

**Class 12 Sociology Half-Yearly
Special Marathon PPT:**

CULTURAL CHANGE

CULTURAL CHANGE NOTES

Cultural Change

Cultural change means the change in beliefs, values, customs, traditions, lifestyles, and practices of people over time. It shows how society adapts to new ideas, influences, and conditions.

Examples

- Adoption of western dress, food, and music in India.
- Spread of education changing traditional roles of caste and gender.
- Acceptance of secular values in public life.

Two Developments to Focus On

❑ **Changes in Social Structure** → Women's status, caste relations, role of education, and new opportunities.

❑ **Cultural Factors** → Secularism, westernization, modernization, and globalization.

Social Reform and Women in the 19th and Early 20th Century

Context

- In colonial India, many social changes took place.
- Pre-colonial India had reform attempts as well, but the 19th-century reforms were different.
- They were in a modern context and involved a mix of ideas.
- These reforms were also broader in outlook, though sometimes less immediately visible.

Key Reformers and Contributions (Part 1)



Raja Ram Mohan Roy

Father of Indian Renaissance. Criticised social evils like sati. Supported widow remarriage, women's education, and equality. Believed in reason, natural rights, and humanitarian principles.



M.G. Ranade

Combined ancient thought with modern humanitarian ideas. Advocated widow remarriage and women's education.



Sir Syed Ahmed Khan

Social reformer and educationist. Promoted modern education among Muslims, especially through the Aligarh Movement. Encouraged scientific outlook and women's education.

Key Reformers and Contributions (Part 2)

Jyotiba Phule and Savitribai Phule

Pioneers of women's education in Maharashtra. Worked against caste discrimination and gender inequality.

Kandukuri Veeresalingam

Social reformer from Andhra Pradesh. Strong advocate of widow remarriage and women's education. Opposed child marriage and supported modern education.

Raja Ravi Varma

Famous artist who used painting to depict women in new, dignified roles.

Pandita Ramabai

Early champion of women's rights. Established institutions for widows and destitute women.

Dayanand Saraswati

Argued for reforms based on Vedic teachings. Opposed child marriage, supported widow remarriage.

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar

Used Shastras to defend widow remarriage. Worked for women's education and upliftment.

According to sociologist Satish Sabharwal

According to sociologist Satish Sabharwal, social and cultural change in colonial India can be understood through three main aspects:

1. Modes of Communication

New technologies: printing press, telegraph, railways, medical knowledge.

Spread of new ideas through newspapers, books, lectures.

Movement of people and exchange of ideas (social reform, health, education).

2. Forms of Organization

Rise of modern **social organizations:** Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj, Prarthana Samaj, Aligarh Movement.

Public debates and discussions on religion, society, and reform.

Greater use of rational arguments and modern thinking in social issues.

3. Nature of Ideas

Flow of **new ideas** and information about equality, rights, and modern knowledge.

Special focus on **education** → women's education, growth of new schools, publication of books and journals.

Lectures, writings, and reformist literature shaped public opinion.

👉 In short: Satish Sabharwal highlights that colonial India saw new communication, new organizations, and new ideas, all of which gave a modern context to social and cultural reform.

Different Kinds of Social Change: Sanskritization

Sanskritization is the process by which people try to improve their social status by adopting the names, rituals, customs, and practices of culturally higher-placed groups (mainly upper castes).

Impact

Very widespread in Indian society.

Present both within Hinduism and outside it.

Known as Desanskritisation when adopted by groups not originally part of Hindu society.

Shows regional variations based on local traditions.

Criticisms of Sanskritization

Exaggerates social mobility → makes it appear easier than it really is.

Suggests that the desire to imitate upper castes is natural and desirable.

Results in adoption of upper-caste rites and rituals, while ignoring local traditions.

Justifies the idea of purity and pollution, instead of questioning caste hierarchy.

Leads to the erosion of Dalit culture → decentralization of their unique traditions.

Nuances of Sanskritization: A Multi-Perspective View

2

“ Views of M.N. Srinivas

He explained that Sanskritization led to the spread of the “Great Tradition of Hinduism” → meaning, local practices merged into broader Hindu cultural practices, creating a shared religious tradition.



Example: Kumude Pavade's (Autobiography)

A Dalit woman recounts how she became a Sanskrit teacher. Her story shows that even after upward mobility, it was impossible to escape caste identity completely.



Present Trends (Desanskritisation)

In many regions today, Dalits and backward communities are rejecting Sanskritization. Instead, they are promoting their own cultures, traditions, and identities, resisting imitation of upper castes.

Different Kinds of Social Change: Westernization

Westernization refers to the changes in Indian society and culture as a result of about 150 years of British rule. The term is used to describe changes at different levels: **institutions, ideology, and policy.**

1. Emergence of Westernized Subcultural Patterns

New ways of living, dressing, education, and lifestyle influenced by the West. Growth of a class of Indians who combined Indian and Western values.

2. Emergence of New Ideas and Values

Spread of ideas like democracy, equality, liberalism, rationality, and secularism. Impact on literature, science, and philosophy.

3. Copying of Behaviour

Changes in family life, language use, clothing, dining, and social etiquette. Indians started mixing Western habits with traditional practices.

Impact of Westernization

Indian Art and Literature: Introduction of new styles in painting, prose, and poetry.

Culture and Lifestyle: Influence seen in food, dress, entertainment, and education.

Cultural Conflicts: Generational differences, tension between tradition and modernity.

Raja Ravi Varma's Paintings: Illustrate how family structures and roles shifted, showing a blend of Western and Indian elements.

Srinivas's Observation



Line between the two often unclear; even non-Hindus sometimes became Westernized instead of Sanskritized.

Modernization & Secularization: Parallel Processes of Social Change

Modernization

1. Modernization: Introduction of modern ideas: rational and scientific thinking, individuality, achievement by choice (not by birth). Emphasis on mastery of life rather than relying on fate or destiny. Promotes universal values and cosmopolitan outlook.

In India:

Shift from faith-based to reason-based explanations. Change in marriage, family, and occupational practices. Old customs questioned; new opportunities opened.

Secularization

Process where religion declines in influence over public and political life. Separation of religion from governance and decision-making. Religion and modernity can coexist → both remain active in society.

Secularization of Caste

Religious roots of caste have weakened over time. Caste less dominant in ritual/religious life but still visible in politics, marriage, and social identity. Shows a blend of old and new ideas → caste continues, but in a secular, social, and political form.

👉 **In short:** Modernization brought rational and scientific outlook, secularization reduced religion's hold on public life, and caste transformed from religious to socio-political identity.

Marathon MCQs (Part 1)

1.

Who is known as the Father of Indian Renaissance?

A. M.G. Ranade

B. Raja Ram Mohan Roy

C. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan

D. Dayanand Saraswati

2.

According to Satish Sabharwal, which of the following is one of the three main aspects of social and cultural change in colonial India?

A. Modes of Communication

B. Industrial Revolution

C. Political Parties

D. Economic Planning

3.

Sanskritization refers to the process of adopting the practices of:

A. Western societies

B. Culturally higher-placed groups

C. Tribal communities

D. Colonial rulers

Marathon MCQs (Part 2)

4.

Who gave the concept of Sanskritization?

A. Satish Sabharwal

B. Raja Ram Mohan Roy

C. M.N. Srinivas

D. M.G. Ranade

5.

Westernization in India is associated with changes resulting from approximately:

A. 50 years of British rule

B. 100 years of British rule

C. 150 years of British rule

D. 200 years of British rule

6.

Which process refers to the decline of religion's influence over public and political life?

A. Sanskritization

B. Westernization

C. Modernization

D. Secularization

ANSWERS — MCQs

1. B. Raja Ram Mohan Roy
2. A. Modes of Communication
3. B. Culturally higher-placed groups
4. C. M.N. Srinivas
5. C. 150 years of British rule
6. D. Secularization

LONG-ANSWER QUESTIONS (1-3)

1. Explain the meaning of cultural change and discuss its major examples in Indian society.

Cultural change means the change in beliefs, values, customs, traditions, lifestyles, and practices of people over time. It shows how society adapts to new ideas, influences, and conditions. Examples include adoption of western dress, food, and music; spread of education changing traditional roles of caste and gender; and acceptance of secular values in public life.

2. Discuss the major contributions of social reformers such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy, M.G. Ranade, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Jyotiba Phule, Savitribai Phule, and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy criticised social evils like sati and supported widow remarriage, women's education, and equality. M.G. Ranade combined ancient thought with modern humanitarian ideas and advocated widow remarriage and women's education. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan promoted modern education among Muslims through the Aligarh Movement and encouraged a scientific outlook. Jyotiba Phule and Savitribai Phule were pioneers of women's education in Maharashtra and worked against caste discrimination and gender inequality. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar used Shastras to defend widow remarriage and worked for women's education and upliftment.

3. According to Satish Sabharwal, explain the three main aspects through which social and cultural change in colonial India can be understood.

According to Satish Sabharwal, social and cultural change in colonial India can be understood through three aspects: Modes of Communication, Forms of Organization, and Nature of Ideas. New technologies such as the printing press, telegraph and railways helped spread ideas. Modern organizations such as Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj, Prarthana Samaj and the Aligarh Movement encouraged public debates and reform. New ideas about equality, rights, modern knowledge and education also developed through schools, books, journals, lectures and reformist literature.

LONG-ANSWER QUESTIONS (4-6)

4. What is Sanskritization? Explain its impact and discuss the major criticisms of Sanskritization.

Sanskritization is the process by which people try to improve their social status by adopting the names, rituals, customs, and practices of culturally higher-placed groups, mainly upper castes. It was widespread in Indian society and showed regional variations. However, it has been criticised because it exaggerates social mobility, encourages imitation of upper castes, promotes upper-caste rites and rituals, justifies ideas of purity and pollution, and can lead to the erosion of Dalit culture. M.N. Srinivas explained its connection with the spread of the "Great Tradition of Hinduism."

5. Explain Westernization and discuss its major aspects and impacts on Indian society and

6. Explain Westernization and discuss its major aspects and impacts on Indian society and culture.

Westernization refers to changes in Indian society and culture as a result of about 150 years of British rule. It operated at different levels including institutions, ideology and policy. Its aspects included the emergence of Westernized subcultural patterns, new ideas and values, and copying of behaviour. It influenced Indian art and literature, food, dress, entertainment, education, family life and social etiquette. It also created cultural conflicts involving generational differences and tensions between tradition and modernity.

6. Differentiate between modernization and secularization. Explain how secularization has affected the caste system in India.

Modernization involves the introduction of modern ideas such as rational and scientific thinking, individuality, achievement by choice, universal values and a cosmopolitan outlook. Secularization refers to the decline of religion's influence over public and political life and the separation of religion from governance and decision-making. In India, secularization of caste has weakened its religious roots. Although caste remains visible in politics, marriage and social identity, it has increasingly taken a secular, social and political form.