



Modern Indian history from about the middle of the eighteenth century until the present- significant events, personalities, issues.

The Socio-Religious reformers of the 19-20th century aimed at modernization rather than westernization. Do you agree? Discuss. (250 words)

Reference: Modern Indian history by Spectrum Publications

Why the question:

The question is from the static portions of GS paper I, part Modern history.

Key Demand of the question:

One is expected to elaborate on the statement and present opinion.

Directive:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer:

Introduction:

Briefly explain about the socio-religious reforms of the 19-20th century.

Body:

Write a line about the difference between modernization and westernization.

Discuss how such socio-religious reforms aimed at modernisation rather than westernization.

Conclude with the positive impacts of the reforms on Indian society.

Conclusion:

Conclude how In the evolution of modern India the reform movements of the 19-20th century have made very significant contributions. They stood for the democratization of society, removal of superstition and abhorrent customs, spread of enlightenment and the development of a rational and modern outlook.

Introduction:

Socio-religious reform movements 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.

From the early 19th century, debates and discussion about social customs and practices took a new character due to the development of new forms of communication. Various reformers like Raja Rammohun Roy, Ishawarchandra Vidyasagar, Swami Dayananda Saraswati persuaded people to give up degraded age-old traditions like Sati, child marriage, polygamy, female infanticide etc. by adopting a new way of life. They were keen to spread knowledge of modernization in the country and bring about greater freedom and equality for women and “lower caste” people.

Body:

Westernization is a process of imitation of culture and values of western countries by non-western countries. Whereas, **Modernization** has a wider connotation. Adopting the modern style or modern ways and ideas of thinking, living, etc is ‘Modernization’. Modernization is a change or modification which offers the promise of the preservation of the past.

19-20th century socio-religious reforms aimed at modernisation rather than westernisation:

- Reformers like **Raja Rammohan Roy, Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Jyotiba Phule, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and Pandita Ramabai** understood that ignorance and backwardness in the society was responsible for hindering its progress and development.