CHAPTER-II

REFORM MOVEMENTS
AND EMANCIPATION
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This chapter deals with the major aspects of socio-religious reform movements and emancipation discourse that came up in the nineteenth century in India. Various factors which contributed for the emergence of these movements to play a significant role have been discussed. There were many intellectuals and activists have attempted, throughout history, to construct a discourse of social justice, liberation and emancipation through a reinterpretation and recontextualization of traditional sources and symbols.

Liberal Discourse of Emancipation

The use of 'liberty' to describe the physical 'ability to do what I want', the power to satisfy our wishes, or the extent of the choice of alternatives open to us has been deliberately fostered as part of the socialist argument. Once this identification of freedom with power is admitted, there is no limit to the sophisms by which the attractions of the word 'liberty' can be used to support measures which destroy individual liberty, no end to the tricks by which people can be exhorted in the name of liberty to give up their liberty. It has been with the help of this equivocation that the notion of collective power over circumstances has been substituted for that of individual liberty and that in totalitarian states liberty has been suppressed in the name of liberty. 90 Hayek also famously noted 91 that "liberty" and "freedom" have probably been the most abused words in recent history.

91 Friednch August von Hayek, The Road to Serfdom, 1944, p 14
Liberal peace has emerged first among those cultures who have participated the longest in this many-layered tradition, that is, the peoples of Western Europe and their offspring in English-speaking America, Australia, and New Zealand. Further, if France and Germany took two centuries to emulate Anglo-Saxon liberalism, despite having at their ready disposal the intellectual resources of the Western tradition, we should not expect non-Western peoples to succeed at this difficult task any more quickly. True, they enjoy the advantage of the very late emulator, who has before him the fully-fledged model of liberal democracy and thus can learn the most from the problems experienced by his forerunners. But this advantage should be largely undone by not having gone through many of the conceptual and cultural developments that led to liberal democracy in the West. From its communitarian perspective, the good of the part cannot be separated from the good of the whole, hence, the individual whose rights are diminished for the sake of the public good merely does his duty and fulfills his natural purpose. Generally put, ideas are understood much more readily from within the tradition in which they have evolved, for understanding is a matter of meaning which is inherently contextual. This context dependency may be less important in technical matters, but it becomes highly significant with regard to concepts from the humanities, such as personhood, rights, and the rule of law. This is not to deny that liberty belongs to the inherent aspirations of human beings as such, for all of them are endowed by nature with the capacity to act from free will and thus to govern themselves.

The failure of state-led economies during the late twentieth century demonstrated rather clearly that liberal or free-market economies are far more productive and thus more likely to raise people’s standard of living and endow states with the resources to generate military might. On these
grounds, liberals are certainly right when they claim universal appeal for their paradigm and refer to such corroborating instances as the coming down of the Berlin Wall and the raising of a statue of liberty in Tianamen Square during 1989. Moreover, the quality of human consciousness that makes for free will also enable societies to change their basic premises and acquire new cultural traits. After all, the West itself underwent a fundamental change when it abandoned the communitarianism of the classical tradition for the sake of liberal individualism and removed the good life from the purview of the state.

Liberalization requires far more than adopting a Western-style constitution, passing the corresponding laws, holding elections, and privatizing the economy. As we have seen, it presupposes the many conceptual shifts that occurred prior to liberalization in the West, such as valuing life and prosperity more than glory, honor, and power, understanding norms as abstract universals, conceiving people as persons to be absolutely respected, believing in the rule of law and the sanctity of contracts, separating church and state, etc., which are often lacking in non-Western societies.

Turning liberal ideals into the corresponding practices is a lengthy proposition in itself, since we must first overcome our natural inclination to exempt ourselves from the laws before our aspiration for liberty can serve not only ourselves but others as well. And whereas the consciousness of select individuals might be capable of internalizing all these concepts in a lifetime, such rapid learning is impossible for the collective consciousness of entire societies, which develops dialectically over generations. Liberals often fail to recognize these facts and thus tend to underestimate the time it takes for non-Western societies to liberalize.
The reason for their a historical optimism lies with the scientific epistemology of Hobbes and Locke, the founders of liberalism, who took knowledge to consist of the objective representation of things and believed to have discovered the true principles of government for the first time. As a result, liberals consider it "self-evident" that human beings are individuals who desire to be free, secure, and prosperous and that natural reason prescribes limited government based on rights and consent of the governed as the best regime for all, regardless of time or place.

John Locke was being a religious person; he links individual rights and human welfare with the existence of God. J. S. Mill has given substance to human morality. Human dignity constitutes central value for him. The individualism is considered a key value for the freedom in any society. All human beings have a right to get happiness. If anybody for his own happiness snatches another person's happiness, it is an immoral act and injustice to that person. Therefore, as long as one individual's freedom does not create trouble for others, each individual should have, food, attire, education, marriage, occupation, consultation of liberalism, this is, the ideology of liberalism.92

The general belief of liberalism is that the aim of politics is to preserve individual rights by providing the maximum freedom of choice. The common aspect of socialism and conservatism emerged with the conjunction of the enlightenment, the industrial revolution and the political revolutions of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. Liberalism retains a faith in the possibilities of ameliorating the present social conditions, which is related to the idea of progress widely accepted.

92 G B Sardar, Ranade Prant Samajik Sudharmechi Tatvamimansa, Published by Pune University, Pune, 1973, p 85
in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The idea embraced the prospects for development in knowledge, in welfare, and in morality.93

Since all human beings are endowed with the same faculty of reason, liberals assume that peoples the world over will accept their principles once they have been made known to them; hence, their desire for declarations of the rights of man, such as those by England in 1689, Virginia in 1776, France in 1789, and the United Nations (UN) in 1948. Should people still not grasp the scientific truth of the liberal paradigm, the myths that obfuscate their true interests can be dispelled by enlightenment, such as UN literacy campaigns, teaching by Peace Corps Volunteers, the Civic Education Project of the Soros Foundation, World Bank Seminars, etc. Further, liberals assume that peace, freedom, and prosperity suffice for human beings to develop their full potential for a good, happy, and meaningful life. But, as the growing disappointment with modernity in Western societies suggests, there are aspects of the human soul that liberalism fails to reach. In particular, as detailed below, replacing the concrete virtues of traditional society with the abstract rights of individuals leads to a loss of community and the sense of belonging that it provides. Concomitantly, the capitalist economy that arises in a liberal society leads to a consumptive hedonism as people’s passions are aroused for the sake of selling them more; a spiral of ever increasing competition arises as economic agents are constrained to outbid each other to succeed in the free market; and an urban loneliness sets in as individuals acquire things and activities rather than relationships and move every few years to reach the next rung of the corporate ladder.

Perhaps most insidiously, the liberal celebration of difference makes not only for peace, but also deprives people of a substantive sense

93 This definition has taken from the Oxford University dictionary of politics
of the good. In contrast, traditional societies—such as those existing in the West before liberalization and to varying degrees in the non-Western world of today—endow human beings with concrete and particular identities that are strongly rooted in the narratives of family, tribe, and people, and thus satisfy their deeply affective need for ethnocentric bonds. They prevent capitalism from tearing apart the organic fabric of life by regulating trade and commerce in accordance with religious and political purposes. And they guard people against the existential anxiety that results from limitless freedom in the realm of the spirit. Hence, non-Western peoples have very good reasons to resist liberalization however, difficult it may be for Western liberals to accept that theirs is not the only desirable way of life. Thus, when China and others claim that the Western demand to observe the full catalogue of human rights is an alien imposition, they may not be simply trying to legitimate oppression, but could also speak from a deeper awareness of the good of traditional community.94

Indian culture received its first recorded impulses from the Indus Civilization (ca. 2500-1600 BC), whose Dravidian people maintained commercial and cultural ties Mesopotamia, built well-ordered cities, worshipped fertility and sexuality, and discovered the enrapturing effects of yogic meditation.95 Around 1500 BC, Indo-European pastoralists, calling themselves Aryans (*aryas*, i.e., ‘nobles’), entered the Indian subcontinent from the northwest, subdued the dark-skinned Dravadians (whom they named *dasas*, later coming to mean ‘slaves’), and settled its northern parts over the next thousand years. The Aryans valued manliness, war, fame, dominion, and riches, and affirmed life as an

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eternal cycle of consumption, in which the stronger rightfully devoured the weaker. The human aspect of this cycle consists of the four classes (varnas, meaning ‘colours’) of society—the three Aryan classes of priests (brahmans), warriors (kshatriyas), and herder-cultivators (vayishas), and the Dravidian class of slaves (shudras)—with the higher rank being entitled to consume the lower. At the same time, sacred law commands men to be loyal to their guests, comrades, friends, and brothers, not to steal their cattle, and not to deceive them in a game of dice.

Around 600 BC, this kind of ‘master morality’ was overturned by the Upamshads, the teachings of forest-dwelling sages, who renounced the attractions of bodily life, which they judged a cause of misery on accord of its transience, and instead pursued the liberation (moksha) of the individual soul or self (atman) from its otherwise eternal migration from body to body. Through asceticism, which weakens the desires that make us cling to the body, and meditation, which strengthens our spiritual capacity, they sought to leave behind the phenomenal level by becoming nothing but soul and merging into the subtle and blissful energy (brahman) that constitutes unified permanent reality on the metaphysical level. As part of this revaluation, Mahavira (599-527 BC), the founder of Jainism, elevated non-injury to all beings (ahimsa) to a supreme duty, but also rejected compassion and doing good to others as attachments that hinder liberation, which is ultimately attained by fasting unto death. Further, Jainism asserted the many sidedness of truth, allowing the affirmation of a proposition and its opposite at the same time.

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98 See Rig Veda, 5 85, 7 86
100 On Jainism, see Sources of Indian Tradition, pp 45–92, Billington, Understanding Eastern Philosophy, pp 45–50
contrast, the Buddha (563-483 BC), founder of the third major renunciatory movement, elevated compassion and loving-kindness to cardinal virtues (together with joy and equanimity) and rejected extreme asceticism by asking laymen merely to abstain from killing any sentient being, from stealing, from wrongful sexual activity, unjust speech, and intoxicating drink; and, issuing a serious challenge to Upanishadic thought, he denied the soul as an illusion of self that lies at the root of all suffering (*dukkha*), and asserted that the four ranks of society are merely functional in origin and that even the lowliest could thus attain liberation\(^1\)

From about 500 BC to 500 AD, these Dravidian, Aryan, Upanishadic, and Jain elements but not the Buddhist ones that challenged them merged into Hinduism, a highly syncretic and increasingly theistic combination of the Aryan affirmation of life and its renunciation by the Upanishads, which has shaped the mainstream consciousness of India ever since. Accordingly, society is by nature a hierarchy of the four classes (*varnas*), which in turn is divided into a great number of hereditary, endogamous, and commensally castes (*jatis*) that impose on their members distinct codes of conduct (*sva dharma*) concerning their daily duties, privileges, disabilities, and livelihoods. Below this society are the excluded castes, among them the untouchables, whose hereditary livelihood consists of the most impure work, such as removing garbage and human waste, disposing of the dead, working leather, and whose touch, shadow, or even view is considered pollution. Crime and punishment are conceived in reference to the caste of perpetrator and victim, with offenses against members of higher castes being punished

\(^1\) On Buddhism, see *Sources of Indian Tradition*, pp 93–153, Billington, *Understanding Eastern Philosophy*, pp 51–70
more harshly and offenses by members of higher castes treated more leniently

For the liberal respect for natural and inalienable rights is but the culmination of the Hebrew-Christian commitment to absolutist morality. This commitment in turn is rooted in the idea of a single, all-good, all-knowing, and all-powerful God, who reveals in explicit fashion which actions are inherently wrong as opposed to the multitude of Hindu deities, who not only conflict with each other but commit their own transgressions, and the hopeless energy of Brahman at the ground of all being. In addition, the Socratic turn in Greek philosophy from speculation about nature to systematic inquiry into ethics and politics made it impossible for the West to tolerate contradictions between right and might on the level of practice as opposed to Hindu thought, which not only limited itself to metaphysics, epistemology, logic, and language, but celebrated the many sidedness of phenomenal truth.

Hindus became familiar with liberalism in the wake of the British conquest during the nineteenth century, their response was markedly mixed. Impressed by Christian ethics, Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833) and G.K. Gokhale (1866-1915) sought to put India’s emerging national consciousness on a cautiously liberal course, by supporting English education in Indian schools, arguing for the emancipation of the lower castes, welcoming the abolition of widow burning, and demanding freedom of the press and eligibility of Indians to all ranks of the civil service. Soon, however, in reaction to such attempts at Westernization, traditional Hindus, most notably Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) and Aurobindo Ghose (1872-1950), asserted the superiority of India’s spiritual and organic society over the materialistic and rights-centered individualism of the West, defending the caste system on functional grounds, defining the nation as a village community and declaring
sacrifice of self to the nation a religious duty. This tension between liberal and traditional ideas also shaped the thought of Mohandas K. Gandhi (1869-1948), the father of independent India. Gandhi’s encounter with Christianity in England deepened his embrace of equality, brotherly love, humility, and absolutist obedience to one’s conscience regardless of consequences. His training as a lawyer in England made him argue that natural reason forbids caste discrimination, untouchability, and the degradation of women regardless of what Hindu scripture might say.

At the same time, the Mahatma rejected the materialism, individualism, and life-corroding competitiveness of the West, proclaiming the simple and spiritual life of the Indian village community as his ideal. He also thought that liberal democracy as practiced in the West amounted to little more than legalized exploitation of the weak, hoping that India would develop an ‘integral democracy’ (purna swaraj) instead, where the masses would enjoy genuine participation in the political process and the rich would be trustees of the national wealth for the sake of the poor. Following in Gandhi’s footsteps, Jawaharlal Nehru, India’s first Prime Minister (1947–64), wanted a secular state with civil liberties, but also thought that only a socialist order could uplift India impoverished masses. Five decades later, India is a functioning democracy with regular elections, an independent judiciary, political parties, trade unions, and a partially free press. Entrepreneurship thrives and much has been done to recognize the rights of the lower castes, tribal

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Reform Movements and Emancipation

Social reform as a movement in India commenced early in the nineteenth century under the aegis of the British rule. With the British conquest, India was overwhelmed by an alien civilization far advanced in material sciences as well as in political and economic thought. The new ideas and new ways of life that the British brought with them stirred the Indian society to its depths and created an intellectual ferment in the minds of the thinking people. English education introduced by the British rulers brought about a great change in social and religious outlook of the people. It gave the ideas of individual freedom, human rights, equality, rationalism, secularism, and democracy. It instilled in the minds of the educated persons a spirit of enquiry into the basis of their social system. They began to challenge current beliefs, customs, and social practices. These individuals were the pioneers of social reform movement in India.

The individual in the Indian society was bound by the rules and restrictions of the family, the caste, and the community. To liberate the individual from the outdated, oppressive, and irrational restrictions was the basic task of the social reform movement. The movement aimed at transforming the society by raising a protest against the prescribed traditional rules. They were convinced that the changes they proposed were conducive to the best interest of the society and sought to convince others to modify or transform their ways of behaving. The social reformers, therefore, were social innovators.

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105 Sources of Indian Tradition, pp. 896-905
The task that lay before the reformers can be classified into three categories: first, regarding family system, particularly the institution of marriage, abolition of evil practices like child-marriage, polygamy, dowry system, prohibition of widow re-marriage; second, regarding caste system liberalization of caste restrictions, interdining, inter-caste marriages, removal of the idea of pollution and abolition of untouchability; third, regarding abolition of evil usages and unjust and inhuman practices such as purdah system, denial of education to women, shaving of widows heads, infanticide, animal sacrifices, hook-swinging etc. An uphill task lay before the social reformers. They had to face severe opposition from diehard orthodox and conservative forces in the society. As Wamanrao Madhavarao Kolhatkar, a social reformer of the last century from Vidarbha said that the reformers “have to face opposition proceeding from our dear and near ones- parents, wives, daughters, and countrymen with whom we have to journey in the pilgrimage of life”. The peculiar feature of the Hindu society was that there was no bar to preach anything a reformer might like, but no sooner he carried out his theories in practice, he was excommunicated- he became an out caste.

There were several forces, indigenous and foreign, at work for social reform in India. Indigenous force was the English educated elite who had imbibed the new spirit generated by the impact of the West. The forces of foreign origin were the Utilitarians and the Evangelicals in England and Christian Missionaries in India. These forces worked with their objectives in their own way. The Utilitarians and Benthamites found India a convenient ground to test their theories through the instrument of Government of India. They envisaged a radical transformation of Indian

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106 K A Kaluskar, *Vichar Sangraha*, 1, p 163
society by releasing its people from the thraldom of superstition and tradition as a result of firm government, sound law and application of scientific principles of political economy. They believed that society could be reformed by proper laws. Bentinck, Macaulay, Metcalfe and Dalhousie, who were their representatives in Indian government, advocated rapid transformation of India. Bentinck rule was distinguished for social and educational reforms. The important feature of his policy was the frontal attack on practices coming into conflict with the universal moral law. Abolition of sati, suppression of child sacrifice; measures against infanticide were some of his important measures. His epoch-making measure was the introduction of English as the medium of instruction.

It was due to Utilitarians that the Government of India became the instrument of social reform early in the nineteenth century. Rev Dr. John Wilson, the Famous Scottish Missionary of Bombay had catalogued 31 items of reform measures adopted by the government for which penal action was provided. Some of the measures the British introduced encroached upon the right and privileges of the high castes. The principle of equality before the law brought all their subjects on equal level irrespective of caste and creed. But after the Revolt of 1857, the government abandoned its policy of reforming the Indian society. The Indians were left to reform themselves in their own way.

The second force was Evangelicals led by William Wilberforce. They crusaded against a range of moral evils prevailing in the Indian society. They wanted to Christianize India and lead them to the path of salvation through the teaching of Jesus Christ. They worked through the

107 C H Heimsath, Indian Nationalism and Hindu Social Reform, p 23
108 Judith M Brown, Modern India, p 69
109 Ibid, p 69
British Parliament and the Christian Missions in India. The Christian Missionaries were the first to level harsh criticism at the Hindu society. As early as in 1822, they began to question a wide range of social practices such as Sati, prohibition of widow remarriage, child marriages, polygamy, infanticide, and animal sacrifice. They were the pioneers in female education in India. As for the impact of Christianity on India, Sir N.G. Chandavarkar observed, “the ideas that lie at the heart of the Gospel are slowly, but surely, permeating every part of Hindu society and modifying every phase of Hindu thought.”

The forces mentioned above were working from outside. There started a movement for social reform within the Hindu society inaugurated by the first generation of English-educated men. These men received with open mind the modern ideas of reason, science and progress and tried to apply them to social problem of India. They were convinced that unless evil customs and inhuman and unjust practices were abolished, the society would not progress.

In the nineteenth century, most of the Indian reformers were influenced by the liberalism. When they started to speak out on social problems, they used the notion of liberalism to perpetuate their ideas. Liberalism provided great ideological support to Indian nationalism in the late nineteenth century. The reformers received the values of liberalism from the west. Liberalism had brought about major changes in western countries like the establishment of the values of individualism, human rights and democracy, which encouraged the reformers to bring about social reforms in India.

The peculiarity of the social reform movement in India was that it

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100 G Smith, The Life of John Wilson, pp 352-53
111 Sarma & Sakur, Politics and Society, p 17
was centered round certain personalities. Unlike the later political movement, it lacked organization and continuity. But it went on plodding its way sponsored by great and brilliant personalities.

**Ram Mohan Roy** (1772-1833), was the pioneer Renaissance in India. He was a source of inspiration for social reform in India, was born in 1772.

Ram Mohan’s name is invariably associated with the development of the monotheistic tradition and with the abolition of *sati*. In 1805 Colebrooke’s essays on the Vedas had demonstrated the existence a monotheistic tradition in ancient Indian literature and Colebrook had argued that polytheistic tendencies and idolatrous practices were later aberrations.\(^{112}\)

It is also important to point out the influence of Islam on the development of Ram Mohan’s monotheistic way of thinking.\(^{113}\) Ram Mohan’s name is also associated with the abolition of *sati*. He had set up the *Atmiya Sabha* in 1815. Amongst other things, this *Sabha* discussed the evils of *sati*. A contributory factor in Ram Mohan’s animus towards *sati* was the personal element in the form of the self-immolation of his elder brother’s wife in 1811.\(^{114}\)

Facing tough opposition from the orthodox traditional group of Hindu society, Ram Mohan was succeeded to abolish the *sati* system. *Sati* was finally declared to be illegal in the Bengal Presidency in 1829 by William Bentinck. Bentinck had probably come to feel that the hoped for gradual abolition of *sati* through the spread of education and tactics of dissuasion rather than coercion was too gradual in impact and the fruits of education were in any case hardly ever filtering through to other than

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\(^{112}\) Kopf, op cit, pp 40-41. Also see, Mukherjee, op cit, pp 140-141

\(^{113}\) See R C Majumdar and M Wahid Mirza, “New Religious Ideas,” in *BPAIRE*

\(^{114}\) R C Majumdar, “Social Reform,” Majumdar edited, British Paramountcy and India Renaissance, Part II, Bharatiya Vidyabhavan, Bombay, 1965 This volume is henceforth abbreviated as *BPAIRE*
upper classes. Ram Mohan also argued against the evils of the practice of polygamy. He seems to have been against the marriage of widows, although he did plead for a change in the Hindu laws of inheritance so that the lot of widows might be made more bearable.

The above reforms pertain to the general socio-economic condition of women. There were some other reforms which pertaining to society at large. In advocating the unity of Godhead, Ram Mohan also got involved in a controversy with orthodox Christian Missionaries. This had to do with Ram Mohan’s advocacy of the reforming of religions so as to establish the unity of the Godhead. He made an attempt to preach this doctrine by setting up, with William Adam, the Unitarian Mission in Calcutta in 1821. The Unitarian Mission never really took off, unlike the Brahmo Samaj, which was established by Ram Mohan in 1828. The Brahmo Samaj was also popularly referred to as the Brahmo Sabha.

The first person from Bengal to break the taboo was Ram Mohan Roy. Dwarakanath Tagore succeeded him, then it was continued by Vidyasagar and Keshabchandra Sen. Keshabchandra Sen joined the Brahmo Samaj in 1857. Under his leadership, the Brahmo Samaj would split and split yet again. The Samaj would draw away from Hinduism and become rather Christian in its outlook, with Keshabchandra Sen going about his social crusade with all the zeal of biblical prophet. It is extremely important to understand the transformation in the Brahmo Samaj as the dominant leadership passed from the hands of Ram Mohan Roy to those of Debendranath Tagore and eventually into the hands of Keshabchandra Sen.

115 Ibid
116 Ibid
117 The Brahmo Samaj was the original name, see R.C. Majumdar and M. Wahid Mirza, “New Religious Ideas,” in BPAIRE. It is sometimes incorrectly supposed that the Brahmo Sabha was the original name, see Kopf, op cit, pp. 202-203

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Ram Mohan was a firm believer in the sanctity of scriptural authority and thereby believed that scriptural authority could in fact determine social ethics. In so far as scriptural authority was in conflict with what an individual felt to be right, an individual could do what he felt to be right without necessarily questioning scriptural authority. The spirit was one of reforming rather than of revolting or discarding. Particularly after the infallibility of the Vedas was given up, Debendranath Tagore felt that if scriptural authority could be questioned and given up. But this did not necessarily warrant a questioning of what passed by the name of social ethics. He could contemplate a revolution in the religious sphere, but not in the social sphere. Debendranath was against the onslaught of a crusade a social reform in the social sphere. In the religious sphere he continued to feel that the Brahmo Samaj was part and parcel of the Hindu tradition. Under Keshabchandra Sen, the Brahmo movement became a movement for revolution both in the religious and in the social spheres. The Brahmo Samaj argued that it no longer belonged to the mainstream of Hindu tradition; it proclaimed itself as a separate religious community. This was a fundamental weakness of the movement. Henceforth, whatever social reforms would be mooted would touch member of Brahmo faith alone, the bulk of the community would remain untouched.

The Brahmo Samaj of India set up branches all over the country and adopted a nationwide programme of social reforms. The influence of the Brahmo Samaj spread to Madras, where a theistic society was started in 1864 under the name of Veda Samaj, which was later changed to Brahmo Samaj of South India. R. Venkata Ratnam of the Madras Brahmo Samaj focused attention on the need for welfare measures for the

118 For a detailed discussion, see R C Majumdar, “Impact of Western Culture,” in *BP AIRE*
depressed classes in South Kudmul Ranga Rao started a free school for the depressed classes at Mangalore in 1897, which was later taken over by the Depressed Classes Mission Society of Madras established in 1909. These efforts stimulated many other organizations with liberal ideas to work for the depressed classes.

Thus, the Servants of Indian Society, which was founded by Gokhale in 1905, declared elevation of the depressed classes as one of its aims. The Theosophical Society, established in 1882 in Madras under the leadership of Swami Vivekananda also worked for the welfare of the depressed classes, especially in the field of education. Mrs. Annie Besant, a prominent member of this Society came to India in 1893. She became the President of this Society. She devoted herself to the revival of Hindu religion. Her activities in the field of education were more significant. She founded the Central Hindu College at Benares which was ultimately merged with the Benares Hindu University. Her paper “New India” spread the theosophical ideas. Later she started the Home Rule Movement to give momentum to the National Movement in India.

It is important to stress that the Brahmo Samaj and the Arya Samaj, which started for the welfare of the depressed classes were inspired by the Missionaries and adopted many of their techniques of organization. A new and popular form of organization, the ‘Mission’ came into existence, for example, the Depressed Classes Mission, Suddhi Samaj, and the Rama Krishna Mission, whose functions included propaganda, proselytization, rituals of ‘baptism’, a programme of general and religious education, social welfare, economic development, and political action.\(^{119}\)

**Swami Dayananda Saraswathi** (1824-1883), was in the tradition of Vishnubuwa, but much more learned in the Hindu scriptures than the

\(^{119}\) Ibid
latter. Dayananda stood for the restoration of the Vedic Aryan Society with all its ancient institution and practices. He wanted to solve the problems of life in accordance with Vedic canons. He did not know English and was in no way influenced by European culture. The Arya Samaj, which he established at Bombay in 1875, preached the following principles: 1. Brotherhood of man 2. Equality of sexes. 3. Absolute equality between man and man 4. Equal opportunity for all.

He advocated education of girls and widow-remarriage. He strongly opposed child-marriage. Dayananda was sharply critical of the caste system. In practice the Arya Samaj uplifted untouchables to the status of Brahmans by investing them with the sacred thread and by interdining with them. He upheld Chaturvārnyā, based not on birth but on merits and actions of the individual. He preached that Vedic religion was open to all and anybody could adopt it by purification. Arya Samaj tried to revive the ancient purity of the Vedic Society. It was opposed to the rigidity of caste distinctions based on birth. It championed social reform.

The banner of social reform movement was carried on further in the latter half of the nineteenth century by stalwarts like Justice Ranade, Ramabai Ranade, Justice Telang, Dr. R.G. Bhandarkar, G.G Agarkar and Vithal Ramji Shinde.

**Justice Ranade** (1842-1901), who provided ideological basis for the social reform movement. Ranade’s vision of social reform was so sweeping as to cover all aspects of human progress. He advocated reform in all aspects. He said, “we want to work on no single line, but to work on all lines” 120 Ranade adopted a realistic approach towards social reform. He supplemented with religious texts and western knowledge his critical arguments, which were legally grounded. Ranade kept himself in

120 *Miscellaneous Writings of Ranade*, p 159
personal touch with all kinds of reform movements in different provinces of India. According to him the work of social reform was the work of liberation. Ranade raised social reform movement to a spiritual level when he declared: “the end is to purify and to perfect the whole man by liberating his intellect, elevating his standard of duty and perfecting all his powers.”

In his scheme of social reform, the whole existence was to be regenerated. He said “the change which we should all seek is a change from constraint to freedom, from credulity to faith, from status to contract, from authority to reason, from unorganized to organized life, from bigotry to toleration, from blind fatalism to human dignity.”

Ranade wished to caste society into a new mould. He stated that the reformer must have his family, village, tribe and nation recast in other and new moulds and that is the reason why social reform becomes our obligatory duty and not mere pastime, which might be given at pleasure.

While working for social reform Ranade did not want to break with the past. He observed that a true reformer has not to write on a clean slate, but to complete the half written sentence. Ranade was not a revivalist. He asserted “in a living organism as society is, no revival is possible” Ranade’s method of reform was persuasion by appealing to the conscience of the people. He stated that if reformation was desired, the inward man, his thought and ideas had to be changed. While everywhere an aggressive individualism was in discourse, in that epoch

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121 Ibid, p 179
122 Ibid, p 116
123 Ibid, p 196
124 Ibid, p 118
125 Ibid, p 191
126 Ibid, p 192
Ranade rough conjectured the motives of the welfare state and which he connected to individualism and collectivism; this shows his prophetic vision 127

The burning question whether the State should interfere in individual’s life or not? In this regard, the people who favoured the State’s role in making laws to prevent social evils adopted liberal ideas Ranade was in favour of State’s action to eradicate social evils and said, “individual liberty of action is no doubt a great force, but this liberty has its limitations imposed by the fact that no man’s liberty should encroach upon the liberty of those who surround him. Whenever there is large amount of unredressed evil suffered by people who cannot adopt their own remedy, the state has function to regulate and minimize the evil” 128

According to Ranade social, economical and political considerations cannot be divorced from each other. He declared “you cannot be liberal by halves” Ranade died in 1901. After him the work of social reform was carried further by his wife Ramabai, Dr Bhandarkar, N.G Chandavarkar, K. Natarajan, D.K Karve and others. R.G Bhandarkar (1837-1925) was a stalwart among social reformers. Being a through going reformer, he acted what he preached. He supported widow-remarriage not only on the basis of scriptures but also on the grounds of justice, morality and humanitarianism 129 He was a staunch supporter of female education. He fervently condemned the rigid caste system, which had corroded the vitals of the country. He was wholeheartedly for the uplift of untouchables. In his personal dealings he never observed caste distinctions. He had arranged a Kirtan of a Mahar at his own residence. 130

127 Nalmi Pandit, Maharashtrait Rashtrwadacha Vikas, Mumbai, 1955, p 49
128 Mahadeva Govind Ranade, Religious And Social Reform-A Collection of Essays And Speeches, Compiled by Kolasker M B, Bombay, 1902, p 103
129 R G Bhandarkar Yanche Dharmapar Lekh ani Vyakhyane, p 52
130 Nibanda Sangraha I, II, III, Agarkar Lekha Sangraha, Ed G P Pradhan Kesari Chi Trumurti, PG Sahasrabuddhe, Philosophical Trends in Modern Maharashtra, Lederle
According to Bhandarkar, our social system is a great obstacle in the achievements of individual rights. Due to social restrictions, people cannot progress. He says that the object of social reform is to eradicate such evil customs as it had undermined the energies of the Indian people and prevented the free expansion of their powers and capacities. For Bhandarkar, English education appeared to be a useful instrument to create nationalism by reforming the other human institutions. He wrote, “our English education has evoked in a sense of nationality, and we have been thinking of the evils from which our nation is suffering, and endeavouring to remove them by the introduction of reforms, political, social, moral and religious”.132

Gopal Ganesh Agarkar (1850-1895), He was a radical social reformer as well as radical nationalist. He was a friend and colleague of Lokamanya Tilak, but in later years became his adversary. He was the first to accept as a whole the principles underlying the new ideas that flowed from the West. He was deeply influenced by the philosophies of J.S Mill and Spencer and also by theories of August Comte and Charles Darwin. Mill was the apostle of rationalism and Spencer was the apostle of individualism. Comte held up the service of humanity as the best of human ends. From these authors he studied the basic principles of social life and interpreted Mill and Spencer through Indian eyes. He was a disciple of Utilitarian school of England, also called as Philosophical Radicals. The tenets of this school were the greatest good of the greatest number, rationalism, secularism, individual freedom, equality, omnipotence of education and simple living and their principle of free

131 R G Bhandarkar, Collected Works of Sir R G Bandarkar, 4 Vols, Ed by The Late Narayan Bapu Utgikar, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune, 1928-1933, p 527
133 Philosophical Trends in Modern Maharashtra, Lederle, p 138
trade; and there was more of emotion in Agarkar. He may be called a Maharashtrian representative of the Philosophical Radicalism.

Till Agarkar appeared on the scene, social reform was regarded as a religious duty. Sanctions of the Shastras were sought for every item of social reform. He had immense faith in reason of man. Reason was his sole guide for reform. Man’s reason has to be approached in an appropriate manner to enable him to overcome age-old superstitions and irrational practices. He replaced tradition and authority by reason. He was the only reformer of his time, who did not seek the sanction of the Sastras. He claimed that “we have equal authority as the sages of old”

Agarkar was championing reforms in all the fields’ life simultaneously. He preached full equality between all human beings. He wanted to free womanhood from the bondage of mankind. He, therefore, advocated equal treatment to women, co-education, their economic independence and even divorce. The next step to Agarkar’s reforms is the present day movement of liberation of women. For Agarkar, individual is a sacred entity and he urged that all individuals irrespective of their castes, creeds and sex, should get the opportunity to develop their best potentialities in themselves. It is this principle of equality of opportunity that is founded idea because of unprofitable circumstances. For the progress of Indian society he emphasized on material changes. According to Agarkar’s philosophy, individual is one free value and individual exists not for society but society exists for an individual.134

Vithal Ramji Shinde (1873-1944), popularly known as Karmaveer or Maharshi, was a religious and social reformer. He was a researcher and all-sided reformer. He was a staunch supporter of the

134 Nalmi Pandit, Maharashtratil Rashtrwadacha Vikas, Mumbai, 1955, p 81
depressed classes and worked in his own way to ameliorate their
c Condition and eradicate the evil of untouchability. In his young age he
was influenced by J S Mill, Spencer and Agarkar. Max Muller’s works
turned the atheist in him into a devout theist and he joined Prarthana
Samaj. He worked as a missionary of the Samaj from 1903 to 1910. In
later years he became Brahmo Samajists and as such did missionary work
for the Brahmo Samaj. Shinde founded the Depressed Classes Mission of
India in Bombay in 1906 with the help of the Bombay Presidency.\footnote{135}

The objects of the Mission were: spread of educating among the
untouchables, to seek to provide employment for them, to try to remove
social restrictions imposed on them and to impart religious teaching to
them to make them better citizens.\footnote{136}

By the first decade of the twentieth century the social reform
movement in Maharashtra had penetrated into different strata of the
society presenting three-reform movement aiming towards social change.
The first was limited to the upper strata of the society and was
predominantly Brahmin-led urban centered movement. Second was
presented the rise of middle strata led by Jotiba Phule. It was peasant
dominated and rural based movement. It arose as a revolt against the
Hindu social system, but in later times became anti-Brahmin movement.
Third was the movement of the depressed classes in its primary stage
indicating the signs of awakening among the lowest strata of the society.
It was later to develop into a vigorous movement led by Dr. Ambedkar.

**Initiation of the Dalit Movement**

Even though the awakening of the oppressed people began around
eighteenth century, emergence of “conscious and vociferous untouchable

\footnote{135} C H Heimsath, *Indian Nationalism and Hindu Social reform*, p 244
\footnote{136} Sambhajirao Patne, *Maharshi Vithal Ramji Shinde*, p 34
opposition to the social values and religious hierarchies of Hindu society”¹³⁷ leading social reform movements became visible by the second half of the nineteenth century. So “the Dalit movement in the familiar sense of organised resistance of the ex-untouchables to caste oppression may not be traced beyond colonial times”¹³⁸ Still this does not mean that the struggle of low and out castes did not exist in early times. In his article, Teltumbde utters that the history of this struggle is as old as the caste itself. However by the Dalit movement, where the Mahars of the Maharashtra state were the backbone of the mentioned movement, this struggle took a more organized path with a Mahars will not remain for years downtrodden and are already pushing themselves from the state of degradation. They have established a school of their own community. He at well-settled political sight and a decisive purpose, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar the leader of the Dalit Movement was from the Maharashtra state, as well.

The first signs of arousing iconoclasm were noted by an official of United Kingdom, Mr Cradock, the settlement Commissioner of Nagpur District in year 1900 was noted as follows present lacks education and self respect, but these will come, and the day may not be far distant when a Mahar will be found among the ranks of the native magistry (Report of the Land Revenue Settlement of Nagpur District, 1900)¹³⁹

The anti-Brahmanical movement stimulated especially by the appearance of Jotiba Phule, besides Shahu Chhatrapati. In his book, Omvedt warns reader of not considering the movement as isolation but in the context of the general colonial situation and the efforts of Indians to

¹³⁹ Joshi, op cit, p 23
respond to it. Actually, not only the non-Brahman but also the Brahman political evolution and motion gained pace by the presence of the colonial rule. The challenges by the West carried Indians to think about development, reform and elevating India to the level of colonial power ruling herself. However, Omvedt stresses that, such considerations were prompting the requests and interests of elites, upper classes. That is why they did not opt for a “social revolution” but for “modernization”, revitalization of the old society. They offered initially a well-industrialized India, thus the first step for modernization was providing modern technology, modern training and education for western style production. This is especially done to avoid the answer that Weber gives for the question ‘why capitalism could not develop in Middle East’. For Weber, it was because of the Asiatic mode of production. Thus, it can be deducted that, after the arrival of the British in India, modern technology and development entered India. In Middle Eastern States, after the penetration of colonial powers, the agricultural production gains speed, not the modern production systems. However, India chose to boost industrial development.

The aim was to adopt capitalism in India on behalf of modernization. If they boosted agriculture, they believed they could neither develop capitalism nor modernization. As a result, Indian elite wanted to launch capitalism in their state. The Marxian view explains why Indian elites asked for capitalism. It is because, the capitalism is a form of ‘class society’ to Marxists. Class society is the traditional social structure of India. ‘Caste, in short, represents a differentiated form of

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140 Omvedt, Gail, *Cultural Revolt in a Colonial Society: The Non-Brahman Movement in Western India 1873 to 1930*, Bombay: Scientific Education Trust, 1976, p. 98
141 Ibid, p. 99
'symbolic capital' 142 Thus, capitalism fits the social structure of India. The resistance of Indian elite against the colonial power was not to protect Indian labour against the exploiting power, but to establish own economy and modern industrial systems; to become liberated in means of government, and to upgrade both political and economic existence of Indian elite. Albeit in their confrontation against colonialism, they were not after protecting the rights or liberating the labour power, the serf people namely Shudras or the untouchables. Because, with the old social system, the lower classes served ostensible 'elites' as a compulsory role. The Shudras served the elite, but in turn they were not paid. It was a religious role, to serve the upper castes. But by the rise of capitalism, labour could become a piece of the economic relations and in turn producers had to pay for the services provided by the people they previously ignored. Moreover, adopting capitalism brings adopting European values as well.

Hence, the revolution they pushed cannot be considered as a social revolution. It was barely to improve the position of high caste members before the colonial rule. The entire population of India was not taken into consideration. Still the majority of the Indian population was composed of those ignored people, as members of lower layers of the caste system: Shudras. Even though this was a discriminative revitalization movement, numerous scholars regard it as a very precious step towards evolution of old, traditional and colonized India. For these scholars, at least an impulse was recorded for any revolution. Because the demands for social revolution from lower layers of the society heard just after the elite effort for modernization. Phule voiced the forgotten people of India first. He articulated that the modernization movements going on in India had to

142 David West Rudner, Caste and Capitalism in Colonial India, Berkeley University of California Press, 1994, p 213
become a social revolution to break the walls of the caste system and make India a genuinely developed one with equal social lines. For him, to achieve a real improvement, initially the dominance of a particular class had to be defeated. To defeat the domination was only possible by downfalling the traditional order, as far as the so-called ‘elite’ is the construction of the ancient Hindu social system. A series of reforms were required in lines of cast to weed out the colonial rule and make India a developed power in the region.

The priestly Brahmans were not to agree with the idea to make amendments in ancient Hindu hierarchical organism or to challenge Brahmanic values. Some fanatic Hindu upper castes have committed brutal massacres toward the Dalits, who desire betterment in their social position. On one hand the oppressed people of India, creating the majority, were seeking social reforms, nevertheless, on the other hand The National Congress was rigid about the issue of excluding social revolution heading from the agenda. In spite of this, the ‘social revolution’ notion had already entered the National Congress and was strong enough to set off breaks within the Congress. Mainly two groups came into view: Moderates and Extremists. The British rule in India brought a nationalism fashion in India. However, echoes of nationalism diversified as the aforementioned two groups. One group was after improving India via using the British as a stepping-stone and for the other group the British rule was completely interference to Indian affairs, and India was being abused by them. The desire for change and new social formation was what Moderate wing of National Congress sought.

In Europe, liberalism was a revolutionary theory of the newly emerging middle classes. In England, it emerged in its genuine and fundamental form and in France; it emerged in a revolutionary form.
while in India it came in a moderate form. The Moderates were aspiring for more Europeanized institutions and educational system, more equality, justice, law and liberty breezing into India. Gokhale was leading the Moderates and Mohammad Ali Jinnah was within lines of moderates. Alternatively to the Moderates, the Extremists were rigidly rejecting any of the changes and opposing against the entire Europeanistic values, because they were afraid of damaging the Brahmanical instructions. The prominent leader of the extremist view is Bal Gangadhar Tilak, who a journalist was, distributing ideas about revitalization of free India based on Maratha traditions and recognized as one of the architects of free India. According to this standpoint, independence is the principal requirement for a nation. Any measure should be used without hesitation in order to achieve it. Tilak expressed this view by his famed sentence which was sloganized “Swaraj is my birth right and I shall have it”. The extremists were after swaraj and moderates were after swadeshi that these words connoted respectively independence or self-rule and self-reliance. Unavoidably the extremists were also after modernization, yet the innovations they were planning to propose were framed in Hindu instructions.

With the emergence of moderate and ultra nationalism, non-Brahmin ideology built its nationalism through non-Aryan culture. Phule made the criteria that caste must annihilate, and without the annihilation of caste system, we cannot become a nation. Therefore, Phule stated that our country is not a nation due to its division into thousands of

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143 B Sardar, Ranade Prant Samajik Sudharmechna Tatvamimansa, published by Pune University, Pune, 1973, p 101
144 Omvedt, op cit., p 102
146 Yashwant Suman, Maharashtratil Jatisanstha Vishayak Vichar, Pratima Prakashan, Pune, 1988 p 296
There is no unity in society, every where people are bound in caste mentality. To build a nation there should be a national society, and a society is built and survived by communication, contact and through collective action. But caste system would not allow this to happen. Therefore, national society is not created in India. Phule did attack on 'untouchability', especially caste mentality, which prohibits social communications. In this way the nation building process is set from the down trodden. In Phule’s struggle, Shudras and Ati-Shudras issues were at the center because according to him the Shudra is the protector and real pillar of the nation.

Jotiba Govindrao Phule (1827 -1890), The Greatest Shudra of Modern India, who made the lower classes of Hindus conscious of their slavery to the higher classes and who preached the gospel that for India social democracy was more vital than independence from foreign rule. Sarkar asserts that, it was Phule, who first pronounced the anti-Brahman affection in Maharashtra, with his book Ghulamgiri (1872), and his organization, the Satyashodak Samaj (1873) emphasizing the need to save the “lower classes from the hypocritical Brahmans and their opportunistic scriptures."

One of the foremost social reformers of India and an important social thinker of 19th century, Phule was born to a Mali caste, family of gardeners, in Poona. He forfeited his life for human liberation to the deprived segments of Indian public. For this reason, he initiated the Satyashodak Samaj movement, meaning the truth seeking movement, to obtain a non-Brahmin order and to release depressed classes from

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147 Y D Phadke (ed), Mahatma Phule Samgra Vangamaya, Maharashtra Rajya Aati Sanskrity Mandal, Mumbai 2006, p 140
149 http://www.ambedkar.org, Essays on Untouchables and Untouchability Religious
Brahmanical dominance. His most famed work namely ‘slavery’, which is ‘Gulamgiri’ in Hindi language, was published in 1872. He is best known with his struggle towards the inequalities of Indian society, ignorance and slavery. He mobilized the backward classes in order to discard the humiliating and degrading social structure and to bring equal and just social order that does neither include discriminative classification nor leave women behind because he desired a welfare society. It is believed that the first person to coin the word ‘Dalit’ is Phule since he is considered to be the initiator of the modern Anti-Brahmin Movement.\textsuperscript{151}

According to biographies written about him, Phule read a book of Thomas Paine namely \textit{Rights of Man}, which familiarized him with the ideas of rights, equality, unity, solidarity, justice, and social transformation. One other event that triggered his motivation about social change is about one of his experiences. It is known that Phule was dishonored and embarrassed due to his caste in a marriage ceremony of a friend by superior caste members. This event grinded Phule about the social hierarchy and he sharply decided to make contributions to the betterment of Indian society.

Phule took measures to be disposed of the Brahmanical domination and to engage women in social sphere. Phule is branded to be the first Indian initiating the education of women. It is known that he opened a library for the usage of the untouchable children, two orphanages of Brahman widows and a school of non-Brahman girls. He put emphasis on intellectuality and education, especially the education right of down trodden children and women, thus he demanded free education for all inhabitants of India likewise the technological and scientific development, launching human rights, economic independence,

brotherhood, equality, removal of mediators, Brahmans in religion and many similar constructive factors for a fair society. To realize his aims he established the Satyashodak Samaj on September 24, 1873. This institution's establishment was highly related with the inspirations from St. Kabir. Satyashodak Samaj aimed to seek truth, highlight the importance of human rights, remind Indian society that all humans are equal by birth and what elevate their level are their own equalities, this is why the Samaj made vital contributions in education of lower castes and also girls. To liberate people from Brahmin exploitation, Phule asked that we have to send our Shudra and Ati-Shudra children to school and should start to teach them true knowledge. After educating and realizing the truth, one day a virtues person among these Shudras and Ati-Shudras will pay tributes for our contributions. Like the liberals and conservative nationalists of his times, Phule too, underlined the need to spread education in India. Like his contemporaries, he believed that education was the master key to solve many problems.

Mahatma Phule exempted poor and downtrodden children from payment of education fees. Still the welfare issue were important because improving the standards of Shudras and the untouchables was the imperative of Samaj. Samaj depreciated the magnitude of notions like rebirth, penance, and such rituals of Hinduism and Indian tradition that was believed to add value to or remove it from people. Thus, Satyashodhak Samaj was completely opposed to Brahmanical elitism. The Samaj asserted the essential of saving lower castes and outcastes from Brahmanical dominance. The notions of equality, brotherhood and non-requirement of the middlemen in religious matters were the great ideals of Satyashodhak Samaj. Phule also distressed the prominence and

152 http://www.ambedkar.org/jamanadas/TilakGandhi.htm
even the existence of priests, clerics that points the highest caste of Brahmins. Actually Phule and his followers apprehended that, the existing social and resulting systems of Hinduism must at least be changed or totally be collapsed to save the untouchables from their disgraced standing within the ranking. Because Phule and his institution Samaj were after education since they believed it to be the most precious standard to lift a society up, attempts began to expand education. The education system proposed by supporters of Phule was to be under control of the government, to make it fair. Principally Samaj underlined the importance of primary education, so supported the idea to make it compulsory.

By the year 1882, Mahatma Phule submitted a presentation to Sir William Hunter, the Chairman of the Education Commission, in which he sought compulsory primary education. Moreover, the education of women was particularly underscored below this title. The education curriculum had to be defined well according to Samaj principles, in a way that this system had to be useful in daily life, help people to find jobs, to join in the routine production and economy to better conditions. It was decided to incorporate occupational lectures in the system. The leading professional skill was agriculture and the one of the goals was to load agricultural knowledge to the teachers to spread this competence. One other feature of teachers proposed by the Samaj was to select them out of low castes to create a fair educational system. Phule and his supporters initiated a campaign to overthrow landlords and moneylenders, who prevented economic improvement of farmers and led to injustice. Among his countless efforts, allowing the untouchables to fetch water from public wells is an important step.

The pureness issue for the upper classes was a kind of taboo, and
this restriction caused the depressed classes to be affected of pollution, lack of hygiene and influenced easily by epidemic diseases. They even faced with thirst. Samaj devotees gave a hand for the orphans by constructing orphanages and food centres to feed children. As a challenge towards Hindu traditions, Samaj did not hesitate to criticize Vedas the religious books and the religious customs, branded those rituals misleading, made exertion to prevent widow infanticides, opened Maternity Homes to save the widowed women, even women of upper castes and encouraged widow re-marriages Mahatma Phule also made contributions literature. Presumably, his writings were drawing the attentions to the inequalities of Indian society, fight among Brahmins and non-Brahmins, cruelty of ignorance and peculiar religious customs Phule said that Indian National Congress was not a national organization and it represents the Brahmin people For nation building, Phule looks towards caste system as the main obstacle in nation building According to him without the annihilation of caste system, we cannot build a nation

Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (1891 -1956), Dr Ambedkar has been the predominant character in the Dalit movement was a member of a class of the untouchables, within the Mahar community or caste Even though being born in an illiterate community, he managed to complete his education of law in United States and United Kingdom; moreover he earned degrees from Columbia and London Universities He returned India back in 1923 Because he received an advanced and modern education, he was an open-minded leader and had a wide vision. He was after fresh and up to date view patterns rather than the traditional ones. He sought equal rights for every citizen of India and he was unpleasant with discriminative nature of conventional Hindu social structure. His

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153 Hari Narke (Ed), Mahatma Phule Gourao Granth, Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar, Mahatma Phule Aanu Rajashri Shahu Charitra Sadhane Prakashan Samity, Mumbai, p 201
demands also included separate representation, the right to use tanks and enter temples. He is also recognized as the architect of the Indian Constitution of 1950 and Nehru's Minister of Law. He became the chief of the Dalit movement.

He pursued "the policy of reserving quotas in education, government jobs and employment of the Scheduled Castes." Underlined by Zubrzycki, this system of reservations or quotas, made the untouchables and downtrodden or low classes, and gave them proportional representation in legislatures, government jobs, and educational institutions. The mentioned quotas or the reserved seats are set for the sake of the Dalits, the untouchables, the scheduled castes and tribes. In India, because it is believed that the Hindu majority would scarf up the downtrodden people and the minorities, so on behalf of protecting their rights and cultures, the quota system is a functional pattern. Moreover, the quota system in India is not only for protecting the agitated groups, but also the families of the heroes, like the children and the grandchildren of those, who fought against the British existence in India and died.

Dr Ambedkar also organized protests against the caste and gender discrimination that put untouchables and women off countless rights and led women "numerous incidents of abuse, rape and kidnapping by police and outsiders." Especially, the Dalit women were subject to a greater discrimination on three basis; one because they are low caste, two because they are the Dalits, and three because they are women. According to Clarke, the abuse of the Dalit women is a kind of show off.

154 Sarkar, op cit, p 243
155 Ibid
157 John Zubrzycki, "Lower Castes Still Stuck on India's Bottom Rung," Christian Science Monitor, 8/29/97
158 Ibid
by the upper castes. They use bodies of the Dalits in order to express the power they have over them. That is why the Dalit bodies are subjected to various kinds of violence. "The extension of violence against the Dalit body is extended to violent rape of Dalit female bodies. The shaming of the Dalit communities through acts of violently violating their women folk is a tactic used by caste communities to demonstrate the power they have over all Dalit life." Dr. Ambedkar is best known with his saying "I will not die a Hindu".

Dr. Ambedkar and his followers blamed Manusmriti as the spring of inequalities within the Indian society, and they did not hesitate to burn the book of Laws of Manu. As a result, by a conference, he asked entire downtrodden people of India to leave Hinduism and to convert. This was the only solution to free enslaved people of India according to Dr. Ambedkar. Moreover, "the position of untouchables and lower castes in Hindu society is such the possibility of leaving Hinduism has always been attractive."

The untouchables have fared better in access to the political arena than have low status minorities in most democracies, though their ability and or willingness to exert actual political influence are the subject of constant debate. Access itself is guaranteed by a policy introduced before Independence by one of the early Untouchable leaders, Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar, who argued that, given existing prejudice and socio-economic handicap, untouchables would have to be guaranteed proportional legislative representation if their interests were to be protected in an independent India.

159 Gokhale, Theravada Buddhism and Modernization Anagarka Dhammapala and B R Ambedkar, p 271
160 Contursi, op cit, p 321 52 Gokhale, The Sociopolitical Effects of Ideological Change The Buddhist Conversion of Maharashtrian Untouchables, p 273
161 Ibid
Untouchable political influence at the time was negligible. Ambedkar was one of only a handful with a university education and national political experience—but he was able to take advantage of the multi-cornered independence negotiations between the British Colonial Government and the major Indian parties to win British, and eventually Indian National Congress, commitment to guaranteed representation.\(^{162}\)

Dr. Ambedkar established the Independent Labour Party by the year 1936 in order to struggle for the rights of the untouchables and to seek solution to the socioeconomic inequality question, via the political arena. Moreover, like Mosaddiq of Iran, Dr Ambedkar was also after nationalization of Indian sources like industry and agriculture. He supported special representation, reserved seats in the parliament for the downtrodden people of India. Even though he managed to enforce this political system, Ambedkar revealed his sorrow that about ineffectuality of it.

The contributions of Dr. Ambedkar into the formulating the Indian constitution are impossible to overlook. Before telling about the Ambedkar’s role in formulation of Indian constitution, it is better to clarify the notion of constitution. Dr Ambedkar defines constitution in his article titled ‘The Constitution of British India’ as follows

A constitution is the study of the organization of the state for the State is an artificial person, which claims the right to punish, to possess property, to make contracts and to regulate its rights and duties as between itself and the subjects and also as between the subjects themselves.\(^{163}\) As Hart maintained in his article, two definitions are the

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\(^{162}\) Joshi, op cit, pp 209-10

\(^{163}\) [http://www.ambedkar.org, The Constitution of the British India](http://www.ambedkar.org)
most common, where one says a constitution is a nation’s actual institutions and their development, and the second says a constitution is a document, a code of fundamental law, struck off at a particular historic moment. The second definition is found too mechanic by Hart that for him a constitution is not something prepared by a given formulation. It is rather composed following the path led that constitution’s emergence. As for the Indian society, this nation experienced a transition from colonial hands to free governance. Moreover, the society itself was based on a classification, where a huge number of people were left behind. Thus, main principles of the Indian Constitution are justice, liberty, equality and fraternity, which led the Ambedkar movement as well.

Dr. Ambedkar helped adopting a western style of societal relations in the constitution, for all citizens, and the Article 15 banned any kind of discrimination among citizens, besides the Article 17 abolishing specifically the practice of the untouchability in any form. Actually, as far as Hinduism is based on a distinction and classification of people, then in a sense this article disallows practice of Hinduism. In regard of recovering the equality principle a number of other articles were inserted in the constitution. They mention the standard of preserving injustice by caring economic and educational interests of the weaker in addition to providing reserved seats for Scheduled Castes and Tribes in the House of the People for ten years and this term was extended for several times. Numerous articles were formulated to support those pieces.

The untouchables and low castes were branded as the Scheduled Castes and Tribes and offered some privileges as reserved seats, reserved posts etcetera, many sources as the article of Corbridge, argue that those

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rights and positive discrimination benefits were monopolized by elite groups called the creamy layer in India. Even though both Mahatma Gandhi and Dr Ambedkar were seemed to be after liberation of Indian state and justice, they were not lined in the same row. As Corbridge also states in his article, Dr Ambedkar stood closer to the left wing of the Congress, not to Gandhi. The greatest achievement of the Dalit movement led by Dr Ambedkar was that it successfully secured its share in political power. He correctly understood the role of political power in the advancement of a backward community. Thus, reservation for the scheduled castes and abolition of untouchability were the two important implications of Dalit movement. Under the leadership of Dr. Ambedkar, the Dalit movement was developed outside the influence of the Indian National Movement.

Gandhi's Harijans (1869-1948). As far as their standpoints towards the untouchability problem of India were distinct, Mahatma Gandhi and Dr Ambedkar were political rivals. Actually, Gandhiji was concerned with the idea of freeing India from the British dominion and ignored the untouchables, but paid effort only to silence them. He was neither willing to demolish the traditional Hindu social order nor bestow the depressed classes separate representation in the Congress. On the other side, Dr. Ambedkar was the voice of the untouchables in the Indian political scene. Ambedkar expressed the wishes of the untouchables that can be concisely listed as basic Human Rights and political representation.

The term coined by Gandhi, Harijan to define Dalits, was not accepted by the Dalits, since this word still had a denotation of exclusion. Actually, as Omvedt believes that Gandhi did not mobilize the lower castes and the untouchables into a well organized National Movement, but the middle class, the bourgeois and upper-caste Indians. They were
already controlled by the Congress Party. This conservative consolidation of the Indian National Movement has left the masses of the population still immersed in poverty and caste degradation 166

The Congress Party was an elite organization, dominated by Brahman professionals in addition to some upper class merchants. Those people were totally different from the rest of the Indian society by even clothing and language, so they were separated from the masses. Still Gandhi was aware of the fact that, integration of masses into the movement was vital. In order to close this gap, the Party opened auxiliary branches in towns and villages of India. However, this did not work. Omvedt explains this due to the reality that the problem was not reaching the masses. The problem was the feeling of disturbance of the elite by the integration of masses. Mahatma Gandhi took some measures on behalf of the untouchables, by his own. One of them was Temple Entry Movement, in which Gandhi declared that he would fast unto death if the trustees of certain temples open to the untouchables.

The anti-caste non-Brahman movement was there since nineteenth century, but the question was brought to issues like temple-entrance allowances, thus Dalits raised their case as preferring the British rule to Brahman one. By 1920s, low and outcastes supported the non-cooperation movement of Gandhi. The symbol of entire Indian people, including downtrodden classes was Gandhi, in this resistance. But then they, the lower classes, shifted from the Congress lines and attacked to landlords by developing own movement. Omvedt names it as the inability of Gandhi; he could prevent the deepening radicalism between classes and gather them under the common interest. The Dalits

interpreted the independence movement as throwing off both the British and the Brahman rule including dominance of landlords.\footnote{ibid}

There is another view explaining that Dr Ambedkar neither found the term Harijan, coined by Gandhi, friendly; nor found Mahatma Gandhi in cooperation with themselves in the case, as far as Gandhi gone to fast unto death in order to prevent Dalits granting a separate electorate as Muslims, Christians and Sikhs. Gandhi wanted to prevent untouchables obtaining such rights because in the eyes of Gandhi, the Congress was representing all Indians, where Dalits were no exceptions.

Mahatma Gandhi dedicated his life to Hindu-Muslim unity and believed that a separate electorate would bring the untouchables a distinct nationhood sentiment, which would pave the way to a distinct state and thus to the disintegration of India.\footnote{Wolpert, Stanley, \\textit{India}, Berkeley University of California Press, 1991, p 129} One of the principles of Mahatma Gandhi was \textit{sarva dharma samabhava} meaning equality of all religions. Even though the depressed classes were deprived of the right to worship, they were considered as Hindus, so they were not benefiting from this understanding of Great Soul. In the eyes of Gandhiji, the untouchables were factionists, who were breaking the unity among Hindus.

Ironically, Dr Ambedkar owed the same idea plane with Gandhi, he was also a supporter of unity within India and disintegration was the last thing he would desire Dr. Ambedkar was an opponent to the politics of both Hindu elites and Muslims, because they break India up. Ambedkar was not willing to divide India and establish a separate \textit{Buddhistan}, rather he claimed Indian nation and he cared for the equality within Indian nation. This is why he called for a public conversion.

Ambedkar points a problem, which is the general belief that Congress represents all, including Dalits In one of his writings namely
"What Congress and Gandhi have done to the untouchables" Dr. Ambedkar avows that politics in India has two main facets, which can be indicated as foreign politics and constitutional politics. The foreign politics of India deals with India's freedom exertion from British Imperialism.

As for the constitutional politics Dr. Ambedkar implies the consideration of free India's Constitution. These two aspects of Indian politics are commonly failed to differentiate, and this can be seen easily by observing the foreigners, who are interested in Indian political affairs. Those foreigners become adherent of the Congress and ignore the parties representing Muslims, non-Brahmins, Dalits. In the eyes of the foreigners, the Congress represents the all. For Dr. Ambedkar, the foreigners only see the solidarity maintained under Congress during the independence struggle against the British Colonialism, and they miss the constitutional politics of India. Ambedkar states that this failure is a result of position of the untouchables. The untouchables left the Congress propaganda unchallenged and lingered silent. The Congress represented all against the common case against the British rule in India. However, as for the constitutional politics, the bases of parties differentiated. Under constitutional terms, Gandhi's party, Congress did not maintain the sufficient space for the untouchables.

The Congress was engaged with the idea of fighting for freedom, but still this does not ensure that its aim was to constitute democracy in India. While pursuing freedom, the Congress left the untouchables behind. The Congress was not trying to free the untouchables, from the social, economic and political cage that they were put in. Ambedkar stresses that most of the notions are fallacious and misleading. For instance there is a distinction between the freedom of a country and the freedom of the people in the country. The freedom of a nation is the
focus, nevertheless the nation, which is a unit politically, is divided into classes, socially and people of a class are not promised the same freedom.

During this period, the attention of humanitarians and reformers was also drawn towards the pathetic condition of untouchables. They took the path of Sanskritization to elevate them. In order to prevent alienation of untouchables from Hindu community, they drew the attention of forward communities towards inhuman condition of lower strata of society and tried to create compassion in their hearts for downtrodden. They gave top most priority to the abolition of untouchability. They tried to clarify that untouchability was neither an integral part of Hinduism nor an outcome of Varna and caste system, nor have any religious sanctity, but an external impurity and sinful blot on Hinduism. They laid emphasis on education, moral regeneration and philanthropic uplift. They also appealed to untouchables to observe cleaner habits, so that they could mix up with other sections freely and become proud and independent human beings.

Keeping the issue of untouchability the next prominent reformer was Sri Narayana Guru Swami started a movement called Sri Narayana Dharma Paripalana Movement of Kerala. Sri Narayana Guru established a new social identity for the Izhavas, a former untouchable caste. This was also based on reinterpretation of orthodox Hinduism. The Izhavas constitute about 26% per cent of Kerala’s population and have suffered from educational, religious, economic and political disabilities. Sri Narayana Guru Swami gave them a new religion of one God, one religion, and one caste, which changed their lifestyle and social outlook. He also established a set of religious institutions, like temples, priests, monks, and monasteries which are parallel to that of Brahminical.
Hinduism and facilitated their protest and challenge against the religious, economic, educational and political supremacy of the upper caste.

Narayana Guru Swami (1856 - 1928), was active as a socio-religious reformer, in the 1890s and he died on 20 September 1928. During a period of about forty years the kind of radical changes he ushered in were remarkable He formulated his system of thought oriented towards social transformation and maintained the formation of Hinduism was a necessary adjunct for the upliftment of the masses. His ideology was stated in cryptic form, as belief in one God, one religion and one caste He made a direct attack on the caste system, especially on the supremacy of the Brahmins He was the first untouchable to have shown an intellectual ability in interpreting the Brahma Sutras, the supreme text of the Brahmins Since caste was associated with traditional occupations, Swami advocated that the Izhavas give up their occupation of toddy-tapping. He gave them the slogan ‘drink not, serve not, and produce not liquor’, and encourage them to take to industry, trade and commerce

He believed that progress in empowerment and education was the basis for upward social mobility and keeping this in mind encouraged the organizing of industrial exhibitions. In order to make the religious changes effective, Swami realized the importance of having temples, monasteries hermitages, and a category of celibate monks, priest and missionaries. Thus, he created a set of religious institutions, which were parallel to the Brahminical one and this gave the Izhavas an opportunity to participate in Brahminical Hinduism which had been denied to them for centuries.

Swami envisaged the need for a powerful secular organization to reach the masses he encouraged the Yogam (associated) and thus, the famous Sri Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam (SNP Yoga) came
into existence at Arvipuram in 1903. The foregoing account of Swami's achievements shows that he provided a new ideology and charismatic leadership, which brought about a spiritual regeneration, and gave his followers supreme self-confidence and respect. He gave his disciples the motto: 'Educate that you may be free and organize that you may be strong.' Swami attempted to transform the society as a whole and lift up the Izhavas by working out a spiritual regeneration of Hinduism than by negative it. He set up a whole series of religious institutions parallel to the Brahminical ones, and asked his followers not to go to the temples of the caste Hindus which they were forbidden to enter, but to worship at their own temples. He insisted upon cleanliness and simplicity of rituals. He also thought it necessary to demolish the old temples of the Izhavas where absence songs were sung and which were devoted to the worship of evil goods and spirits. His religion was the religion of humanness, which preached universal brotherhood, and maintained that all men belonged to one race, one caste, and one religion, and followed one god. As regards caste his slogan was 'don't ask, tell or think of caste.'

As the results the SNDP Movement has a bearing on the upward social mobility of the Izhavas and reflected in the growth of differentiated elite and the kinds of ritual, educational and economic gains that they have achieved and the quantum of political power they now enjoy. Secondly, as a result of upward mobility, there is shift in the traditional balance of power in Kerala society. Thirdly, the movement has an impact on the nature of the traditional caste system. All these changes are transformative in character affecting the basic structure and organization of Indian society and culture.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁹ Alexander, K C., *Social Mobility in Kerala*, Poona Deccan College, 1968
E.V Ramaswami Naicker (1879-1973), the founder leader of the Dravida Kazhagam (D K) Movement in South India. Naicker rejected all types of myths of the Aryan religion and culture and organized his protest movement against Sanskrit culture of the Brahmins and self- respect movement among the Dravidians Naicker's movement played an important instrument role in changing the political power structure in Tamil Nadu while the movements organized by Phule and Ambedkar made a powerful impact towards changing the social system. The Dravida Kazhagam movement in Madras denied the superiority of Brahminical Hinduism and upheld the virtues of Dravidian God and Mythology. This ideology was developed the logical fashion by Ramaswami Naicker, and his followers, and it became the basis of the DK movement. The Dravidian ideology idealized the Dravidian gods like Ravana as against Rama, and adopted Tamil as against Sanskrit which was associated with the Aryan invaders and Brahminical Hinduism. The Dravidian ideology became the basis of the self-respect movement led by Periyar in 1925.

It was anti-Sanskrit and anti-north Indian. The followers relinquished the ritual service of the Brahmin priests attacked the Brahminical deities and mythology and burnt Brahminical scriptures. There was widespread propaganda and an attempt to praise the virtues of Dravidian deities, Tamil culture and mythology thereby gaining self-respect and self-confidence. Thus ideologies of this movement reveal five organizing principles: 1. Withdrawal and self-organization, 2. Claiming a higher Varna status, 3. Extolling the virtues of the non-Aryan culture; 4. Negating Hinduism altogether and embracing Buddhism and 5. Marxist ideology combined with an anti-caste Hindu theme.170

170 Hardgrave, R L Jr., The Dravidian Movement, Bombay Popular Prakashan, 1965
The above mentioned reform movements led by various great personalities performed different emancipatory strategies for the empowerment of the downtrodden, depressed, Dalit people irrespective of caste in all over the country. Journey towards emancipation of depressed people was undoubtedly led by several persons belonging to Dalit as well as non-Dalit communities.

Thus, all over the world the under-privileged sections, whether they are racial and ethnic minorities or low castes and classes, are organizing themselves to fight against inequalities, discrimination and deprivation. They often violently agitate for their legitimate share in economic opportunities, educational privilege and political power. Widespread collective mobilization centred around such interests, has led to organized social movements with defined ideologies and leadership, which have brought about significant structural and organizational changes in the societies from where they originate.

A social movement emerges out of the historical process of interaction of various socio-structural conditions prevailing in the society. It involves a number of participants who are socially conscious of the existing conditions and wish to transform these conditions either totally or partially. The level of social or collective consciousness is evaluated in terms of its appropriateness for the ends in view. Besides, a certain number of partisans, a social movement is further characterized by an ideology, leadership, certain specified goals, strategies and tactics to achieve the goals and an organizational structure. The relevance of organization in a social movement is vital in view of its function such as mobilization of masses, ordination of the activities etc.

The activities of the Indian social reformers gave rise to the establishment of a larger number of socio-religious, socio-political, social and educational institutions, organizations, associations in different parts.
of the country. A number of journals, books, tracts, pamphlets, came to be published in different Indian languages for the propagation of a variety of reform activities. Socio-religious sects like Brahm Samaj, Atmiya Sabha, Prarthana Samaj, Arya Samaj, socio-political-religious organizations like Satyashodhak Samaj, social reform associations like the National Social Conference, the Depressed Classes Mission of India, and a host of similar institutions and their branches spread over the entire country.

The castes, which dominated and suppressed the subordinate and downtrodden strata of the society since immemorial time, are the main focus of this analytical study. As a result, the lower social strata became conscious of their basic human rights of which they were deprived since ages. The most significant influence is that of Non-Brahmin Movement, the voiceless castes, the untouchable castes, got the voice against the dominant culture. And that is the phenomena, which laid the democratic values of this ideological discourse in India. At the same time, the nationalists started to fight against British Government to establish the home rule in India. It is obvious that the reformers of the nineteenth century were not articulating their views merely as sociologists or anthropologists. Rather they observed and analyzed the society in which they were living from a realistic perspective. Therefore, their analytical study became of a great significance because it allowed them to foresee the futuristic social reforms. Despite the broad discourse on the caste system, the caste factor does not cease to play the pivotal role even in the twenty-first century in which the caste discourse provides the ideological strength in different walks of modern life.

The action and interaction of the various social reform movements brought in their wake new ideas and programmes of social transformation. They are, 1. The reform movements brought about
remarkable changes in the society and religion. Initially the great changes affected a small group of people, but gradually these ideas spread among many sections of the people, 2. The reform movements strengthened the Hindu religions and made efforts to remove social evils among them, 3. The educated Indians started to think reasonably, 4. The reform movements helped in the revival of the past glory. They also helped in making up of a modern India, 5. It led to the progress of literature in different regional languages, 6. The caste system began to lose its hold on the society, 7. There was a significant achievement in the field of emancipation of untouchables, women, and deprived. Some legal measures were introduced to raise their status, 8. The reform movements created the rise of a middle class which consisted of the teachers, the doctors, the lawyers, the scientists, and the journalists who helped in the progress of India in different fields and 9. The reform movements also contributed for the growth of Indian nationalism as the reform activities united the people all over India and created a feeling of oneness.