



Contribution Of Arya Samaj In Women Education

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Abstract

The Arya Samaj aimed to promote the reform and purification of Hinduism by emphasizing the importance of the vedas as the ultimate source of religious authority. The Arya Samaj was founded by Swami Dayanand, who was born in 1824 under the British occupation of India. Swami Dayananda Saraswati rejected many practices and beliefs that he considered to be later corruptions of Hinduism, such as idol worship, caste discrimination, and certain rituals. This policy's primary goal was to dehumanize and de-culture those with English educational backgrounds. The most significant issues at the time stemmed from colonial persecution of India by the British, as well as a variety of other injustices.

This paper aims to explore the genesis of Arya Samaj and its rules and regulations. It also illustrates the contribution of the Arya Samaj in the Indian freedom struggle and its negotiation with various political and social movement. This paper argues that Arya Samaj emphases on the various social issues based on caste based discrimination and religious conversions.

Keywords: Arya Samaj, Caste discrimination, Religious conversion, Vedic Culture.

Introduction

The Arya Samaj was founded by Swami Dayanand, who was born in 1824 under the British occupation of India. The Brahmin father and mother of Dayanand. At the age of five, he began his education, and in his eighth year, he received the sacred thread. When Dayanand was ordered to observe the Shivaratri fast at the age of 14, this is when his religious views began to change. Dayanand went to a temple with his father to worship and recite mantras. Dayanand saw as a mosque scaled the Shiva statue and then started devouring the gifts. Dayanand's desire for religion was sparked by this. He came to the realization that the idol itself could not be the god. It was a time when communication and transportation options were very limited. Good newspapers and printing presses were few. The British authorities first feared that modern education and the press would foster a climate conducive to

sedition. To operate the British government in India during that time, the British adopted the concept of mass manufacturing English-educated clerks at a low cost.

This policy's primary goal was to dehumanize and de-culture those with English educational backgrounds. The most significant issues at the time stemmed from colonial persecution of India by the British, as well as a variety of other injustices. The fear of widespread conversion of Indians to Christianity, the untouchability practice that reduces Shudras to a subhuman life, the poor position of women, the purdah system, child marriage, illiteracy, and also the most regrettable Sati-system were among them. Dayanand became anxious and restless due to these issues. Further, the policy to turn India into an agricultural colony of industrialized England resulted in the issue of the rising pauperization of the populace.

India was meant to be the only source of raw resources for British businesses as well as the captive market for manufactured British goods. India's antiquated culture, superstitions, and vast range of sects, gurus, and subfaiths, all of which competed with one another, made this possible. Not to mention, Brahmin priest dominance made it difficult to accept other movements like Bhakti in the first place due to their repugnance. Dayanand felt forced to act after being smacked square in the face by the onslaught of problems. To truly understand the origins of the Arya Samaj, we must mentally go to the time when colonialism was at its height.

For more than 10 centuries, outsiders ruled over India. Such a protracted period of dominance taxed India's spirit and diminished her. With the exception of a few bright spots like the development of the Marathas, Peshwas, and Rajputs in the south and the rise of the Chalukyas, Cholas, and Maharaja Ranjeet Singh in the Punjab, this whole time was marked by decadence and anemic activity. Indians become extremely dependent due to foreign control. The final say on all affairs, including rituals and traditions, belonged to the Brahmin priests. Without their input, the householder was unable to take any action

Hindus who shied away from touching millions of their Shudra brethren out of concern about filth were considered untouchable. They were required to take a purifying bath if they did. It was up for debate whether to have dinner with them. Numerous sects and subsects, each with its own Guru and primary text, made up the Hindu world. They did not use inquiry or questioning; rather, they accepted as true whatever was revealed to them in their holy texts and explained by their Guru. Although the scriptures were considered sacred, any astute pandit might add his own addition to further his own group's vested interests or special privileges in the name of the "Rishi" who was the original author. Even though they were limited in number, these interpolations changed the original text's meaning and made it impossible to understand the writings. Swami Dayanand aimed to bring all Hindus together under the Vedic banner. He believed that interpolations were not feasible in regards to the Vedas.

Genesis of Arya Samaj

When Swami Dayanand visited Bombay in 1875, he made a significant and far-reaching decision. This choice impacted the "Arya Samaj"'s founding. This organization was established to firmly plant his message and bring transformation to north India. It afterwards had a significant influence on the growth of Hinduism and Indian nationalism.

Dayanand has been considering creating an organization for long time. He had previously made multiple attempts to establish a society. Both attempts—one in Amah in 1872 and another in Banaras in 1874—were unsuccessful. He founded the Arya Samaj in Rajkot on January 16, 1875, but it was not successful. He attempted to establish another Arya Samaj in Ahmedabad in January 1875, but this also failed. However, he founded the Arya Samaj in Bombay on April 10, 1875.

It was a huge success. A number of elements came together in Bombay to create the ideal environment for his resumed efforts to advance the Arya Samaj. Additionally, it might be argued that Dayanand had improved his organizational planning skills since the early days. His perspectives on reform were now completely developed. In his work, *The Satyarth Prakash*, he introduces his educational philosophy. He emphasizes that it is the responsibility of parents to raise morally upright and educated children. He suggested that children start learning Sanskrit and Hindi at age five, along with other foreign languages.

His formula consisted of three languages. He was also in favor of parents raising their kids with appropriate discipline and socialization. Dayanand supported intensive education beginning at age 8 for both boys and girls, but he opposed co-ed schools.

Bhramakharya is a requirement for all students. However, Dayanand advocated for gender equality via education. He fiercely opposed child marriage and advocated for males and girls to get married at ages 16 and 25, respectively. One of Dayanand's most significant and uncommon actions was his promise to "reclaim" Hindus who had converted to other religions, such as Islam, Christianity, and so forth. This was frequently carried out in large groups at a purifying ceremony known as the "Suddhi" rite. Arya Samaj's founding prompts a number of significant queries. How did Dayanand envision himself serving in the Samaj and the Samaj's place in society? Who were the individuals interested in joining this organization, and what motivated them? What type of organization (Arya Samaj) arose and what were its models? We shall now turn to these queries.

One may argue that Dayanand wished to unite all Hindus who shared his commitment to religious and social changes as well as his belief that Vedic religion needed to be revived in order to effect change in Hinduism. These people would be more successful in assisting one another and influencing the entire society if they were organized as a body. To spread his views, Swami Dayanand had no interest in assembling a group of adherents. He believed that

the people themselves had to initiate reform. The people have a responsibility to strive for both the betterment of society and of themselves personally. Dayanand would not be the people's leader, but he would always be accessible to them for advise via his publications or in person. He refused to become the Guru of any disciples, not even of just one, since he was aware of the limitations of his own understanding.

On the basis of a number of his utterances, we may draw the conclusion that Dayanand never saw his role in the Samaj as one of dominance. It was not his intention for the Samaj to develop into the exclusive haven of a small group of people; rather, he wanted it to be a large, inclusive organization that could bring all decent Hindus together around the Vedas, the central text of their faith. With the Samaj's expansion in following years, Dayanand's core sentiments about it steadily got stronger.

Dayanand spent much of his time preaching, teaching, producing books, and founding Arya Samajis around India, therefore the meeting and debates that resulted in the Samaj's founding did not consume much of his time. The public lecture had evolved into his primary method of instruction. He had primarily focused on the positive aspects of his message, including the Aryan people's history, Vedic revelation, the teachings of God and the soul, ethics, and the advancement of the racial division. He had always been apprehensive about interfering with the flow of his lectures or holding lengthy Q&A sessions following them.

Arya Samaj regulations

The Bombay Arya Samaj was founded on 28 norms that include organizational, social, religious, and socioeconomic issues. These are a few of the rules: For the benefit of everyone, the Arya Samaj is essential. Every province must have a main Samaj with as many branches as feasible. The Sam Veda Mantra will be chanted during the Samaj's weekly gathering once a week. There may be sermons and hymns of adoration for God played to background music. The Samaj must establish Arya schools separately for boys and girls, have a library of Sanskrit and Hindi books, keep accounting (members must contribute 1% of their profits), publish a periodical, and hire exclusively women to work in the girl's school. Educated folks would be dispatched to different locations to proclaim the truth. Members ought to value one another as much as oneself. All rituals, like as weddings and burials, must be carried out in accordance with the Vedas. Any dishonest or vicious member may be expelled, but not on the basis of partisanship or prejudice. An executive would be present in addition to the President and Secretary. The best work would be acknowledged and rewarded.

The Samaj would work for both a spiritual and material restoration of the nation. An Arya Samajist would be given advantage while applying for jobs in Arya Samaj-related institutions. The Arya Samaj should receive any donations given at the time of marriage. It was a fundamental theological principle that the Vedas were ultimate and had inherent authority, whereas other works based on the teachings of the Rishis were only secondarily

authoritative. We are to adore the formless God. The 28 regulations are comprehensive and in-depth; however, they were many and impossible to memorize. They were therefore reduced to 10 at Lahore. The foundation of Arya Samaj was set in Lahore on June 24, 1877, making it a significant day in the organization's history. This was not a Bombay Arya Samaj affiliate.

Its history was changed by the Lahore Samaj, which was essentially a reworking of the previous Sarnaj. For instance, the 28 (niyamas) regulations recognized in Bombay were meticulously reduced, reworded, and explained to a manageable "Ten Principles". The Arya Samaj appeared to have a new constitution. About 100 people made up the Lahore Arya Samaj's original membership. By the end of July, this amount had increased to roughly 500.

On July 24, 1877, the 10 regulations were approved. These are the core beliefs of the Arya Samaj, to which all Aryas are obliged to adhere. The first two speak about God, while the third speaks of the Vedas. The foundations of Arya Samaj are God and the Vedas. The remaining ones serve as a manual for moral behavior. The following are the 10 recommendations: i) God is the foundation (source) of all true knowledge and all things that may be comprehended via knowledge. All Truth, all Knowledge, and all Happiness is God. He is unborn, infinite, just, merciful, everlasting, immutable, and incomparable. He is also bodiless (Formless), all-powerful, just, merciful, all-pervading, unborn, unchangeable, and uncomparable. iii) The Vedas are the purest sources of knowledge. All aryas have a primary responsibility to learn about, spread, and preach the Veda. The Veda is the cornerstone of Dayanand's philosophy after God. His command to "Go Back to the Vedas" instructs us to disregard any alterations to the scriptures that could be in conflict with the vedic teachings. The Veda is the written word of God, given to us by the Rishis (sages). As a result, they were not created by humans. iv) We ought to be prepared to accept the truth and reject lies at all times.

This maxim is significant. We shouldn't adhere to a viewpoint just because it has stood the test of time. If it's untrue, we wouldn't think twice about giving up on it. v) After weighing the right and wrong of each action, all activities should be carried out in accordance. The golden rule is to choose the right and avoid the bad. I vi) This Samaj's guiding principle is to promote physical, social, and spiritual well-being in the world. The traditional Hindu philosophy of exterior individualism, in which each seeker merely sought his own "Mukti" or salvation, is vastly different from this. In fact, that was also young Dayanand's first objective until Swamy Virjananda broadened his horizons and instructed him to engage in Modern Religious service for the benefit of the nation and the whole globe. People should be treated with kindness, justice, and appreciation for their merits. Our interactions with all other creatures should be motivated by love and goodwill, not snobbery, hatred, malice, or jealousy. The kingdom of heaven will come to earth when society is founded on love for all. A person of outstanding merit would also be treated with greater respect. Although it does

not teach mindless equality, regardless of a person's virtues or vices, genius or mediocrity, merit or otherwise, this is the hallmark of human dignity.

Vedic socialism is what this is. viii) We ought to try to eradicate ignorance and advance knowledge. Superstitions, illiteracy, and ignorance are the root causes of all afflictions and evils, whereas knowledge promotes happiness and general well-being. This rule is being put into effect through the sermons delivered at many Arya Samaj venues and the network of D.A.V. and Gurukul institutions. ix) No one should be happy with their personal improvement; instead, they should see their own good as being helpful for everyone. This implies that since all people have God's likeness, they are one and the same. The whole focus is shifting from self-interest to selfless goodness. If everyone is hungry or dissatisfied, neither a man nor a community can be content because this would only lead to the collapse of society as a whole. Giving to others is not a favor but rather an act of enlightened self-interest (x) Although everyone is free to pursue their own well-being, everyone is required (unfree) to abide by societal regulations that have been established for the benefit of everyone. For instance, since all such regulations are in place for the benefit of everyone, it is not permissible to steal, murder, or violate traffic laws. However, in all private issues, concerning one's individual good, one has freedom. That means one has freedom of action but not at the cost of the well being of others.

MOVEMENT OF ARYA SAMAJ AND REFORM

In north India, the Arya Samaj established a sizable number of schools for both boys and girls. Christian missionaries were stopped from converting people to Christianity by the opening of orphanages. In the wake of the earthquake, Arya Samaj labored. The Arya Samaj was responsible for converting Hindus back to Hinduism in 1923 after the Moplas of Malabar had forcibly converted them to Islam. The Arya Samaj had fought for untouchables' recognition as equal Hindu society members before Mahatma Gandhi took up their cause. They also made an unceasing effort to dispel their superstitions and instruct them in the core principles of religion.

As a part of the educational mission for the Arya Samaj, Dayanand established several Gurukuls. After Dayanand died in Ajmer in 1883, the first D.A.V. (Dayanand Anglo-Vedic) College was established in Lahore to honor his memory. This organization became the focus of the nation's education system. The founders of Lahore College intended to foster a scientific temperament in its pupils without displacing them from their spiritual, cultural, or religious roots. Such English-medium institutions hadn't been formed until that point; only the British government or foreign Christian missionaries had done so. However, certain Dayanand devotees, such as Swami Shardhanand, objected to the method of teaching and established a successful *llet institution called Gurukul at Kangri, close to Hardwar in Uttar Pradesh. It was modeled after the antiquated notion of a residential school where professors and students lived together as a family in Medieval and Modern times. Over 50 gurukuls exist

in India today, with the majority located in Haryana. As both claimed to be the true devotees of Dayanand, there arose a disagreement between the DAV and Gurukul. The educational institutions were utterly ungoverned by the government and were viewed as hostile to Britain. Again, the D.A.V. College movement, which was the politically moderate Arya Samaj side, had a bigger influence on the educated middle class. In the nineteenth century, this middle class was at the forefront of the Indian Renaissance. Thus, the educational policies of the Arya Samaj were completely at odds with those of Lord William Bentinck (1834 policy) and the Christian missionaries, who sought to produce either clerks for the government or Christians.

Arya Samaj and political issues

Dayanand was a social and religious reformer, but much more. He was also a pioneer in India's political and national awakening. The Indian National Congress was established in 1889; the Arya Samaj was established in 1875. Dayanand had laid the foundation and proclaimed that self-rule cannot be replaced by foreign rule. According to Lala Lajpat Rai, the British have always had a bad impression of the Arya Samaj. Frequently, this manifested itself in the deportations, prosecutions, etc., of its members. The Arya Samaj was viewed as a seditious organization. Members of the Arya Samaj were expelled from civil and military service for no other reason than that they belonged to the group. A lot of moral fortitude was displayed by its members in their open statement of their desire for political freedom during a time when such declarations frequently resulted in imprisonment. Nevertheless, the Arya Samaj always stated that it was a religious, social, and cultural organization. According to Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the first President of India, Mahatma Gandhi's Arya Samaj Movement had a vital influence in transforming the Indian National Congress from a loyalist organization into a popular political movement (moderate to radical approach). The majority of the social changes promoted by the Arya Samaj as part of the National Movement were also adopted by the Congress.

The eradication of untouchability, the liberation of women, and other reforms were approved by the Congress, which demonstrated the Arya Samaj's position on political freedom and sociocultural advances. Many Arya Samaj adherents went on to actively support Mahatma Gandhi throughout Religious Movements: Medieval and Modern times. The Arya Samaj, on the other hand, is a social reform movement that avoids power politics. It belongs to a non-political group. According to D. Vable, power politics began to infiltrate the Arya Samaj in the post-independence era. While it was on the rise in 1915, it started to decrease from 1920 on as the Congress gained popularity under Gandhi. The political revival of the years leading up to independence greatly weakened its significance. Additionally, Hinduism's impact put its very identity at danger. Approximately 65 years after Lala Lajpat Rai's warning, the Arya Samaj is currently facing its own erasure by Hinduism, which it

originally claimed to safeguard. In reality, the Arya Samaj would be better off focusing on its own identity than defending Hindus.

The following are some ways that Swami Dayanand and the Arya Samaj movement have aided the national movement: 1) Encourage the use of Hindi 2) Swadeshi and Khadi received assistance 3) There was support for and agreement on opposition to salt tariffs. Because Swami Dayanand called for a return to the Vedas, some detractors have labeled him as reactionary and looking backwards to the past. However, Dayanand introduced modern action to India in the same way that Gandhiji did fifty years later.

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