

Name: _____ Date: _____

Women, Caste and Reform

Q1. Give a brief description of movements that were organised by people from within the lower castes against caste discrimination.

Ans. _____

Q2. Why were changes necessary in Indian society?

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Q1. Give a brief description of movements that were organised by people from within the lower castes against caste discrimination.

Ans. Gradually, by the second half of the nineteenth century, people from within the Non-Brahman castes began organising movements against caste discrimination, and demanded social equality and justice. The Satnami movement in Central India was founded by Ghasidas who worked among the leatherworkers and organised a movement to improve their social status. In eastern Bengal, Haridas Thakur's Matua sect worked among Chandala cultivators. Haridas questioned Brahmanical texts that supported the caste system. In what is present-day Kerala, a guru from Ezhava caste, Shri Narayana Guru, proclaimed the ideals of unity for his people. He argued against treating people unequally on the basis of caste differences.

Q2. Why were changes necessary in Indian society?

Ans. Indian society had been a prey to many evil practices for long time. Some were:

- i. Most children were married off at an early age. Both Hindu and Muslim men could marry more than one wife.
- ii. In some parts of the country, widows were praised if they chose death by burning themselves on the funeral pyre of their husbands.
- iii. Women's rights to property were also restricted.
- iv. Besides, most women had virtually no access to education.
- v. In most regions, people were divided along lines of caste. Brahmans and Kshatriyas considered themselves as "upper castes".

The above mention social customs and practices made the changes necessary in Indian society.