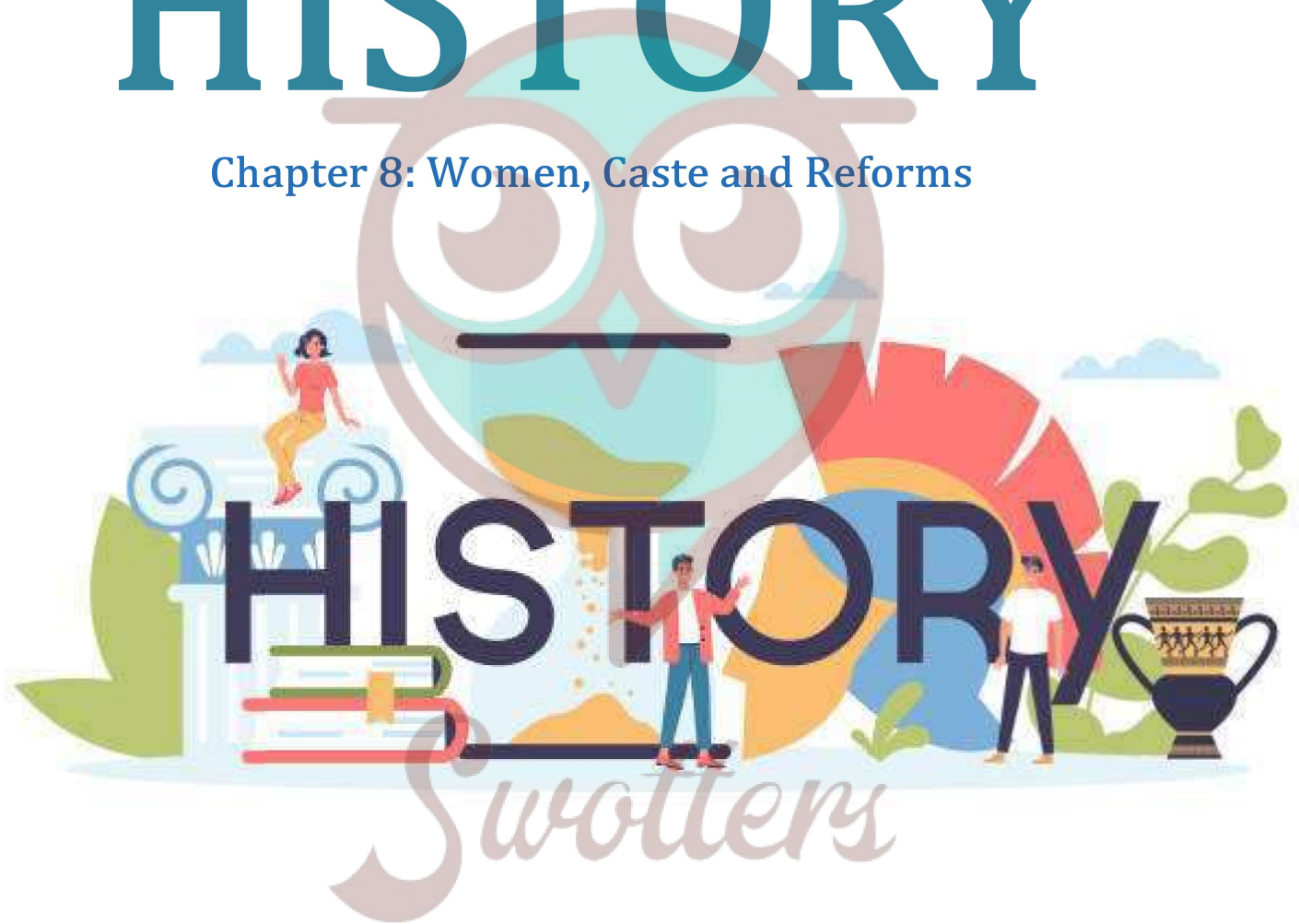


# HISTORY

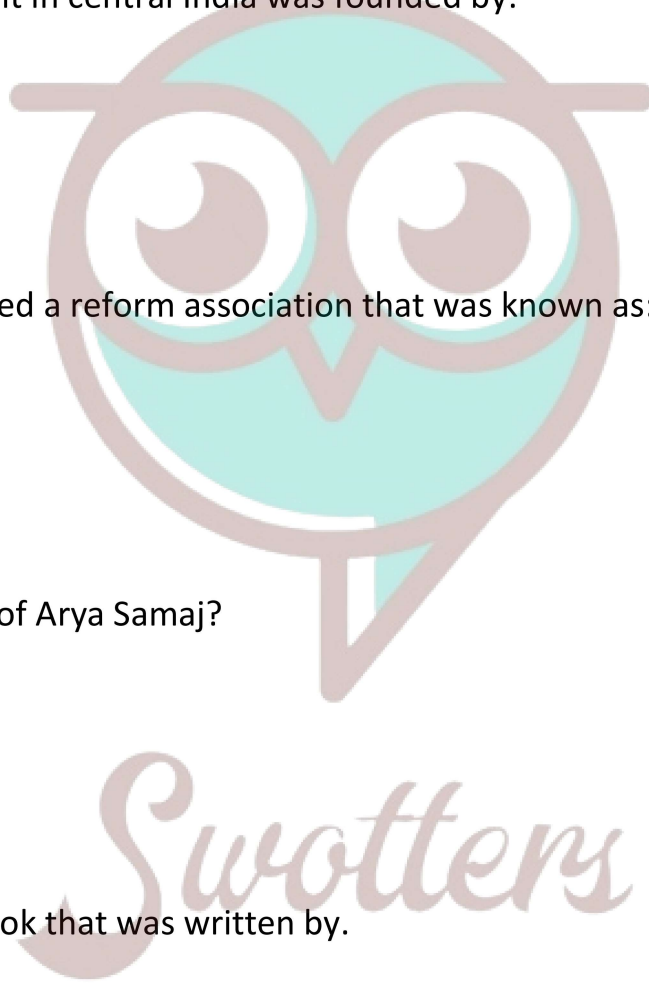
## Chapter 8: Women, Caste and Reforms



## Important Questions

### Multiple Choice Questions-

1. Paramhans Mandali was founded in 1840 to work for the:
  - a. Demands of Labour
  - b. Labour
  - c. Plantation Workers
  - d. Abolition of Caste
2. The Satnami Movement in central India was founded by:
  - a. Jyotirao Phule
  - b. Ghasidas
  - c. Dr. Ambedkar
  - d. Pandit Rama Bai
3. Rammohan Roy founded a reform association that was known as:
  - a. Brahmo Samaj
  - b. Arya Samaj
  - c. Home Rule League
  - d. Socialist Party
4. Who was the founder of Arya Samaj?
  - a. Rammohan Roy
  - b. Swami Dayanand
  - c. Balgangadhar Tilak
  - d. Vivekananda
5. Stripurushtulna is a book that was written by.
  - a. Tarabai Shinde
  - b. Pandita Ramabai
  - c. J.L. Nehru
  - d. Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar
6. Who formed the 'Brahmo Samaj'?
  - a. Raja Ram Mohan Roy
  - b. Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar
  - c. Keshav Dutt



- d. Rabindranath Tagore
7. Who founded the Mohammedan Anglo Oriental College?
- Muhammad Ali
  - Shaukat Ali
  - Sayyid Ahmed Khan
  - Deoband School
8. Who founded the Satyashodhak Samaj?
- Sri Narayan Guru
  - Jyotirao Phule
  - Dr. B. R. Ambedkar
  - E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker
9. Which low caste did the Sri Narayan Guru belonged to?
- Ezhavas
  - Mahar
  - Madigas
  - Agarias
10. Who wrote these words "Isn't a woman's life is a dear to her as yours is to you. Her face is not be seen, a widowed woman is a bad woman"?
- Pandita Ramabai
  - Tarabai Shinde
  - Begum Rokeya Shekhawat Hossain
  - Rashsundari Devi
11. What was the occupation of Madigas?
- Plantation
  - Sewing Sandals
  - Cleaning work
  - None of these
12. Name the countries where the lower caste people went for plantation work.
- Mauritius
  - Trinidad
  - Indonesia
  - All of these

13. What did Raja Ram Mohan Roy do to oppose the caste system?
- Translated an old Buddhist text
  - Translated an old Mughal text
  - Wrote an Autobiography
  - None of these
14. What formed the basis for the division of Indian society?
- Gender
  - Castes
  - Colour
  - None of these
15. Name any two religious communities in India that allowed men to marry more than one wife in the early 19th century?
- Hindu
  - Muslims
  - Both a and b
  - None of these

### Very Short:

- Why are social reformers described so?
- How did reformers bring changes in society?
- What do you mean by 'sad'?
- Who were known as Vaishyas?
- Who was Raja Rammohun Roy?
- What was hook swinging festival?
- Who was Mumtaz Ali?
- Who published the book named Stripurushtulna? What is it about?
- How did widow's home at Poona help the widows?
- What was the contribution of Christian missionaries in spreading education among tribal groups and lower castes?
- Why do people view leather workers with contempt?

### Short Questions:

- What did Raja Rammohun Roy do to end the practice of sati?
- Give an account of the movement that spread in different parts of the country in

favour of widow remarriage. Did the movement get success?

3. What do you know about Tarabai Shinde and Pandita Ramabai? What did they do for improving the condition of women?
4. Give a brief description of movements that were organised by people from within the lower castes against caste discrimination.
5. Who was E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker? What, did he do to improve the condition of the untouchables?
6. What was the childhood experience of Dr Ambedkar because of his belonging to the Mahar Community?
7. What was the argument of E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker about the untouchables?

### Long Questions:

1. Why were changes necessary in Indian society?
2. How did women involve themselves in their upliftment?
3. Explain the Singh Sabha Movement in brief.
4. How challenging was the life for Dr B.R. Ambedkar during his childhood when he experienced caste prejudice in everyday life? How did he challenge the problems faced by low caste people?

### Answer Key:

### MCQ:

1. (d) Abolition of Caste
2. (b) Ghasidas.
3. (a) Brahmo Samaj
4. (b) Swami Dayanand
5. (a) Tarabai Shinde
6. (a) Raja Ram Mohan Roy
7. (c) Sayyid Ahmed Khan
8. (b) Jyotirao Phule
9. (a) Ezhavas
- 10.(b) Tarabai Shinde
- 11.(b) Sewing Sandals
- 12.(d) All of these
- 13.(a) Translated an old Buddhist text
- 14.(b) Castes



15.(c) Both a and b

16.(c) William Jones

### Very Short Answer:

1. Social reformers are described so because they felt that some changes were essential in society and unjust practices needed to be rooted out.
2. They brought changes in society by persuading people to give up old practices and adopt a new way of life.
3. Widows who chose death by burning themselves on the funeral pyre of their husbands were known as 'sati', meaning virtuous woman.
4. Traders and moneylenders were known as Vaishyas.
5. Raja Rammohun Roy was a learned social reformer. He was well versed in Sanskrit, Persian and several other Indian and European languages. He raised voice against the practice of sati and got it rooted out.
6. It was a popular festival in which devotees underwent a peculiar form of suffering as part of ritual worship. With hooks pierced through their skin they swung themselves on a wheel.
7. Mumtaz Ali was a social reformer who reinterpreted verses from the Koran to argue for the education of women.
8. Tarabai Shinde published Stripurushtulna. It is about the social differences between men and women.
9. It trained them so that they could manage financial support for themselves.
10. These missionaries set up schools for tribal groups and lower caste children. Here, they were equipped with some skills to make their way into a new world
11. Leather workers work with dead animals which are seen as dirty and polluting. Hence, people see them with contempt.

### Short Answer:

**Ans: 1.** Raja Rammohan Roy was a great social reformer. He moved to see the tyranny of old practices that were deeply rooted in the Indian society. Burning of widows on the funeral pyre of their husbands was one such old practice which, Rammohan Roy felt, needed to be rooted out immediately. He began a campaign against this. As he had deep knowledge of Sanskrit, Persian and several other Indian and European languages, he tried to show through his writings that the practice of sati had no sanction in ancient texts. He got support from the British officials who had also begun to criticise Indian traditions and customs by the early 19th century. Finally, in 1829, the practice of sati was banned.

**Ans: 2.** The movement in favour of widow remarriage spread in different parts of the country by the second half of the 19th century. Veerasalingam Pantulu formed an association for widow remarriage in the Telugu-speaking areas of the Madras Presidency.

Around the same time young intellectuals and reformers in Bombay pledged themselves to work for the same cause. In the north the founder of the Arya Samaj Swami Dayanand Saraswati also supported widow remarriage.

However, the movement did not get much success. The number of widows who actually remarried remained low. Those who remarried were not easily accepted in the society. The conservative people never approved the new law

**Ans: 3.** Tarabai Shindewas a woman who got education at home at Poona. She is better known for publishing a book named Stripurushtulna meaning a comparison between women and men. She, in this book, criticises the social differences between men and women. Pandita Ramabai was a great scholar of Sanskrit. She found Hinduism very oppressive towards women and wrote a book about the pathetic condition of Hindu women belonging to upper caste. She started a widow's home at Poona to provide shelter to widows who had been maltreated by their husband's relatives. Here women were given training to make them self-dependent.

**Ans: 4.** By the second half of the 19th century, people from within the lower castes began to raise voice against caste discrimination. They organised movements against this practice and demanded social equality and justice. The Satnami movement became famous in Central India. It was initiated by Ghasidas, who came from a low caste, worked among the leather workers and organised a movement to improve their social status.

In Eastern Bengal, Haridas Thakur's Matua sect worked among low caste Chandala cultivators. Haridas questioned Brahmanical texts that supported the caste discrimination. Shri Narayana Guru belonged to Ezhavas, a low caste in present-day Kerala. He proclaimed the ideals unity of all people within one sect, a single caste and one god. By organising these movements the leaders coming from low-caste tried to create awareness amongst the lower castes.

**Ans: 5.** E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker belonged to a middle-class family. He had been an ascetic in his early life and had studied Sanskrit scriptures carefully. Afterwards, he became a member of the Congress but quit it when he found that at a feast organised by nationalists, seating arrangements followed caste discrimination, i.e., the lower castes were made to sit at a distance from the upper-castes. He founded Self Respect Movement which inspired untouchables to fight for their dignity. He argued that untouchables were the true upholders of an original Tamil and Dravidian culture which had been subjugated by Brahmans. He felt that all religious authorities saw social divisions and inequality as God-given. Untouchables had to free themselves from all religions to achieve equal social status.

**Ans: 6.** Dr Ambedkar was bom into a Mahar family. As a child he experienced what caste prejudice meant in everyday life. In school he was forced to sit outside the classroom on the ground. He was not even allowed to drink water from taps that upper-caste children used.

**Ans: 7.** E.V. Ramaswamy argued that untouchables were the upholders of an original Tamil and Dravidian culture which had been subjugated by BrahmAnswer: He felt that all

religious authorities saw social divisions and inequality as God-given. Untouchables had to free themselves from all religions in order to achieve social equality.

### Long Answer:

**Ans: 1.** Indian society had been a prey to many evil practices for a long time. Men and women were treated differently. Women were subjected to many restrictions. They were not allowed to go to schools. They were not allowed to choose their husbands. Child-marriage was an established custom in the society. Most children were married off at an early age. Both Hindu and Muslim men could have many more than one wife. In some parts of the country, sati was in practice. Those widows were praised who chose death by burning themselves on the funeral pyre of their husbands. Women's rights to property were also restricted.

One more evil practice that had crippled Indian society was that all people did not enjoy equal status. The upper-caste, consisted of Brahmins and Kshatriyas, availed all privileges. But other than these people were subjected to exploitation. The untouchables, who did menial works, were considered polluting. They were not allowed to enter temples, draw water from the well used by the upper castes. They were seen as inferior human beings.

These evil customs and practices had eclipsed the progress of society. Hence, debates and discussions began to take place from the early 19th century, with the development of new forms of communications. For the first time, books, newspapers, magazines, leaflets and pamphlets were printed. They spread awareness among the common mass.

Social reformers like Raja Rammohun Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, came forward and took initiatives to bring changes in society by abolishing the evil practices one after another.

**Ans: 2.** By the end of the 19th century, Indian women themselves began to work for their upliftment. They began to get higher education in universities. Some of them trained to be doctors, some became teachers. Many women began to write and publish their critical views on the status of women in society. The name of Tarabai Shinde is worth-mentioning here. She got education at home at Poona. She published a book, *Stripurushtulna*, meaning a comparison between men and women. She criticised the social differences between men and women. Another woman, Pandita Ramabai, was a great scholar of Sanskrit.

She criticised Hinduism which was so oppressive towards women. She wrote a book about the miserable lives of upper-caste Hindu women. She established a widow home at Poona to provide shelter to widows who had been ill-treated in their families. From the early 20th century, Muslim women such as the Begums of Bhopal and Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain played an active role in spreading education among Muslim girls. They founded schools for them. Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain fearlessly criticised the conservative ideas. She argued that religious leaders of every faith accorded an inferior



position to women.

The orthodox Hindus and Muslims got alarmed to see all this. Several Hindu nationalists felt that Hindu women were adopting Western ways which would corrupt Hindu culture and erode family values. Orthodox Muslims were equally worried about the impact of these changes. Unaware of all these, women, from the early 20th century, began to form political associations, pressure groups to push through laws for female suffrage and better health care and education for them. Some of them even joined various kinds of nationalist and socialist movements from the 1920s.

**Ans: 3.** The Singh Sabha Movement is a reform organization of the Sikhs, the First Singh Sabha were founded at Amritsar in 1873 and at Lahore in 1879. The Sabhas aimed to rid Sikhism of superstitions, caste distinctions and practices seen by them as non-Sikh. They promoted education among the Sikhs, often combining modern instruction with Sikh teachings.

**Ans: 4.** Ambedkar was born into a Mahar family. As a child he experienced what caste prejudice meant in everyday life. In school he was forced to sit outside the classroom on the ground and was not allowed to drink water from taps that upper caste children used. After finishing school, he got a fellowship to go to the U.S. for higher studies. On his return to India in 1919, he wrote extensively about upper caste power in contemporary society.

In 1927 Ambedkar started a temple entry movement. The movement of temple entry was participated by Mahar caste followers. Brahman priests were outraged when the Dalits used water from the temple tank. Ambedkar led 3 such movements for temple entry between 1927 and 1935. His aim was to make everyone see the power of caste prejudices within the society.



Swotters