

## Chapter 8 Women, Caste and Reform

1. What social ideas did the following people support?

- a. Rammohun Roy
- b. Dayanand Saraswati
- c. Veerasalingam Pantulu
- d. Jyotirao Phule
- e. Pandita Ramabai
- f. Periyar
- g. Mumtaz Ali
- h. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar

Answer.

- a. Rammohun Roy - Ban of Sati
- b. Dayanand Saraswati - Widow Marriage
- c. Veerasalingam Pantulu - Widow Remarriage
- d. Jyotirao Phule - Equality amongst castes
- e. Pandita Ramabai - Women's education
- f. Periyar - Equality to untouchables
- g. Mumtaz Ali - Women's education
- h. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar - Widow remarriage

2. State whether true or false:

- (a) When the British captured Bengal they framed many new laws to regulate the rules regarding marriage, adoption, the inheritance of property, etc.
- (b) Social reformers had to discard the ancient texts in order to argue for reform in social practices.
- (c) Reformers got full support from all sections of the people of the country.
- (d) The Child Marriage Restraint Act was passed in 1829.

Answer.

- (a). True
- (b). False
- (c). False
- (d). False

3. How did the knowledge of ancient texts help the reformers promote new laws?

Answer.

Rammohun Roy was well versed in Sanskrit, Persian and several other Indian and European languages. He tried to show through his writings that the practice of widow burning had no sanction in ancient texts. The strategy adopted by Rammohun was used by later reformers as well. Whenever they wished to challenge a practice that seemed harmful, they tried to find a verse or sentence in the ancient sacred texts that supported their point of view. They then suggested that the practise as it existed at present was against early tradition. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar used the ancient texts to suggest that widows could remarry.

4. What were the different reasons people had for not sending girls to school?

**Answer.**

There were the following reasons for people to not send their girls to school:

- a. They feared that schools would take girls away from home
- b. Schools will prevent them from doing their domestic duties.
- c. Girls had to travel through public places in order to reach school.
- d. Travelling to schools would have a corrupting influence on them.
- e. They felt that girls should stay away from public spaces.

**5. Why were Christian missionaries attacked by many people in the country? Would some people have supported them too? If so, for what reasons?****Answer.**

The Christian missionaries were attacked by the people as they were involved in the religious conversion of poor and tribal people that is, converting a Hindu into a Christian. These missionaries had also set up schools for tribal and poor kids to learn however the larger section of people who looked down upon the poor people and tribal people did not like the idea of exposing tribal people towards education. Hence, the attacks on Christian missionaries started.

**6. In the British period, what new opportunities opened up for people who came from castes that were regarded as “low”?****Answer.**

The poor from the villages and small towns, many of them from low castes, began moving to the cities where there was a new demand for labour. Some also went to work in plantations in Assam, Mauritius, Trinidad and Indonesia. The poor and the people from low castes saw this as an opportunity to get away from the oppressive hold that upper-caste landowners exercised over their lives and the daily humiliation they suffered.

**7. How did Jyotirao, the reformer justify his criticism of caste inequality in society?****Answer.**

Jyotirao Phule who stood against the caste inequality believed that the upper caste being the ‘Aryans’ does not belong to his land. He put forward his opinions by telling people that the land has always belonged to the low-caste people and the Aryans came from outside. He looked forward to the golden age where low-caste people live peacefully without the intrusion of upper caste.

**8. Why did Phule dedicate his book Gulamgiri to the American movement to free slaves?****Answer.**

Jyotirao Phule wrote his book, ‘Gulamgiri’ in 1873. The book title means ‘Slavery.’ From 1861 to 1865, the American Civil war was fought. The Civil War began primarily as a result of the long-standing controversy over the enslavement of black people. Phule dedicated his book to all those Americans who had fought to free slaves, thus establishing a link between the conditions of the “lower” castes in India and the black slaves in America.

**9. What did Ambedkar want to achieve through the temple entry movement?****Answer.**

In 1927, Ambedkar started a temple entry movement, in which his Mahar caste followers participated. Brahman priests were outraged when the Dalits used water from the temple tank. His aim was to make everyone see the power of caste prejudices within society.

**10. Why were Jyoti Rao Phule and Ramaswamy Naicker critical of the national movement? Did their criticism help the national struggle in any way?****Answer.**

Jyoti Rao Phule and Ramaswamy Naicker both were critical of the national movement as they thought that there were no differences between anti-colonialists and the colonialists. Phule thought that the upper-caste people who want to fight against the Britishers will want to rule once the Britishers leave. Phule was always against the upper caste people as he called them the 'outsiders.'

Naicker was apart of Congress party and his experiences led him to believe that when a party who is fighting against Britishers is not free from the taint of casteism, how can any national movement lead to casteless society.

Their criticism helped to strengthen the national struggle where reformists started restructuring their thoughts to get rid of the differences between the upper caste and lower caste. The national struggle became the tool to eradicate caste differences, religious and gender inequality.

