

Unit - 10

Social Transformation in Tamil Nadu



Learning Objectives

To acquaint ourselves with

- To acquire knowledge about the social transformation of modern Tamil Nadu
- To know the different social reform movements in Tamil Nadu
- To understand the ideas of the social reformers



Introduction

Europeans established their political power over Indian subcontinent in the latter half of the eighteenth century. While they were concerned with annexing India, by the beginning of the nineteenth century they were reordering Indian society. New revenue settlements were made. Influenced by British Utilitarian ideas and evangelicals they also tried to impose their cultural superiority over the Indian people.

This caused a reaction among the Indians. During the nineteenth century, educated Indians from different parts of the country began to feel the humiliation and responded by seeking their socio-cultural identity from their past. However, they understood some merits in the colonial arguments and were ready to reform. It resulted in the social and religious reform movements in modern India. This particular historical development is also identified as the Indian renaissance.

Renaissance is an ideological and cultural phenomenon. It is closely tied to modernity,

rationalism and the progressive movement of the society. Critical thinking is at its root. This ideology of humanism stimulated creative energy in all spheres of social life and knowledge such as language, literature, philosophy, music, painting, architecture, etc.

10.1 Tamil Renaissance

The cultural hegemony of colonialism and the rise of humanism brought several changes in the socio-cultural life of the Indian subcontinent. Modern Tamil Nadu too experienced such a historical transition. Tamil language and culture played a significant role in their identity construction. The introduction of printing press, linguistic research on Dravidian languages, etc... underpinned the process of Tamil renaissance. Although religious literature was taken up predominantly for publication in the early years after the advent of printing technology, things began to change gradually. Works that can be described as secular were taken up for publishing.