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Anti-Caste Movements **(Colonial India)**

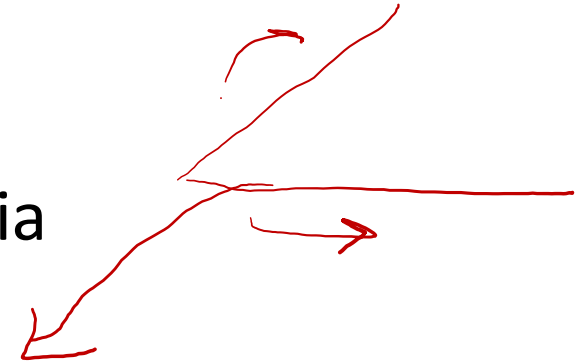
Colonialism and nationalism in
India(CNI)

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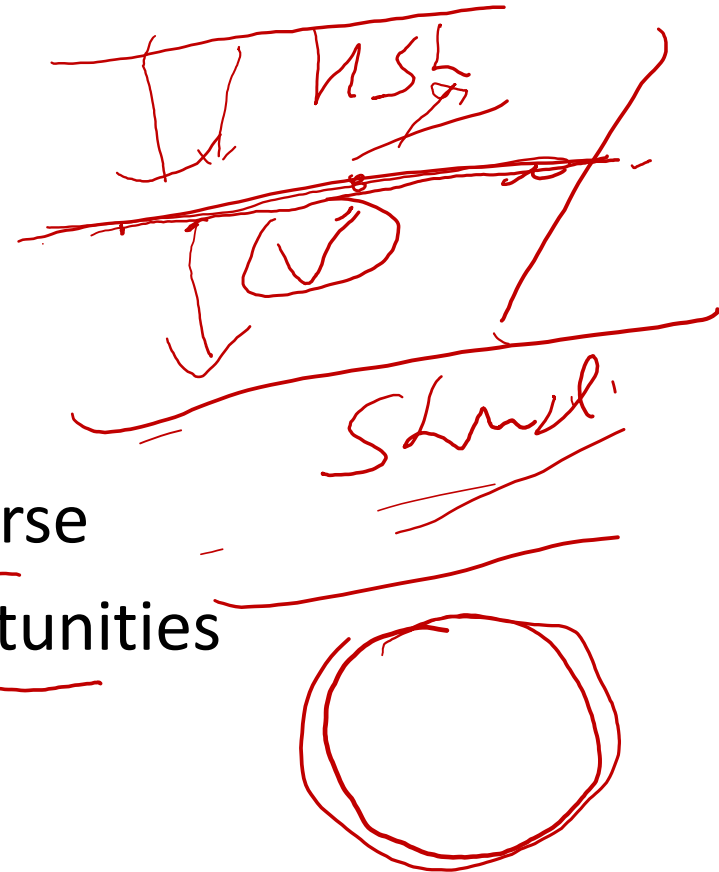
Structure of the video lecture

- The caste system features unique features
- Two streams of anti caste movement in colonial India
- Anti Brahmanical movement and their features
- Prominent anti-Brahmanical movements in colonial India
- Impacts and Legacy of anti-caste and anti-Brahmanical movements



Features of the Caste System

- Antiquity
 - Considered even older than Vedas
- Graded Hierarchy →
- Ascriptive(birth based) Social Status
- Endogamy in Marriage, Dining, Social Intercourse
- Determinant of Vocation and Economic opportunities
- Notion of Purity & Impurity
- Religious Sanctions and sanctity



The Role of the colonial rule in unleashing the agencies for anti-caste Movements

- Liberal egalitarian and utilitarian doctrine
- Secular and scientific education system
- Imposition of rule of law, Codification of laws, legal equality
- Modern transport, urbanisation, industrialization
- Political representation and franchise
- Opportunities for new vocations and social mobility



Anti-Caste Movement: Two Streams

- **As part of socio-religious reform movement- By the Outsiders**

- By reputed social reformers of generally upper caste Hindu
- liberal egalitarianism, Not radical, - Within the paradigm of Brahminical Hinduism
- Brahmo Samaj (Raja Ram Mohan Roy), Prarthna Samaj (Atmaram Pandurang), Ramkrishna Mission (Vivekananda), Arya Samaj (Dayananda Saraswati) Gandhi's Untouchability abolition movements (Harijan Sevak Sangh)

- **Anti-Brahminical Movements—By the Insiders**

- By path breaking social reformers from Dalit & lower castes
- Radical- not only against the caste system but critical & against Brahminical Hinduism
- Satyashodhak Samaj (Jyotiba Phule), Self-Respect Movement (Periyar), Dalit & backward caste Movement (Ambedkar), Namasudra Movement (Matua, Bengal), Adi-Andhra Movement (Telugu Region), Adi-Hindu in Uttar Pradesh and Adi-Dharm in Punjab, Adi Dravidas movement in Tamil Nadu, Shri Narayan Dharma Paripalan (SNDP) movement in Kerala



Key Features and Demands of anti-Brahminical movement

- **Counter Hegemonic:**

- Challenged the cultural hegemony of Brahmins and upper caste Hindus
- Rejected authenticity of Vedas, considered Aryans as invaders, Brahminical Scriptures as false narratives and pre-Aryan people in India as the carrier of original Indian culture and civilization

- **Critical of Brahmanical Hinduism:** questioned religious texts and practices that justified caste hierarchy and Brahmanical Supremacy

- **Social Equality:** Leaders promoted inter-dining, inter-caste marriage, and equal social rights.

- **Fought caste discrimination:** temple entry, right to access water from public tanks, no discrimination in education, employment, public offices

- **Self respect** and empowerment: instilled the dignity and self respect in Dalits, untouchables and lower castes and empowered them socially and politically



Prominent anti Brahmanical movements in colonial India

- Satya Shodak Samaj by Jyotiba Phule
- Dravida Kazhagam and Self-Respect Movement by EV Ramaswamy Naicker Periyar
- Dalit and Anti-Caste Movement by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar
- The Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana (SNDP) movement by Shri Narayana Guru
- Adi-Andhra Movement (Telugu Region), Adi-Hindu in Uttar Pradesh and Adi-Dharm in Punjab, Adi Dravidas movement in Tamil Nadu



Jyotirao Phule and the Anti-Caste Movement in Maharashtra-1/2

- Jyotirao Phule (1827-1890), himself of a lower-caste, was one of the earliest and most prominent leaders in the anti-caste movement in colonial India.
- **Ideology:** Ant-Brahminical-- Brahminical Hinduism is perverted Form of Hinduism; Ant-Casteism-Caste system Oppressive discriminatory and against social equality
- Contributions:
 - **Satyashodhak Samaj**(Truth-Seekers' Society): He founded it in 1873
 - Expose the false beliefs and practices that justified caste discrimination, especially those related to religious orthodoxy and the dominance of Brahminical Hinduism.
 - Promote education for women and lower castes.
 - Encourage social reforms like inter-caste marriages and the abolition of untouchability
 - **Education for Women and Lower caste**
 - In 1848, Phule and his wife **Savitri Bai Phule**, opened the first school for girls in Pune
 - In 1873, he established a school for the Dalits in Pune
 - education should be rooted in reason, science, and rational thought
 - Challenged Brahminical Control of Education



Jyotirao Phule and the Anti-Caste Movement in Maharashtra-2/2

- His Books and creations
- **Gulamgiri (1873)**
 - Critique of Brahminical Hinduism and the Caste System
 - caste system was a creation of the Brahmins to maintain their social, cultural and economic power over the lower castes
 - Prevailing caste system had no basis in the original teachings of Hinduism
- Shetkaryacha Asud(1881) – ‘The Farmer's Whipcord’
 - critiques the exploitation and suffering of peasants, especially the lower castes, under the oppressive economic system that dominated colonial India
 - Intersection of caste discrimination, oppression and economic exclusion of caste system and British Land Revenue System
 - Lower caste peasants facing triple whammy- Caste discrimination, oppression by landlords/Zamindars and oppressive land revenue system
 - called for a radical overhaul of the existing social and economic structures
 - urged farmers to become politically aware and actively engage in the struggle for their rights



Periyar's Anti-Caste and Anti-Brahminical Movement-1/2

- Born in 1879 in Erode, which was then part of the Coimbatore district of the Madras Presidency, in a Kannada Baliya merchant family
- Core Ideology: social justice, abolition of caste-system, Anti-Brahminism, dignity of the lower castes
- Key Goals of Periyar's **Dravidian Movement**
 - abolition of caste-system
 - Eradication of caste-based discrimination
 - Eliminating Brahminical Privileges
 - Promotion of Women's Rights
 - combined anti-Brahminical ideology with rationalism, feminism, and linguistic & regional pride



Periyar's Anti-Caste and Anti-Brahminical Movement-2/2

- **Contributions:**

- **Self-Respect Movement:**

- Founded in 1925 in Madurai, Tamil Nadu

- **Aims:**

- Independence from Brahminical domination.
- Promotion of self-respect for lower castes.
- **Social reforms**, especially in terms of **education** and **legal rights** for the marginalized.

- **Protest Against Untouchability**

- Public protests against untouchability practices.
- Fought for public spaces like temples, roads, and wells for lower castes.

- **Temple Entry Movements**

- Advocated for the **right of lower castes** to enter Hindu temples
- Vaikom Satyagraha (1924–1925)
 - agitation for access of 'Dalits' and Lower castes to the prohibited public environs of the Vaikom Temple in the Kingdom of Travancore

Dalit and Anti-Caste Movement by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar-1/3

- Born in 1891 at Mhow in MP, by caste 'Mahar' (Dalit)
- Ideology:
 - Anti-Caste crusade- Annihilation of caste system
 - Caste system- biggest ailment of Indian Society; it makes political reform meaningless and economic reforms almost impossible.
 - Hindu Sashtra provide legitimacy and sustenance to caste system
- Contributions:
- Public protests & Movements
 - **The Mahad or Chowdar tank Satyagraha (1927):** to allow untouchables to use water in a public tank in Mahad
 - Public Burning of **ManuSmriti**
 - **The Kalaram Temple Entry Movement (1930):** for Dalits' right to enter the Kalaram temple in Nasik
 - **Mahad** conference (1927)-- to raise awareness about the civil rights of Dalits
 - Struggle for Separate Electorate for Dalits , The Poona Pact:1932
 - 22 Vows-1956- Nagpur oath by thousands of his Dalit Supporters while converting to Buddhism



Dalit and Anti-Caste Movement by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar-2/3

- Organisation for Rights of Dalit & oppressed castes
 - Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha --1924
 - Samata Sainik Dal --1924
 - Samaj Samata Sangh--1927
 - Depressed Classes Education Society --1928
 - Scheduled Castes Federation--1942
- Journals, News Papers & Magazines
 - Bahishkrit Bharat (Marathi Fortnightly)- 1927
 - Mook Nayak (Marathi-language newspaper)- 1920
 - Janata (weekly Magazine)--1930
 - Samata (News Paper)--1929



Dalit and Anti-Caste Movement by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar-3/3

- Books & Creations
 - Castes in India
 - Annihilation of caste
 - Who Were the Shudras?
 - The Untouchables
- The Constitution of India– Modern Manu
 - Drafted a liberal, egalitarian Constitution- removed untouchability, social equality, Social Justice, no caste-discrimination
 - Constitutionalism and Constitutional Morality



The Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana (SNDP) movement by Shri Narayana Guru

- Sree Narayana Guru: Born: 1856 in the Ezhava community (Kerala).
- Ideology: **equality, rationalism, and universal brotherhood**
- In **1903**, **Sree Narayana Guru** founded the **Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam (SNDP)**
- **Aims**
 - to unite the **lower castes** and encourage **self-respect, education**, and social participation.
 - to promote **social equality** and empower the **Ezhava** community
- Key Principles of SNDP Movement
- one caste, one religion, one god
- Social Equality, Opposition to Caste-based discrimination, Spiritual Unity, Promotion of Self-Respect, **allow access to temples** for lower castes



Anti-Brahminical movement : Impact and Legacy

- Political
 - Dalit and backward Caste politics
 - Reservation policies in education, employment, political representation
 - Strong regional political movements, especially in South India
- Social
 - Increased social mobility among lower castes
 - Increase in educational, employment, and political opportunities among lower castes
 - Weakening of traditional caste restrictions
- Cultural
 - Development of alternative cultural narratives—sub-alternism
 - Emergence of Dalit literature and art
 - Recognition of non-Brahminical cultural traditions



Sum Up

- Imposition of an alien British rule based on liberal doctrine unleashed the agencies of social reformers to challenge the deep entrenched caste system and subjection of Dalits and lower castes within that
- ~~Anti~~- caste movements in colonial India can be categorised on the basis of insider outsider
- First were the liberal egalitarian movements by the renowned social reformers belonging to upper caste Hindus, The second was radical movements by social reformers from the Dalit and lower castes
- Key Features of anti-Brahminical movements- Counter Hegemonic, Critical of Brahmanical Hinduism, Social Equality, Fought caste discrimination, Self respect and empowerment
- Anti Brahmanical movements have a lasting socio-political impacts



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