

Daily Answer Writing

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Structure :

- Define Indian Renaissance.
- Bengal Renaissance.
- Conclusion.

Context:

- Main features of Indian Renaissance.
- Social reforms.
- Educational reforms.
- Other reforms.

Introduction:

Social and cultural awakenings in India was a result of Indian renaissance that was inspired by the Western concept of reason, equality and liberty. Renaissance meaning revival or rebirth was the great transitional movement of Europe that swept away medieval unprogressive ideas and substituted it with individualism, material emancipation, scepticism, nationalism, a more sound economic system and self-expression.

Indian Renaissance was started under the influence of the western thinkers. Main features of Indian Renaissance were as follows:

- A new way of studying Indian past was brought in.
- Reinterpretation of Indian religious text and rituals was made, which brought irregularities and mal-practices in our religion into light at that time.
- A new movement for socio-religious reforms were started under Raja Ram Mohan Roy and other intellectuals.
- It was influenced by western thinkers.
- Indian Renaissance gave rise to study of English literature thoughts, philosophies and books of history.
- Over political movements it has some influence and later on it was perfectly adopted by political movements.

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Social and Religious Reform Movement :

Social Reform Movement are linked with different ideas including presence of Colonial government, Economic and Social backwardness of society, influence of modern western ideas, rise of intellectual awakening in the middle class and poor position of women in society. British rule in India acted as a catalyst to deep seated social changes. Western culture also influenced the Indian Life and thought in several ways. The most important result of the impact of western culture was the replacement of blind faith in current traditions, beliefs, and conventions by a spirit of rationalism.

Important characteristics of Social Reform Movement included leadership by wide emerging Intellectual middle class. Reform movement started in different parts of India in different period but having considerable similarities. They were link with one region or one caste. It was clear to them that without religious reformation, there cannot be any social reformation.

Raja Rammohan Roy:

The central figure of this cultural awakening was Raja Rammohan Roy. Known as the “father of the Indian Renaissance”, Rammohan Roy was a great patriot, scholar and humanist. He was moved by deep love for the country and worked throughout his life for the social, religious, intellectual and political regeneration of the Indians.

Social Reforms:

In 1814, Rammohan Roy settled in Calcutta and dedicated his life to the cause of social and religious reform. As a social reformer, Rammohan Roy fought relentlessly against social evils like sati, polygamy, child marriage, female infanticide and caste discrimination. He organised a movement against the inhuman custom of sati and helped William Bentinck to pass a law banning the practice (1829).

Henry Vivian Derozio and the young Bengal movement:

The establishment of the Hindu College in 1817 was a major event in the history of Bengal. It played an important role in carrying forward the reformist movement that had already emerged in the province. A radical movement for the reform of Hindu Society, known as the Young Bengal Movement, started in the college.

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The Ramakrishna Mission:

In 1896, Vivekananda founded the Ramakrishna Mission to propagate social welfare. It laid emphasis not on personal salvation but on social good and social service. The Ramakrishna Mission stood for religious and social reform based on the ancient culture of India. Emphasis was put on the essential spirit of Hinduism and not on rituals.

Other reforms:

As more Indians went abroad, they reinterpreted ancient wisdom in modern idioms and likes of Vivekananda, Mrs Arundale, LokmanyaTilak, Sarvarkar, Gandhi, KaniyalalMunshi, Tata, Birla and Bose helped spark renaissance in different fields of art, crafts, dance, music, philosophy, politics, economics, science, literature etc.

Contribution of the reform movements:

Many reformers like Dayanand Saraswati and Vivekananda upheld Indian philosophy and culture. This instilled in Indians a sense of pride and faith in their own culture. Female education was promoted. Schools for girls were set up. Even medical colleges were established for women. This led to the development, though slow, of girls' education. The cultural and ideological struggle taken up by the socio-religious movements helped to build up national consciousness. They, thus, paved the way for the growth of nationalism.

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