86 boarding schools run by various missions.

Printing Press was first introduced in India by the Portuguees Josuits in 1557 in Goa, to print Christian literature. Second printing press was introduced in 1578 at Tinewelli by the same Christain missionary society. It is also reported that in 1616 a printing press was started by Thomas Stephan, (a Portugueess missionary) at 10 Rochol village near Bombay. Then, Dr. Carrey, a missionary introduced a press at "Madanbatty" near Calcutta city in September 1798. This press was shifted to Serampur near Calcutta, in 1800, where books and periodicals in native languages were printed. American Christian Missionaries had started printing press in 1813 for printing school text-books

The introduction of printing press in India, in the early years of 19th century was followed by publication of newspapers and periodicals on regular basis. These newspapers began to express their views on the evil customs of Indian society and suggested methods to remove them, and supported social reforms movement. 'Dyanodaya' (1842), 'Tar-Prasarak' (1850), "Prabhadaya" (1856), were run by Christian missionaries. 'Durpan' (1832),'Dig-darshan'(1837), 'Prabhakar' (1848), "Dyana Prasarak" (1858) and others non-Christian papers supported the social reforms. However, there were many newspapers like "Vichar-
Lahari" (1852), "Chandricle" (1854), "Sad-dharma-Deepika" (1856) were published in Maharashtra which opposed to the work of Christian missionaries and justified Hinduism.

III. Impact:

Thus, Christian missionaries were one of the channels through which modern ideas found their way to India. They played part in introducing an important role in India, the humanistic side of western civilization.

One of the well-known reformer of that time Mr. N.G. Chandawarkar, while paying tributes to the work done by missionaries in the field of social reforms, has observed that, "social consciousness and modern outlook found in the society during 19th century was the result of the work done by the missionaries. They imparted western education. They revived the vernacular books and knowledge. Major credit for initiating social reforms and creating favourable atmosphere for the same may be given to Christian missionaries and their devoted work".

Though British rulers allowed the missionaries to work in India, they did not support their activity.

The society at large did not approve of their ultimate objective of spreading Christianity through conversion. Yet they were impressed by their sincerity, honesty, devotion and hard-work inspired by these virtues. Some Indian
leaders also thought of establishing organizations to undertake social activities.

IV. **Limitations:**

Despite their pioneering work in the field of education, the missionary efforts had their own limitations. Basically their aim was to spread Christainity and not to reform Indian society. As it is said that the missionary societies imparted education with the hope that the natives shall be able to read Bible and thereby can develop affinity towards Christainity. The change in the atmosphere in favour of social reforms can be said as bi-product of their activities.

Secondly, it can be stated that their contacts with the natives and exchange of views and thoughts between them resulted in conversion of some educated young Hindus to Christainity which had adverse effect and the people began to look to the work of Christain missionary with suspicion. This also created some sort of anti-missionary sentiments among the conservative minded Indians.
(2) Paramhans Sabha and Manav-Dharma Sabha:

(i) Establishment- The activities and teachings of Christian missionaries had great impact on the educated youths in the middle of 19th century Maharashtra. Some of those English educated young natives were against idol worship and believed in one God. In 1844 (22 June) Dadoba Pandurang and Durgaram Mancharam established Manav-dharm Sabha at Surat. This organization was based on the rules and regulations formulated by Dadoba Pandurang on the suggestions of Dalapatram - a social reformer - to follow the path of true religion (Satya Dharma). But this was short lived affair. The Manav-dharma Sabha could not continue for long time.

In 1850 Dadoba Pandurang returned to Bombay and he established a secret organization called Paramhans Sabha. With the help of Ram Balkrishna Jayakar, Bhikobadada, Chavan, Sakharam Laxman Chavan etc.

The actual working of these Sabhas was done secretly. The members of these organizations did not believe in caste system. Their method of membership and radical views about the religion were quite radical in those days. Therefore, to avoid possible social wrath and boycott they worked secretly. Since the work was done secretly authentic information about membership, branches etc. is
not available. In addition to this it may be noted that the pursuit of this activity led to many rumours. One of them was that many members were about to take Baptism, i.e. conversion into Christianity.

(ii) **Objectives of Paramahansa Sabha**

The aims and objectives of Paramahansa Sabha were as follows:

1. To encourage widow remarriages.
2. Not to observe caste distinction.
3. To encourage women's education.
4. To educate lower caste people.
5. To worship and pray to God as the creator of the whole world.
6. Not to worship idols.
7. To teach everybody to discharge his duties according to his power of reasoning etc.

The main condition for membership of the Sabha was to share milk or bread that was already tested or partly eaten by some other member. This was necessary to prove that the members of the Sabha have no observation for caste-system. The Paramahansa Sabha had its branches in Poona, Ahmednagar, Satara.

(iii) **Composition and Working**

Among the chief members of the Paramahansa Sabha were
Ramkrishna Bhandarkar, Baba Padamanji, Dr. Atmaram Pandurang, Kasam Mohmadji, Narayan Raghunath, Bhau Mahajan, Bhikaba Laxman, his brother Sakharam Laxman, Tukaram Tatya Padwal, Moroba Vinoba, Bal Shankar Shintre, Madan Shrikrishna etc. Most of them belonged to upper caste and upper strata of the society. Some of its members like Jotiba Phuley belonged to middle level castes as well.

iv) Limitations of Paramhansa Sabha-

Notwithstanding its ideals and objectives the Paramhansa Sabha could not influence the common people. The actual working of the Sabha was quite secretative. Most of the members had no courage to face the social opposition for preaching and acting accordingly which was not acceptable to the society at large at that time. It is reported that Dadoba Pandurang and Bhau Mahajan used to sit in the adjoining room when they came for the meetings of Paramhansa Sabha. In the course of time Baba Padamanji left the Sabha and founded a new organization called "Satya-Shodhak Mandal", and Mahatma Phuley founded - Satya-Shodhak Samaj"

(3) Widow Re-marriage Association 1865:-

1) Establishment - On 14-12-1865 a meeting of various representatives of different castes was convened in Angrewadi, Girgaon, in Bombay. Brahmins, Pathare, Prabhu,
Saraswat, Sonar (Gold-smith) and others from different castes were present. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss openly the issue of widow-marriage and to get support from different castes for such marriages. As a result of this meeting "a widow remarriage association" was formed on the same day.

A managing committee was elected. Mahadev Vinchurkar became the President and G.H. Deshmukh (alias Lokhitwadi) and Moroba Kanhoja became Vice-Presidents. Vishnushastri Parshuram Shastri Pandit and Balaji Pandurang worked as secretaries of the association and Moroba Vinayak as the treasurer.

Vishnushastri Pandit and Madhavdas Raghunathdas, a Gujarathi reformer, took lead in making this institution active and popular. Bal Mangesh Wagle, K.T. Telang, M.G. Ranade, Janardhan Sakharam Gadgil, Balaji Pandurang, Abaji Vishnu Kayawate, Ramchandra Jayakar, Harichandra Sadashivaji were also the members of this Association. Under their leadership this Association made gradual progress. These leaders were successful in discussing this problem with orthodox Brahmin Pandits and Shastries who were opposing the idea of widow re-marriage and raising the marriagable age of girls. After a lengthy discussion Vishnu Shastri Pandit succeeded in getting consent and approval in writing, for raising the marriagable 'age of girls' to 12 years. The Association was trying to make
favourable public opinion for widow re-marriages.

The Background of Widow Re-marriages Act-

Widow re-marriage Act was passed on 25-7-1856. Public opinion was gradually being built up in favour of widow re-marriages. However, such widow marriages did take place before actual enactment of this Bill.

During the period of 1832 to 1856 a vigorous campaign in favour of widow marriages was undertaken by the press and some individuals.

In 1817 Venkateshshastri Telang a Brahmin, from Nasik discussed the question of widow marriages with other Brahmins and orthodox Pandits. Balshastri Jambhekar wrote articles in favour of this issue in 'Durpan'. Lokhitwadi wrote letters in "Prabhakar" wherein he discussed the cause of widow marriages and suggested some concrete steps to encourage this activity. He also suggested to collect funds for the benefit of widows. The editor of "Prabhakar" Bhau Mahajan also wrote articles favouring widow marriages and earnestly published news of widow marriages which took place in the country. During 1842 widow marriage was celebrated in Belgaum, which was given wide publicity.

During the same period Marathi newspaper 'Dnyanodaya' also published news and articles on this issue, which
ultimately created favourable atmosphere in the public. 

As a result of the efforts done by the social reformers in the first half of 19th century (i.e. from 1818 to 1856) the British rulers took cognisance of the issue, and as a result the government enacted a Bill to accord legal sanction to widow re-marriages in 1856.

However, the Bill could not passed so smoothly. The orthodox section in the society gave a petition to government opposing such legislation. However, British government did not give much importance to this protest and finally decided to make law in this regard. It was also thought by some liberal minded people that the problem of widow remarriages will not be solved by making a law. Efforts to encourage and educated the people were needed equally. Therefore the widow remarriage association was formed.

The Objectives of the Association-

The very name of the Association is expressive enough to give clear idea about the main objective of this Association. It's objectives were as under:-

1) To encourage widow marriages.

2) To propagate this idea through public discussion and the press.
iii) To create awareness among the people about the existing act favouring widow re-marriage, so as to remove fear in the minds of the people.

**Composition**

The composition of the widow re-marriage Association reveals that its membership was of mixed character. The members were from different castes like Pathare, Prabhu, Brahmins, Sonar (Gold-smith), Gujarathi etc. Thus it was a multi-caste and multi-lingual Association.

The time was such that many progressive persons sincerely desired to acquire membership. But practically very few became members because of fear of public criticism.

In spite of this the number of membership rose from 12 to 198. The activities of the association were spread in Ratnagiri, Pune and Ahmadabad.

**The Impact**

Widow re-marriage Association sincerely prepared background for widow marriages. The association succeeded in bringing about some widow marriages. During the period of its active existence such marriages were celebrated openly and in dignified manner. Invitations were sent to people so as to make it known to public that such marriages were celebrated inspite of resistance from orthodox section of the society.
For example, widow marriage of Venutai (widowed daughter of Prabhakar Krishna Bhat) and Pandurang Vinayak Karmarkar took place in the house of Moroba Kanhoba on 15-6-1869. This marriage was attended by some of the well-known persons in Bombay like Dr Wilson Hunter, Bhauprasad Daji Lad, Dhirajlal Mathuradas, V.N. Mandalik, M.G. Ranade, R.G. Bhandarkar.

Mr. R.G. Bhandarkar married a widow of 16 years who had lost her husband at the age of 7. Bhandarkar's first wife was alive. Marriage ceremony took place in Pune instead of Bombay. Jyotirao Phuley took the leading part in organizing this widow marriage. Narayan Jagannath Bhide also married a widow on 12.11.65 at Bombay.

The activity of this association gradually spread over in Gujarath. The first branch of this association was established at Ahmadabad with the initiative of C.H. Deshmukh on 14.10.1866. The association got active support and participation of Mahipat Ram Rupram, Jagajeewandas Khushalidas. Before that Madhav das Raghunath das, Karson Mulji, Narmada Shankar created favourable atmosphere for this association. To encourage widow remarriages even cash prizes were also given to the needy couple.

Limitations-

Like other associations the achievements of the association were also limited because of the resistance
from orthodox section of the society. This association could not adequately influence common man to accept widow marriage as a normal thing.

Another reason for its failure was that the issue was limited to upper castes only. Among majority of lower castes widow re-marriage was permissible by traditions.

Of course this was not the drawback of this association, but the then existing social situation was so adverse that the association could not get support from the large section of the people from this upper caste groups. Therefore, the organization could achieve limited success. It was active till Vishnushastri Pandit was its secretary, but after his death in 1876, the association slowly became ineffective and almost defunct thereafter.

However, during 1893 one of the social worker and reformer in the field of upliftment of women, Professor Dhondo Keshav Karve revived this association. Professor Karve set the example in this direction by marrying with a widow.

(4) Prarthana Samaj (1867):-

Paramhansa Sabha was dissolved in 1860. But the work of similar nature was continued by a new organization
called "Bombay Prarthana Samaj". The Samaj was established in Bombay on 31.3.1867 by Dadoba Pandurang. Some members of Paramhansa Sabha like Moroba Vinoba, Tukaram Padwal, Mama Parmananda, Vasudeo Balaji Navrange were also present at the time of its formation.

This new organization was also known as "Ekeshwar Bhakti Mandali" (Association of devotees of one God). Prarthana Sabha was the product of joint influence of Paramhansa and Manav-dharma Sabha and Brahmosamaj of Bengal. Prarthana Sabha or Samaj came into being in response to the pressing needs of the society for reforms in the socio-cultural fields.

Justice M.G. Ranade took a leading part in the establishing and working of Prarthana Samaj. Persons like Dr. Bhandarkar, Justice Chandawarkar, Modak also took part in strengthening of Prarthana Samaj.

Objectives and Activities-

The objectives of Prarthana Samaj were as follows-

1. To encourage inter-dining and inter-marriages among different castes of the Hindus.
2. To encourage re-marriages of Hindu widows.
3. To upliftment of the backward classes and the improvement of the condition of women in Hindu society.
4. To start social service in different places in Bombay presidency.
5. To spread the education and to start night schools.

Members of the Prarthana Sabha were theists. But they were against idol worship. They offered silent prayers. On every Sunday lectures on religion were given by eminent men in Prarthana Samaj.

The Samaj under took different activities through various agencies. The Samaj founded 'orphanage' and "Asylum" at Pandharpur. They also founded 'widow-homes' and depressed class missions. First widow re-marriage between Vasudev Balaji Navarange and Krishnabai was solemnised by this Samaj on August 24, 1870.

Prarthana Samaj also started publication of 'Subodha-Patrika' to spread its message throughout the Bombay Presidency.

Composition-

If we carefully examine the composition of Prarthana Samaj we find that majority of its members belonged to upper castes in society and were mainly from intellectual class. Common men were not attracted to it in large scale. Therefore their ideas of reforms remained only at discussion level among its members, and could not attract more people towards their activities.
Impact-

Prarthana Samaj was established to study and to examine the time-old practices and usages which they wanted to make more liberal in their outlook. The period under which Prarthana Samaj worked created a favourable atmosphere for social and religious changes.

During the period women from upper caste could get little freedom to move around freely. The Samaj attempted to create a great mental awakening by introducing new thoughts and views among its members. As stated earlier Mahatma Phuley was also a member of Paramhansa Sabha and sympathiser of Prarthana Samaj. There is a similarity between the principles of Paramhansa Sabha and Satyashodhak Samaj. It is said that some members of Prarthana Samaj also encouraged and helped Phuley in his reform activities.

Limitations:-

As stated earlier the people from main stream of the society or common men were not attracted to Prarthana Samaj. Therefore, it remained just an organization of higher middle and higher class people. Hence its thought and activities did not percolate to the lower strata of the society, where they were much needed.
The Prarthana Samaj was not radical in its method to bring changes in the society. It was the beginning of social reforms, therefore, these organizations had no sufficient strength to oppose the strong base of traditionalists and orthodox people.

The promoters of the Sabha had not enough courage to face the opposition from the orthodox and traditional people. As stated earlier, many of the members of these associations did their work quite secretly for fear of being criticised. Most of the associations were mainly run by English educated and middle class people. Many of them were Government servants. They were away from the masses. Hence people could not believe in their genuineness and usefulness. The members could not win the minds of the people in general. Vithal R. Shinde and Sadashiv Pandurang Kelkar were the only members known for their roots and contact with the masses.

(5) Satya-Shodhak Samaj (1873)

Establishment - Among the organizations that were devoted to social reformers in 19th century Maharashtra, the Satya-shodhak Samaj was the most important organization. It was founded in Poona by Jyotirao Phuley on 24th September, 1873.

In the early years Phuley worked in Paramhansa Sabha
and was actively associated with Prarthana Samaj. It is observed that Phuley was influenced by these two organizations. Some members of Prarthana Samaj had helped Phuley when he established Satya-shodhak Samaj.

Mahatma Phuley wanted to change the old traditional social structure based on inequality which was glaringly manifested in the caste-system. There was much difference between outlook of Phuley and the outlook of other contemporary social reformers. Other reformers wanted to effect reforms in the Hindu society without breaking its basic structure (i.e. caste-system). But Phuley did not believe in this way of reforms. He was in favour of breaking the existing structure and reorganize the society on the basis of new principles.

The line of thinking of Phuley was of recognising the equality of all human beings and of protesting against the caste system. He believed that the Christianity and the Islam were much ahead of Hindu religion in regard to the principle of equality among the human beings.

Apart from the question of social inequality, the issues like poverty, illiteracy and the exploitation of the masses were of great relevance to Jyotirao Phuley.

With the intention of awakening the masses Phuley extensively wrote in Marathi on the question of relevance
of that time. In his book known as the "Shetkaryancha Aasud" he revealed the sorrows of farmers and workers. In his another book "Gulamgiri" (slavery) Phuley described the sorrows of the masses in general, and directs towards the ways to remove them. His book called - "Sarvajaneek Satyadharma" was a kind of manifesto of universal brotherhood.

To propagate his ideas Phuley established "Satya Shodhak Samaj" on the lines of Paramhansa Sabha. The title of this organization was self-explanatory. It was to be an organization of people in search of truth. Paramhansa Sabha and Satya Shodhak Samaj had many objectives in common. Besides, there is much similarity in two books namely "Discussion on religion" written by Dadoba Pandurang and "Satya-Dharma" of Phuley.

Objectives and Activities-

The objectives of Satya-Shodhak Samaj can be summarised as under:

1. To put an end to the exploitation of all depressed classes.
2. To educate the people from these depressed classes.
3. To free all the above classes from the religious servility.
4. Removal of caste-system, to bring equality.
5. To encourage women's education.
Every member of Samaj has to observe the following principles:

1. Obstinence from drinking wines.
2. Compulsory education.
3. To use the goods manufactured in India as far as possible.
4. To do away with the priest-hood.
5. Not to indulge in extra-vagant expenditure at the time of marriage ceremony.
6. Not to recognise the caste-system.
7. Not to worship idols.

On Caste System-

Mahatma Phuley observed that as the Indian masses are divided by the caste system, there can be no real unity among the people. According to him foreign rule was better for social and religious reforms. According to him it was a very fortunate thing that God had sent the brave English people to quell the rebellion created by the priestly caste in India.

In "Brahmananche Kasab" (skills of the Brahmins) published in 1866 and "Gulamgiri" published in 1873 Phuley heavily descended on the caste system - and its evils. He looked upon the caste system in the society in various forms. Therefore, Phuley declared that caste-system must
be uprooted. To achieve this objective of casteless society he founded Satya-shodhak Samaj in 1873.

The anti-caste outlook of Phuley was different from other reformers and organizations who also favoured abolition of caste-system. However, the approaches followed by other reformers was not that revolutionary and drastic; as we find it in case of Jyotirao Phuley.

Mahatma Phuley appealed to all "Bahujan Samaj" i.e. common people including lower classes to unite together to break the caste system. Phuley had love for the betterment of poor and down-trodden people. Hence he continuously worked to awaken the people of various castes and classes like Kunbis, farmers, gardeners, teli and untouchables. He also awakened the labour classes to their exploitation by the higher castes. Mahatma Phuley wanted to change the entire framework of the society which was mainly responsible for creating social order based on inequality among its people, inhuman practices like untouchability and exploitation.

In his crusade against blind beliefs and obsolete and inhuman practices prevailing in Indian society, he advocated reforms like re-marriages of widows. He was also active in arranging such marriages. He also condemned the evil practices of tonsuring the heads of widows.
(i.e. Keshwapan). He was against the concept of untouchability in society. Therefore, he permitted untouchables to have access to the water tank in his house. This was the unparralled event in the history of reform movement in 19th century Maharashtra.

Poona city was the centre of orthodox people and so it was the most unfavourable place for any new social changes in the Hindu society. Under such circumstances Mahatma Phuley tried to break caste system by his own actions. He was action-oriented reformer.

In 1877 Phuley started one "Victoria Balashram" for destitute children with the help of Satya-shodhak Samaj. Those days were the days of great famine in Maharashtra and people on deserting their children on the streets as they were unable to bring them up for want of food and money. This activity shows his love and interests for the poor people. Phuley also established an orphanage for illegitimate children on humanitarian grounds.

**On Education—**

Mahatma Jyotirao Phuley was regarded as the great seer of education in those days. Though he was not highly educated he was considered to be a great educationalist of his times. He recognised that the key to social reforms is education. It opens the flood-gates of
knowledge and creates understanding about the issues and problems around. It helps to think which is very important in their self-development as well as the progress of the society as a whole. Therefore he devoted to the task of spreading education to the lower castes and untouchables as well as women. It was his firm belief that these sections of the society are deliberately kept away from education by Brahmins due to their vested interests.

Under the most adverse circumstances Phuley established a school for girls at Poona in 1848. But he could not get female teachers for his schools. Therefore, first he taught to his wife Savitribai, and then appointed her as the teacher of this school. Savitribai Phuley worked as a teacher inspite of the great opposition from the orthodox people. It will not be an exaggeration to mention here that Phuley was the first Maharashtrian to open the doors of education to the women and people from depressed backward classes.

Jotirao Phuley realised that the peaceful British rule in India was the suitable and right period to start his reform activities. Hence he thanked the British government.

Phuley was invited to express his views on primary education before Hunter Commission in 1882. In his
statement Phuley explained that, "there is little doubt that primary education among the masses in this Presidency has been much neglected. The Government collects a special cess for educational purpose and it is to be regretted that this fund is not spent for the purpose for which it is collected".

In his statement Phuley also said that primary education of the masses should be made compulsory upto a certain age, say upto 12 years. Phuley also requested to Hunter Commission to start separate schools for Mahar, Mang and other lower castes. He also suggested the standard of education should be improved and, therefore, it was necessary to get the teachers, trained. This suggestion is also useful today. Phuley considered education as the real weapon for effecting desirable changes in the society. He was of the opinion that the system of education of that time was not planned in right direction.

In his book "Gulamgiri" Phuley has blamed the British rulers for their negligence in the matter of educating the Shudras and ati-Shudras. He also pointed out that children in the villages cannot go to schools due to poverty. These who go to school dropout shortly and no one encourages them to continue their education further. To tackle this problem of dropouts Jyotirao Phuley had started night school at Bhamburday near Poona. This
shows Phuley's far-sightedness and systematic and methodical ways in tackling and solving the problems in the society at that time.

**Composition of Satya-shodhak Samaj:**

Dr Vishram Ramji Ghole was the President of Satya-shodhak Samaj. Laxamanrao Shinde worked as Vice-President and Narayan Tukaram Nagarkar as Secretary. Ramsheth Babusheth Urwane was the Treasurer. Mahatma Jotirao Phuley was one of the members of Samaj.

Third annual meeting of Satya Shodhak Samaj was held on September 1876. The meeting was attended by 70 members. Prominent among them were Ramchandra Shinde, Azzam Shaleman, Ramsing Purasingh, Vithal Hirve, Balaji Adhav, Vinayak Dhengade, Rajanna Ligu, Balkrishna Deorao etc. Some of the members were government servants, contractors and businessmen.

Every organization has its own characteristics. If we carefully look at the composition of Satya-shodhak Samaj, we find that majority of the members came from non-Brahmin middle class, lower middle class, popularly known as Bahujan Samaj. Very few Brahmins were sympatheiser who paid some contribution to Samaj.

The associations like Paramhansa Sabha, Prarthana
Samaj, re-marriage association, Arya Samaj and many others had members from elite classes of the society. Mahatma Phuley did not wish to have more members from elite class. On the contrary Phuley was more keen to associate his movement with middle class and untouchables who alone could percolate social reforms up to the lower strata of the society.

**Impact**

The impact of Satya-shodhak Samaj is seen in the field of education among the lower classes, untouchables and women. It sets the process of spread of education to hitherto neglected sections of the society.

The Samaj was instrumented in changing the outlook of the people towards the problems of untouchables. Though this movement has not succeeded in uprooting evils like untouchability, exploitation of the lower castes by higher castes, of poor by rich, illiteracy and poverty completely. But the thought which Phuley gave served as a foundation for the future movements in this regard.

Mahatma Phuley had to fight on two fronts, namely poverty and ignorance. He combined economic betterment along with social change. The importance of his thoughts and action lies in the fact that he was the first reformer
who focussed his attention on the hitherto neglected section in the society i.e. women, farmers and the lowest of the lower castes in the society.

Phuley was interested in bringing radical changes in the society in short period, as he was disillusioned about the methods of liberal reformers of that time. He was interested in bringing change in the core of the society. He was revolutionary in his approach and methods.

Phuley was the leader of all lower caste-people. He himself and his Satya-shodhak Samaj were the first to fight for social justice. Therefore, Phuley is rightly called as a "Mahatma" by the people of his time. He was pioneer in giving modern and scientific outlook to society.

Phuley was not afraid to carry on his work nor did he stop his work. He established Satya-shodhak Samaj as an independent organization. He took such step because he felt that the existing organizations of social reforms are concerned only with upper classes of the society and their problems. They have not done much for the downtrodden and untouchables. There is need of some organization to work at lower level in the society. Therefore, Satya-shodhak Samaj was established for effecting reforms for the less privilege classes and promoting their welfare.

The peculiarity of Samaj was that it opposed time-
honoured domination of Brahmins and priest-class over the society, and created sense of self-respect and self-existence of ownness, self-conceit among non-Brahmin class i.e. Bahujan Samaj.

The success of Satya-shodhak Samaj is proved by the fact that some of the rigid and orthodox Brahmins were compelled to have introspection which led them to change their outlook and to welcome the principle of social equality.

Mahatma Phuley's work was well organized and systematic. It deserves a place of pride in all the organized efforts of his period. Therefore, the Governor of Bombay honoured Mahatma Phuley for his reform work. Today all the reforms introduced by Phuley are almost accepted by the society. He brought about renaissance in the social pattern of Maharashtra.

Limitations-

The Satya-shodhak Samaj and its activities were confined to parts of the then Bombay Presidency. Hence, the social reformers in other provinces paid little attention to the work of this organization. Therefore, though the movement was concerned with very basic change in Hindu social structure, it failed to spread throughout the country. Lack of communication in different parts of
the country for proper exchange of thoughts and views in the like-minded people and very limited contacts of Phuley outside of this area can be regarded as the main reason for this state of affairs.

The main reason of its failure was that it was based on the hatred of Brahmins, and even now the same kind of hatred is present in the minds of non-Brahmins. Hence, Samaj remained confined to only of Mali and Maratha castes.

The revolutionary changes on the caste-system that were urged by the Samaj were not acceptable to the orthodox sections of Hindu society. It is also said that Phuley's ideal of complete social revolution in Hinduism remained incomplete on account of the misunderstanding about his crusade against the ills of the society. The powerful orthodox Brahmin-lobby took it, an attack as directed against their interests and hence developed a sort of hatred for these reforms.

Phuley was far ahead of his time in social reforms, but he followed regressive stand in politics. In course of time Satya-shodhak Samaj and its activities came to be regarded as just anti-Brahmin activities.

With all these drawbacks mentioned above no one can under-estimate the greatness and importance of Mahatma
Phuley and Satya-shodhak Samaj. The boldness shown by him in advocating outright abolishing of caste-system is praiseworthy. This boldness continues to inspire social reformers even today.

(6) National Social Conference (1887)

Indian National Congress was established in 1885. Its objective was to provide a common forum to discuss various problems faced by the Indian society at that time. Dr. Hume’s original idea was to create a forum and provide an opportunity to educated Indians to ventilate their grievances and to bring pressure on the rulers to solve them. Though the forum was established to work in the field of political, it was viewed as an instrument to be used for overall transformation of Indian society as the socio-economic and political issues were interlinked. However, in short span of one year two groups emerged in the Congress on the issue of giving priority to social reforms or political reforms. The number of those who were interested in political activism began to increase slowly. As a result of this the question of social reforms was relegated to second position.

The discussion was focussed among the Congressmen on the question, "whether a separate movement should be started for the discussion of social questions". Finally
in 1887 the Congress organization decided not to allow discussion about social reforms on its platform.

At last Dewan Bahadur R. Raghunathrao, M.G. Ranade, Narendranath Sen, Jankinath Ghosal and other decided to establish separate organization called "Indian National Social Conference" which subsequently was established in Madras. Its first session was held at Madras in December 1887 with Mr. Raja, Sir T. Madhav Rao as its President. Two other important office bearers were M.G. Ranade (Vice-President) and B.R. Raghunathrao (General Secretary).

Though it was a separate organization its session was held in the same pendal after the end of the Congress session. This practice continued up to 1894. In 1895 Congress session at Poona, Tilak-group was determined not to allow the session of social conference to be held in the same pendal. Consequently from 1895 onwards the venue and time of the Annual sessions of the Social Conference were changed. Thus, National Social Conference was disassociated from the Indian National Congress.

In this connection Mr. M.G. Ranade said, "though Congress and social conference were the separate organizations, both were sisters-organizations and they must let them both go hand in hand if they wished to make real progress..."
Objectives and Activities:

The main objective of National Social Conference was "to discuss social matters" which means it was a platform for discussing social problems. It was a meeting place for the individuals and members working in social field could meet.

Social Conference advocated the following reforms:

1. Option of marriage to women in the same way as enjoyed by men.
2. Age of marriage for girls to be raised up to 16 to 18 and for boys it should be 20 years.
3. Support to widow re-marriages and efforts to create favourable atmosphere by removing religious and social hindrances in its way.
4. Equal treatment to widows and married women in the social life.
5. Creating awareness in the society about absolute customs and traditions to abandon them.
6. Reconversion to Hinduism.
7. Encouragement to female education.
8. Opposition to customs which brings about unnecessary expenditure on the occasions of marriages.

Registration of social reform associations and problems of polygamy were also discussed in the social conference.
Throughout the period social conference and its members tried to mould the public opinion in favour of reforms and activities mentioned above.

Upliftment of women was regarded as the base for accelerating social reform movement. Hence, all social reformers gave greater attention to female education. It was thought that once women are educated the social reformers could be implemented rapidly, and its objectives could be achieved easily.

In 1892, at the sixth annual session of the conference some resolutions were passed in this respect. It was resolved that, "in the opinion of the conference, the permanent progress of our society is not possible without a further spread of female education". The conference also recommended to British Government that the "education be given on national lines by employing female teachers in schools for women. The conference also requested to open home-classes as an additional device for elderly women who cannot attend regular schools.

The Social Conference, in its 10th annual session, held in 1896, at Calcutta recommended that "... the steps should be taken to promote for religious and moral education in government schools out of school hours and in private schools during school hours".
Child marriages was also an important issue before the National Social Conference. The issue of child marriages was linked up with large number of child widows and their problems. It was felt that the problem of widows might be less severe if the age of marriages is raised from 10 to 12 years. The movement of raising the marriagable age was undertaken individually by social reformers of that period which was supported by the National Social Conference.

The organized efforts to raise the age of marriage of girls made by National Social Conference was complementary to the work of B.M. Malbari who deserves major credit for persuading the government to enact the Age of Consent Bill. Fourth social conference was held at Calcutta in 1890. The conference, vide resolution No. 2 requested to government that, "efforts be made to postpone the celebration of marriage rights till 12 years in the case of girls and 18 years in the case of boys". M.G. Ranade had also sent personal memorandum to Government to support Malbari's age of Consent Bill.

However, National Social Conference was a collectively organized movement for social reforms. The conference attracted the attention of government towards various social evils from time to time and tried to make
favourable public opinion for its reform activities.

Regarding the issue of widow re-marriages the National Social Conference was of the opinion that the act of 1856 has failed to provide to the remarried woman in social status, the rights of a married and family considerations. The conference pointed out that, "in many cases she and her second husband are not only ex-communicated, but the right of worship in public temples has been denied to them, and no relief has been given in the civil courts". The conference recommended government to look into this matter and undertake appropriate steps to improve their condition by giving more protection of law.

Composition-

The members of National Social Conference were from upper class of the society and majority of them were government servants. Common people and lower class were ignored. On the contrary Mr. M.G. Ranade complained in his lecture that common people did not support him in reform activities. Muslims also neglected social conference, with the exception of Badruddin Tayabji. Besides this, the conference could not get sympathy from untouchables for their reform activities.
Impact

The contribution in the field of reform activities made by this organization was worth nothing. It prepared the public opinion in favour of social reforms by following different methods, like public meetings, encouraging discussions in small groups, public discussions through press, submitting petitions and memorandums to government and passing resolutions in the annual sessions on the important issues. Its role was that of pressure group.

Limitations

National Social Conference was really doing good work as a social organization, yet it had certain limitations. In the first place it was a short lived affair. It was in the field of social reform movement roughly for a decade and thereafter it could not continue.

Secondly from composition point of view it was an elite organization. The members of the Congress and Social Conference were almost the same; educated, upper class, elite groups. It failed to expand its net to cover the lower strata of the society and women who were facing a lot of problems and constituted almost half the number of total population in the country.

Thirdly a large section of its leadership were under
the impact of traditional values and attitudes. Therefore, they did nothing beyond passing resolutions for reforms on peripheral nature. They were not interested in total reconstruction of society, probably they might be experiencing limitations of the period in which they were working. Some of them were interested in just religious reforms.

Fourthly, there was some misconceptions among the people in general, about the social reforms. They looked upon social reforms as something anti-religious. During the same period Pandita Ramabai, an educated Hindu lady converted herself to Christianity. Therefore masses started linking social reforms with conversion to Christianity. The national social conference did not work to remove this misunderstanding. It also failed to impress upon the real content of the religion while dealing with social reforms.

Vithal Ramji Shinde one of the reformers pointed out that reforms are impossible without the religious relevance. The reformers associated with the conference were unsuccessful in pointing out the facts and reality of Hindu religious provisions. Hindu religion, in fact, never favoured custom of Sati, ban on widow marriage, removing of hairs of widows etc. These evil customs are not genuinely religious and was never pointed out by the organization to the public.
Reformer like Sir T. Madhav Rao, who was associated with National Conference, opposed the age of Consent Bill on the grounds that the Government should not interfere in the religious matters. It was against the objectives of the conference. Thus practical behaviour of the reformers was also not in conformity with their ideas of social reforms. Therefore, there was a gap between the "words" and "deeds", "preaching" and "performance" which cannot be ignored as it had its impact on the people.

There were no close relations between the Congress and the Social Conference after 1895. The Congress did not cooperate with the conference in positive manners. This also had its impact on the performance of the National Social Conference.

In spite of these defects and limitations, the conference had its share in promoting social reforms in India; which cannot be ignored.

(7) **Other Associations:**

(i) Student's Literary and Scientific Society was founded in Bombay in 1848, to undertake mainly educational activities. The society arranged public meetings, seminars, lectures and discussions on various social problems and created awareness among the people about social reforms.
To promote and spread of education was also the objective of this society. Hence, the society started girl's schools in Bombay. Separate schools for untouchables were also started by this society in 1852. The society insisted that each family must send at least one female child to school. The society also supported widow re-marriages.

(ii) Dnyan Prasarak Sabha, another organization, was established in 1848. Dadabhai Naoroji and Dadoba Pandurang took initiative in its establishment. To create social awareness and awakening was its objective.

There were other reform organizations established during this period. Pandita Ramabai founded Sharda Sadan in Poona, in 1890. This was shifted to Kedgaon near Ahmednagar and was re-named as "Mukti-Sadan". This organization worked to bring about all round development of women. Ramabai took initiative in arranging public meetings at Bombay to convince the women to support the age of Consent Bill and tried to create favourable public opinion. However, due to her embracing Christianity her efforts were widely misunderstood by the largely orthodox minded Hindu society including its elites and social leadership of that time.

Mrs. Ramabai Ranade, wife of M.G. Ranade, started
Hindu Ladies & Literacy Cult. The club started classes for illiterate women and widows. She also founded "Seva Sadan" at Poona to promote women's welfare. It also establish its branches at different places in Bombay Presidency. All organisations in this group moulded public opinion in favour of social reforms.

Ultimately pressure created them compelled the Government to enact some important laws for introducing social reforms.

Apart from the associations and organizations mentioned above, there were many other political and economic organisations established from time to time. British Indian Association (1839), Zamindar's Association (1851), Deccan Association (1852), Poona Association (1867), Indian Association (1870) were some of them.

II. GROUP: B REVIVALISTS ORGANIZATIONS

(1) Arya Samaj (1875):

Establishment - Arya Samaj was founded in 1875 in Bombay by Dayananda Saraswati. His greatest work is "Satyarth Prakash", a commentary on Vedas. Arya Samaj criticised Christianity and Islam.

Swamiji's interpretation of the Vedas differs from the traditional Hindu interpretation as well as interpretation
by the western scholars. According to him Vedas are infallible. Swamiji believed in one God and relied on the Vedas as an authority. Vedas are the source of true religion. Dayananda wanted to revive the Golden Age of the Vedas. "Go back to Vedas" was his slogan. Therefore, Arya Samaj is regarded as a revivalist organization.

**Objectives and Activities** -

The basic principles of the Arya Samaj are as follows: (i) Equality between men and women (ii) Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man (iii) Love and charity towards all.

Arya Samaj was against any kind of idole worship and ritualism. It did not believe in the hereditary caste-system and holds the view that untouchability has no sanction in the Vedas. Dayanandji believed that merit and not birth should be the basis of social differentiation. The Arya Samaj recognised the equal rights of all men and women and Brahmins as well as non-Brahmins to read Vedas.

Education was also treated as an important task by the Arya Samaj. Arya Samaj started number of schools and colleges as a part of its programme to spread education in the society. In some places it revived the traditional Gurukul system of education. In this regard
Swamiji said, "Shiksha or education is that which promotes knowledge, culture, righteousness, self-control and such other virtues and eradicates evils like ignorance". However, Swami Dayanand opposed co-education.

The Arya Samaj also supported free and compulsory education. Swamiji once said that, "there should be a state legislation to the effect that nobody should keep his sons and daughters away from school after 8th years of age. The parents not abiding by this order should be punished by the state..."] This shows his keenness about the education.

At that time issue of child-marriages were widely discussed. The Arya Samaj was against child-marriages. Swami Dayananda suggested marriageable age for girls as 12-24 years and 25-38 years for boys. According to him this suggestion was based on psychological differences between sexes. In support of this D.A.V. High School of the Arya Samaj at Lahore, refused admissions to married girls. The Arya Samajists tried to bring the changes through legislation. In 1929, a bill raising minimum marriageable age for girls as 14 years, was introduced by Harbilas Sarda who was an Arya Samajist. This act known as "Sarda Act".

The Arya Samaj started the "Shudhi-movement" - i.e.
reconversion of those who embraced Christianity or Islam to Hinduism. It also organised Orphanages and widow homes.

Arya Samaj was quite broad based social reform organization. M.G. Ranade had also accepted and said that, "the Arya Samaj is not religious organizations, but a social organization and had a social basis".

Impact -

Arya Samaj always fought against religious sectarianism, casteism, untouchability and denial of equal rights to women. The Samaj fought against these evils on the "fundamental principles of fatherhood of God and brotherhood of men".

When political reform versus social reform became an issue between the "moderates" and "extremist", Arya Samaj supported reforms in both the fields simultaneously. It gave equal importance to issue of national independence and inculcate feeling of staunch nationalism among the people.

Another impact of Arya Samaj was that it inspired the spirit of nationalism and democracy among the people. The Samaj also attempted to integrate the Hindus by propagating abolition of caste system.

By advocating removal of untouchability as a
precondition of all social reforms the Arya Samaj can be regarded as the first native body, "to break new ground and to attempt something akin to the work of social reclamation of which Christianity had the monopoly". Its slogan "go back to Vedas" was inspired with urge to bring about national unity and to kindle national pride and consciousness, on the basis of the common cultural lineage from Vedic period.

Dayananda Saraswati was not only a social or religious reformer, he was also harbinger of national political awakening. As the Arya Samaj was founded in 1875, a decade before the Indian National Congress, it is argued that, "Dayananda had already prepared the background for national awakening and declared that "a good government is not substitute for self-government".

As stated above Swamiji had its own political philosophy, but it was not a political organization. Dayananda instructed his followers to avoid political involvement. But Lala Lajapat Rai did not accept this view. He said that the leaders of Arya Samaj "have inspired political thoughts and actions". So the members of Arya Samaj were free to join any political party or political group.
Bipin Chandra Pal, one of the well-known nationalists, also explained that "the movement (Arya Samaj) seemed to me, in fact more political than religious or spiritual".

Swamiji did not like people adopting English as a national language. He supported and advocated Hindi as a national language.

From the facts mentioned above, it can be said that Arya Samaj was not against political or national movement. Arya Samajists took leading part in the national movement mainly in Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh. It was also active in ex-Hyderabad State including some border areas of Marathwada region.

Like other organizations the Arya Samaj was not limited to any particular region as such. It was a movement of all India character.

The work of Arya Samaj can be summarised as under:—

1. It encouraged reform movement within the frame of Vedic culture, but against all meaningless rituals which were practised among Hindus. The Samaj proposed to put forward Hinduism in its original form and overcome the baseless, barbarious and at times inhuman casteism and traditions of past centuries.

2. The Samaj created and developed pride and self-respect among Hindus for Vedic culture.
3. It successfully thwarted the aggression on Hinduism launched by Christian missionaries and Muslims simultaneously. By doing this Samaj succeeded in putting a break to the spread of Christianity. It was the most important contribution of Arya Samaj.

4. Arya Samaj prepared the background for national awakening and also inspired political thought and actions.

Thus, entire work of Arya Samaj was guided by two considerations simultaneously: (i) integration of Hindu society as a whole and (ii) encouragement to reform activities.

Arya Samaj aims at radical changes in the thought and action of the people. Its aim was the formation of a new national character on the fundamental basis of Vedic thought and Vedic life style. Thus it was more concerned with revivalism of Vedic tradition and culture, which dominated its concept of social reforms. Limitations:

However, the work of the Samaj was criticised by several sections on number of grounds.

The orthodox Brahmins did not support the movement, because they feared that Samaj was trying to reduce the influence and hold of Brahmins over the Hindu society.
Muslims and Christians did not approve of several activities carried out by the Samaj. They did not like the very concept of creating of Hindu society devoid of caste; creed and sect. Muslims and Christians were against the campaign of Samaj which promise to take back converts from Islam and Christians into Hinduism. This was perceived as a threat to possible spread of these religions.

British government did not appreciate the work of Arya Samaj and described its activities as militant.

However, it is an accepted fact that the Arya Samaj was the most influential, powerful and successful of all reform movements in the country.

Swami Dayanand Saraswati died in 1883. His work was carried on by his followers Lala Hansaraj, Lala Lajapat Rai and many others.

Lala Lajapat Rai explained the importance of Arya Samaj. He said, "Samaj is practically the future of Hinduism, it works in the interests of Hindus and it protects the Hindu community from the religious aggressions of other alien. Samaj hinders the spread of Christianity in India."
(2) **Theosophical Society (1875)**

**Establishment:**

One of the revivalist organizations of the time under study was Theosophical Society of India. It was also one of the institutions which helped the progress of reform movement in Maharashtra. This society indirectly inspired people to form Indian National Congress in Bombay. Therefore it is necessary to review the work of this society while studying the social and political developments in 19th century Maharashtra.

The founders of the Theosophical society were foreigners, but were great admirers of Hinduism. The society was founded in the U.S.A. in 1875 - by Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott. Both came to India four years later and established their headquarters at "Adyar" near Madras.

The most important propogator of Theosophical Society in India was Mrs. Annie Beasant. She declared that she had remained Hindu at heart. She was religious minded. Once she said, "remember that the condition of national greatness is the teaching of religion to the young. Teach them to be religious, without being sectarian. Teach them to love their own faith".
Activities of the Society

Mrs. Beasant said that reform was needed in Hindu society and that reform meant a resurgence of purified Hinduism because "without Hinduism there is no future for India", and described ancient Hinduism as enlightened, intellectual, full of vigour and strength. She believed that the problems of contemporary India could be solved only by the revival of traditional ideas and institutions.

In order to reform Hindu society Mrs. Beasant at first worked for the development of flexible caste system, in place of existing rigid caste system. In reality the society did not believe in caste system. The members of the society belonging to different castes were taking their meals on a same table. In support of this Mrs. Beasant said, "you have to eat with other people, you have to be associated with men and women on a footing of social equality". Mrs. Annie Beasant herself explained that, "our members have delayed the marriage of their daughters against caste and home pressures".

Theosophical Society encouraged foreign travel and widow re-marriages. It also advocated upliftment of the depressed classes. The society also supported education for women.
As stated earlier Mrs. Annie Beasant and Theosophical Society was against child-marriages. In this regard she said, "between 15 to 25 years your daughters die more rapidly than at any other age, because you have married them when they are not fit for marriage and put on them the burden of maternity before they are ready to bear a child. It is murder than preventible death. You have no right to be fathers". She further added, "remember one more point, i.e. while you have child mothers and school-boy fathers you will never have a healthy and long-lived nation".

The society was working throughout India. It also had its branches in prominent cities like Bombay, Pune, Nasik etc. Though the society had before it the objective of reforming Hindu society, it failed to attract common man towards it. It was always regarded as an organization of elites in the society. By and large it became popular for the metaphysical contents of its teaching rather than social work and teaching.

(3) RamKrishna Mission (1897):-

Establishment— One more important movement that emerged in India was that of Ramkrishna Mission. It was founded by Swami Vivekananda in 1897, in Bengal. But, as stated earlier, it was one of the institutions which
indirectly helped the progress of social reform movement in 19th century Maharashtra.

Ramkrishna movement is a socio-religious reform movement. It was established "as an instrument for social and national regeneration, by spreading education among the illiterates, helping them to fight against poverty and disease, removing the social evils and raising them to a higher level of morality".

Activities of the Mission:

Education to all sections in the society including women and untouchables, economic and social progress of the masses, rural reconstruction, and removal of untouchability were the thrust areas of the missions work.

With reference to social reforms Swamiji once said, "we do stand in need of social reforms, we have, therefore, to wait till the people are educated, till they understand their needs and are ready and able to solve this problems". Vivekanand suggested to spread education among the masses. To him, education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man. But what type of education was the question. Swamiji suggested, "life building, man building and character making education".

Swami Vivekanand fought against untouchability. He
said that the untouchables should be educated well and they must be made cultured citizens. He was of the opinion that the nation lives in the cottage. Hence "go to the masses" was his suggestion to reformers.

He stimulated the pride of Indians in their own customs, civilization and way of life.

However, to some people Ramkrishna Mission has done nothing to abolish caste system and hereditary priesthood which were main defects of Hinduism.

Revivalist Groups in Maharashtra:

Despite the similarity in their objectives, different revivalist organizations had the differences in them on the grounds of their methods and philosophical foundations. All the revivalist organizations were against of rigid caste system. They favoured spread of education, encouraged women's education. They were in favour of raising the age of marriage of girls around 12. In short these organizations ultimately aimed at establishing progressive society based upon the principle of welfare.

In spite of the unity of purpose and sincerity of leadership the revivalist group could not become influential in Maharashtra.
The reasons of their partial success in Maharashtra can be stated as under:

(a) Maharashtra was lucky in having number of reform organizations and influential leaders who undertook the reform work prior to the rise of this revivalist groups. (i.e. Arya Samaj, Theosophical Society, Ramakrishna Mission).

(b) Arya Samaj got following on large scale in other parts of India because of its anti-British stand. But in Maharashtra leaders like Tilak and others had already awakened the people politically during the last two decades of 19th century.

(c) Prior to the activities of revivalist groups in Maharashtra many newspapers were established and did the work of educating the people and creating public opinion for reforms.

However, limited success of these revivalists organizations should not be taken as the sole measurement of their overall achievements in social reform movement in Maharashtra.

These organizations encouraged public discussions and moulded the public opinion in favour of progressive legislation. Besides, they welcomed the process of
modernization and inspired the people to accept change leaving static outlook. They also convinced the people about the out-dated social evils and prepared them to accept new way of life. This was indirect influence of these organizations on Maharashtra.

III. GROUP (C): Political Movements and Social Reforms:

Bombay Association and Poona Sarvajaneek Sabha were political organizations working in Maharashtra prior to the formation of the Indian National Congress (1885). It is a fact that these organizations were primarily political in character and so they did not directly undertake reform activities. However, some of its members were active in the social reform movements. Therefore, it would not be out of way to discuss in short the working and objective of these political organizations which indirectly encouraged social reform movement in 19th century Maharashtra.

(1) Bombay Association:

Bombay Association was established in 1852. Sir Jamshetji Jijibai was the president of the Association. Nana Jagannath Shankar Seth was the chairman. Bhau Daji
Lad and Vinayakrao and Jagannathji were the Secretaries of Bombay Association.

The Association was a result of political awakening among the elites of Bombay Presidency. The main objective of this organization was to put forward the difficulties and troubles experienced by natives to British Parliament and to suggest ways and means to the British Government in promoting welfare of the natives.

The association made some suggestions in the field of education. In one of its memorandums the association suggested that "the expenditure on education was negligible compared to total public revenue collected. Therefore, proportional expenditure incurred on education should be increased". The association also suggested to establish Universities in each Presidencies.

Bombay Association at latter stage was merged into the Bombay Presidency Association which helped to organize first Indian National Congress.

(2) Poona Sarvajaneek Sabha:

Poona Sarvajaneek Sabha was established in 1870. Ganesh Vasudeo Joshi took leading part in establishing this association. Social reformers like M.G.Ranade and Sadashiva Rao Gawande were the quite influential in Sabha.
Tilak also joined this association as a member.

The objectives of Sarvajaneek Sabha were:

i) To establish liaison between the Government and the public.

ii) To inform the Government from time to time about the real condition of the people.

iii) To explain to the people government's stand on various issues and make them aware about the political happenings around them.

Poona Sarvajaneek Sabha did impressive work in political awakening. Sabha also informed the complaints and difficulties to British government. It was due to the initiative of Poona Sarvajaneek Sabha the first session of the Congress was to be held at Poona in 1885, but because of some epidemic, the Congress session was held at Bombay instead of Poona.

(3) **Indian National Congress:**

Establishment - Indian National Congress was established in 1885. The first meeting of the Congress with approval of Viceroy was held at Bombay on 28.12. 1885, under the presidency of W.C.Banerjee.

The history of the Congress is really the history of India's struggle for freedom. It was the result of the
efforts of Dr. Allen O'ctavin Hume, a retired I.C.S. Officer. Mainly it was the fruit of the political movements which had been going on in the country from the beginning of 19th century. It is also said that the members of Theosophical Society made efforts to create National Congress, and was the by-product of the Theosophical Society. It is also said that the Congress was the product of circumstances rather than the creation of individuals.

Objectives of the Congress:

Once Auckland Colvin, Viceroy, met Dr. Hume and discussed with him social and political problems of the time. Mr. Auckland Colvin wanted to know from Indian leaders in what respect the British administration was defective and how it could be improved. For this purpose he felt it necessary to establish an organization which could act as a "Safety Valve" to tackle political ambitions of the Indians. This was the purpose for which Indian National Congress was established in 1885.

Mr. Hume, in his letter to Auckland Colvin, mentioned aims and objectives of Congress at that early stage of the institution as "the regeneration of India on all lines - spiritual, moral, social, industrial and political".
Thus, the objectives of the Congress, at least in the initial stage, was to discuss political as well as social or non-political matters. Congress was not merely established to criticise the Government policy. It was also looked upon as a constructive organization in social field.

In the first session of the Congress the President Banerjee explained development of education as one of the objectives of Congress.

Immediately after one year Indian National Congress changed itself into a purely political organization — demanding self-government. Dadabhai Naoroji, the President of the Second Congress held at Calcutta in 1886 clearly mentioned that, "we are met together as a political body to represent our rulers, our political aspirations, and not to discuss social reforms". The same view was also explained by W.C. Banerjee, the President of 8th Congress Session, held at Allahabad in 1892. He added, "social questions were left out of the Congress programme, and will always remain as a purely political organization devoting its energies to political matters only".

In 1886 social reformers like M.G. Ranade, Narendra Nath Sen, Dewan Rao Bhahadur Raghunath Rao and others
decided to establish separate organization for discussing social problems. As a result National Social Conference was established as a separate entity in December 1887, at Madras. From this year onwards these two separate organizations began to undertake different programme.

Composition:

The first session of the Congress was held at Bombay in 1885. At that time a circular was issued in which it was stated that "the Congress conference will be composed of delegates of leading politicians, well-acquainted with English language from all parts of Bombay, Madras and Bengal". From this it can be said that, in the beginning, the membership was limited for English knowing persons from urban area only.

However, within short period (4-5 years) the composition began to change slowly. The change was evident from Sixth session which was held at Calcutta in 1890. The delegates who attended this Congress session represented Hindus of high and low castes, Muslims, Parsis, Shikhas, Jain, Christians, Brahmo and Arya Samajist etc. Besides, money lenders, agriculturist, mill-owners, Engineers, Doctors, Teachers, graduates of various regions and religions and castes, sub-castes were also attended the sessions.
Thus, the Congress was composed of the representatives, not of only one class or community, not of one part of India, but of all different parts and of all the different classes. Later, on in the first quarter of 20th century the Congress became mass-movement.

**Impact and Limitations:**

Every organization has its limitations. Indian National Congress is not exception to it. However, in its political activities, despite some limitations, the Congress advanced steadily towards the objective of complete independence. The Congress was in a way cosmopolitan organization. People of different religion, caste, creed, language assembled under the banner of the Indian National Congress. The Congress movement represented the Indian mind. Political freedom was the main objective which attracted all sections of the people towards it. The impact of the Congress was very deep as it reached to the far off villages and the masses.

The Congress created a sense of oneness among the people. Congress succeeded in overcoming transcendent the barriers of race, religion, caste etc.

But the work of the Congress in the sphere of social activities had limitations. Because Congress felt that
discussion of social problems might encourage disintegration, and may divide the different groups which have come together by ignoring these differences for common political objectives. Therefore, it always remained a political organization responding occasionally to social issues of immense importance.

**Evaluation of all Organizations:**

It is seen that the social reform movement in India in general and Maharashtra in particular has started during early years of 19th century. In the beginning of this century Christian Missionary societies sowed the seeds of social reform movement and created social awareness among the people in favour of it. One cannot neglect their positive role in creating favourable background for social reforms.

During the early days of reform movement a generation of English educated people took active part in moulding public opinion in favour of reforms.

The organised efforts of various associations and organizations were also responsible for creating favourable atmosphere and propagating reforms during the 19th century Maharashtra. These organizations owe their existence and growth to the pioneering efforts of the
earlier reformers like Jambhekar, Nana Shankarsheth, Bhau Daji Lad and others. It may be noted that institutionalisation of social reform movement is a major landmark in its development.

These organizations not only encouraged social reforms, but inspired workers, individuals in Maharashtra to join these organizations of social reforms.

It will not be an exaggeration if we presume that the beginning of the organised efforts for social reforms and its institutionalization is the outcome of pioneering work undertaken by the organizations like Dnyan-Prasarak Sabha, Students Literary and Scientific Society, Manav-dharma Sabha, Paramhansa Sabha and Prarthana Sabha.

The evaluation of these organizations or institutions should not be based solely on the degree of success which they have achieved in effecting social reforms, but it should be based on the awakening which they created in the society. On this count these institutions were quite successful. That is to say we should not go after statistics about actual number of widow marriages arranged by them, or child marriages prevented or degree to which rigidity of caste-system reduced, but we should only think of the fact that these institutions did create favourable atmosphere and positive
outlook for social reforms among the people.

These institutions deserve credit because they were instrumented in inspiring active leaders and workers of the time to establish various social and political institutions which were established during 19th century. Organized efforts through the above mentioned associations were inspired to undertake reform activities because of various factors like western liberal thoughts, education and self-less social activities carried on by the missionaries.

The organisations provided a forum for discussion on various social problems. They also created positive outlook for the progress of social reform movement.

If we carefully examine the structure and composition of various associations established upto 1867, it is seen that people belonging to different castes were brought together to work for common goal of reforms. The multi-castes composition of these organizations was the result of prudent outlook of their leaders who were farsighted and were regarded by the people as prophets.

It is observed that all these organizations were the centres of reform activities and had common programme of reforms, like encouraging female education,
to improve the status of women, to support widow remarry and reduce the rigidity of caste system and upliftment of down-trodden classes etc. However, the difference lay in emphasis given to particular activity by each one of them.

The social reform movements created awakening and social awareness among the masses. This resulted in raising the political aspirations of the people. Some of the social reformers got themselves involved in the political movement. For sometime political movement and reform movement marched together.
NOTES AND REFERENCES:


7. American Board of Missionaries were maintaining three widow's home at Bombay, Shirur and Ahmednagar.

8. Dutta, K.K., Socio-Cultural Background of Modern India, Meenakshi Publication, Delhi, 1972, p.94.

9. Ibid., p.102.


11. Ibid., p.6.


15. Narayan and Shripat Sheshadri, Brahmin Brothers of Parli-Vaijanath were baptized in 1843. The case of Shripat Sheshadri was widely discussed at that time. Balshastri Jambhekar and Nana Shankar Sheth tried to bring him into Hinduism through Shudhi-karan Vidhi.
Before that year Parsi young boys named Dhanjibhai Naoroji, Homaji and Pestanj were converted into Christianity in May 1839. Narayan Waman Tilak, Baba Padmanj, Brahmin lady Ramabai were also baptized. There were many such examples.


17. In 1846 Dadoba Pandurang was transferred to Bombay and Durgaram was transferred to Rajkot in 1852 and thereafter the functioning of Manavdharma Sabha came to an end. - Phadke Y.D., Visavya Shatkatil Maharashtra 1901-1914, Vol. I, Shri Vidya Prakashan, Pune, 1989, p.45.

18. Ibid., p.45.


22. Ibid., p.96.


25. Ibid., p.21.


30. Samaj Prabodhan Patrika (Marathi Journal), Prabodhan Sanstha, Pune, September-October 1973, article by Chavan, R.N.


33. Phuley's name was Jyotiba meaning a "flame of light" and by this flame he threw light on social equality and unity on general ignorance of the people.

34. One widow remarriage of "Shenhvi" of Saraswat caste did take place in 1864. This re-marriage was organized by Mahatma Phuley. This proved to be an incentive to the practice of re-marriages in Pune.


37. Ibid., p.155.

38. Ibid., p.163.


40. Daily Maharashtra Times (Marathi), article by Raosaheb Kasabe.

41. Samaj Prabodhan Patrika (Marathi journal), March-April, 1970, p.87.

42. Ibid., p.85.


47. Ibid., p.26.

48. Ibid., p. 371

50. The individuals like Balashashtri Jambhekar, Lokhitwadi, alias G.H.Deshmukh, B.M.Malbari were prominent amongst the reformers on the issue of child marriages. The issue is discussed in earlier Chapter No.III.


52. Ibid., p.368.


54. Vaidya C.V., Abalonnati Lekhamala (Marathi); published by Anant V. Patwardhan, Pune 1929, p.44.


58. Saraswati Dayananda, Satyarth Prakash, Jan-Dnyan Prakashan, Delhi, 1977, p.69.


61. Ibid., p.30.


63. Ranade, Ramabai, Miscellaneous Writings of M.G. Ranade, Published by Ramabai Ranade, Pune, 1915, p.53.


74. Speeches and Writings of Annie Besant, p.217.


79. Ibid., pp.5-6.

80. Ibid., p.13.


83. Ibid., p. 14.
84. Speeches and Writings of Annie Beasant, p.216
85. John Cunning, Political India, Oxford University Press, 1932, p.43.
90. Ibid., p.100.