

UPSCprep Free Daily Answer Writing Initiative

Subject: GS 1

Syllabus: Modern Indian History

Questions

Q1. The 19th Century is called a period of Indian Renaissance. But this renaissance was an equal product of the efforts of natives and colonial legislations. Discuss. (150 words) 10

Q2. Nehru called the Government of India Act, 1935 as "a machine with strong brakes but no engine". Still, Government of India Act, 1935 lays the foundation for the Indian constitution. Discuss. (150 words) 10

Model Structures

Q1. The 19th Century is called a period of Indian Renaissance. But this renaissance was an equal product of the efforts of natives and colonial legislations. Discuss.

(150 words, 10 marks)

Model Structure

Introduction:

- The advent of English was the ignition for the Renaissance in India. Indians were exposed to scientific thoughts, new discoveries and freethinking, which in turn led to socio intellectual revolution that took place in the nineteenth century in the fields of philosophy, literature, science, politics and social reforms, often known as the Indian Renaissance. *or*
- The 19th century is a critical period in the history of India; it is often referred to as the Period of Renaissance because of, Rise in modern values like Rationalism, Religious Universalism, Humanism and Secularism Revival of Indian classics- The reawakening of

the Indian spirit not only led to a new life in literature but also to a revival of interest in ancient literature and native religion.

Main Body:

Renaissance as an effort of natives:

- **Changes in the social dogmas:** like the emancipation of women in which sati, infanticide, child marriage and widow re-marriage were taken up.
- Reform movements: Movements like Brahma Samaj and Prarthana Samaj and leaders like Swami Vivekananda and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar called to set aside the authority of religion and evaluate truth in any religion by the criteria of logic, reason or science.
- Revivalist movements: They were influenced by the rich cultural heritage of India brought to light by Western scholars and found that it was even superior to Western culture.
- Role of the Indian press, for ex: Newspapers like SambadKaumudi, Darpan etc., editorialised against Sati, Polytheism, and the Promotion of women's education.
- Education as a means of liberation- this can be seen in the rise of colleges like Hindu College, Aligarh Muslim University, Deoband schools etc.
- Changing the orthodoxy, many leaders like Jyotiba Phule, Gopal Hari Deshmukh, K.T. Telang, B.M. Malabari, etc., had a two-point agenda—fight for the betterment of the status of women in society and fight to remove disabilities arising out of untouchability.

Renaissance as an Effort of Colonial Legislation:

- **Abolition of Sati:** Regulation XVII of the Government, 1829, the custom of sati was declared illegal and punishable by the Criminal Courts.
- The Widow Marriage Act of 1856 was passed, legalising widow marriage and giving status legitimacy to the children of the married widows.
- Abolition of Slavery: The slave trade and keeping slaves or trafficking in them became an offence under the Indian Penal Code, enacted in 1860

- Progressive women's rights: The Age of Consent Bill of 1891 aimed to increase the minimum age of consent for intercourse to 12 years for all girls in the context of rampant child marriages and marital rapes of young girls.
- Also, Women's education was given high prominence; this can be seen in steps like the Deccan Education Society, Bethune School, Seva Sadan in Pune, etc.

Conclusion:

- These movements, both by the natives and the colonial masters, emphasised the human intellect's capacity to think and reason, which in turn helped in building a new society in India.

Q2. Nehru called the Government of India Act, 1935 as "a machine with strong brakes but no engine". Still, Government of India Act, 1935 lays the foundation for the Indian constitution. Discuss. (150 words, 10 marks)

Model Structure

Introduction :

- The Government of India Act 1935 was an important act in the history of India. As a result of **Simon commission** and result of various previous acts, the 1935 act was laid .

Main Body:

It laid foundation to Indian Constitution in following ways:

- It provided for the establishment of an **All India federation** consisting of provinces and princely states as units. Thus, resulting in today's Union of India .
- It **divided the powers** between the centre and units in terms of **three lists- Federal list, provincial list** and the **concurrent list**. Residuary powers were given to the Viceroy. Today, the residuary powers lay with the centre. But the 3 lists continue.

- It abolished dyarchy in the provinces and introduced ‘**provincial autonomy**’ in its place. The states today are autonomous under federal structure.
- The act introduced **responsible government** in provinces, that is, the governor was required to act with the advice of ministers responsible to the provincial legislature. The responsible government continued with parliamentary form of government and no confidence motion.
- **Bicameralism** was introduced in six provinces- Bengal, Bombay Madras, Bihar, Assam and the United Provinces. Which continues at centre and few states.
- **Council of India** which was established as per the 1858 act was abolished. The secretary of state was instead provided with a team of advisors.
- The act provided for setting up the **Federal Public Service Commission, Provincial Public Service Commission, Joint Public Service Commission, Reserve Bank of India**. Which are constitutional and statutory bodies today.
- **Setting up of a Federal court:**
 - A Federal court was also envisaged to be set up under this act so the provisions of the act could be interpreted in case of any disputes.
 - The supreme court of India, today functions as the federal court.

However, some of its provisions which did not continue in new constitution of independent India:

- It provided for the adoption of a **dyarchy** at the centre. But, this provision did not come into effect at all.
- **Separate electorates** were further extended to depressed classes, women and labour.
- **Preamble, Fundamental rights** etc. were introduced later

Conclusion:

- The powers of the Legislature were confined and restricted. The Act protected British vested interests, discouraging the emergence of national unity, rather encouraging separation and communalism. All nationalists, including Nehru and Jinnah, condemned the Act.

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