



## **Socio – Educational Approach of Raja Rammohan Roy for Making Modern India.**

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### **ABSTRACT:-**

In 18<sup>th</sup> Century during British rule, when Rammohan Roy was born societal condition of the then Bengal in particular and India in general were very miserable due to bad effects of irrational, orthodox Hindu society and its evils like Caste discrimination, Polygamy infanticide, burning of Hindu widows. Raja Rammohan Roy with his prudential effort tried to emancipate Indian society from darkness through a socio-educational approach. Not only he struggled to stop 'Sati' rite and enactment of law, but he felt necessity of educating Indian women for empowerment of women. To bring the changes in society, he used education as an instrument. He established school and colleges for promoting education in India. This paper review the socio-educational approach of Raja Rammohan Roy for making modern Indian society in 18<sup>th</sup> century.

**KEYWORDS:-** Social reforms, educational reformer, women empowerment.

## INTRODUCTION:-

The role Raja Rammohan Roy in emancipation of Indian society from the dark heinous social practices is beyond any amount of praise. His work as a social reformer is unparalleled. He appeared in the 18<sup>th</sup> century when India was under the British rule. But his foremost effort was emancipation. Indian people from their own evil social practices, orthodox religious rituals, and mediaeval thoughts because he believed that without social, religious and educational reforms Indian people will remain in the same darkness. Unlike other great contemporary thinkers, Rammohan never preached his native people intolerance towards the British rulers, rather he held the Europeans to be the greatest benefactor of India. So he thought about collaborating the best Indian cultures with those of the west. He used the authority of the British rulers to fight against the superstition, idolatry, caste system, priesthood and so on and so forth.

Raja Rammohan Roy was a great personality. His contribution in the field of social and religious reform, education, literature led India towards modernity. He struggled throughout his life in order to actualize his dream of a modern and developed India. Raja Rammohan Roy played a very crucial role to transform the society of 18<sup>th</sup> Century Bengal. In order to transform society he used education as an instrument of social change. He realised that formation of progressive society is never possible unless member of the society is well educated. He established school, colleges to educate the people of 18<sup>th</sup> century Bengal. He believed that introduction of European Learning system in India would liberate people from social and religious superstition. He advocated in favour of western system of education. His socio educational thought and approach brought Renaissance in Bengal as well as India. This paper would review social-educational approach of Raja Rammohan Roy in order to setup a modern and developed India.

## RAMMOHAN ROY: AS A SOCIAL REFORMER

In 18<sup>th</sup> century, when Rammohan Roy was born, he witnessed the extremely degraded situation of the then Bengal in particular, and India in general, under the effects of irrational, orthodox Hindu society and its evils, namely-caste discrimination, polygamy, infanticide, burning of Hindu widows. Rammohan intensely wished to rejuvenate the rotten society from within through reforms of various kind.

### ABOLITION OF SATI SYSTEM:-

In India women is regarded as an epitome of purity, virtue and the sole mate of her husband. The term 'Sati' means 'virtuous women'. The term is associated with the Hindu goddess Sati. In Hindu mythology sati was the wife of Lord Shiva who scarified her life when her father refused to invite Shiva to the assembly of Gods. She was so mortified at the humiliation of her husband Lord Shiva that she scarified her life. In Hindu society, to set an example of wifely devotion, a Hindu widow had to sacrifice her life in the funeral fire of her dead husband. Self-sacrifice become the best measure of judging a women's virtue and loyalty towards her husband. But the irony of the fact behind this glorification was that the young widow had to die with intolerable pain in the fire. In 1811 Rammohan Roy witnessed his brother's widow being burned on her husband's funeral fire. After this incident he determined to lead a crusade against this age old practice of women dying as Sati. He organized several campaigns against this.

He was determined to stop this tradition. He tried his best to make people aware regarding this evil tradition. In spite of facing the rage of the Hindu brahmins and social boycott he continued his work to stop this system. Thus at last in the years 1829 Lord William Bentick banned 'Sati' by law and Rammohan Roy's effort was fulfilled. According to this law the custom of Sati become illegal and punished. Abolition of Sati system was a glorious milestone on the path of modernisation of Indian society.

## WOMEN EMPOWERMENT:

Women Empowerment itself elaborates that social rights, political rights, economic stability, and all others rights should be also equal to women. In 18<sup>th</sup> century Indian women had to lead a life of home imprisonment. They were not allowed to go to the outside world. They had to remain in their houses and do household works. They remained uneducated because in those days women education was not allowed. Girls were married at a very young age. They were expected to be loyal to their husbands and such women were honoured and praised as 'Pativrata'.

Rammohan Roy felt the necessity of educating Indian women. He believed education as an important weapon for empowering Indian women. It was the only means to make them about their rights and to make them capable for fighting against harsh patriarchy. Brahmo Samaj played a great role in removing the prejudices, prevalent in Indian society, against the education of women. In 1817, in collaboration with David Hare, Rammohan Roy set up Hindu College in Calcutta. In 1822, he established the Anglo Hindi School and in 1826 he founded Vedanta College.

Along with his famous struggle against the Sati System Rammohan Roy raised his strong protest against polygamy, infanticide, and child marriage. Further his attitude towards caste system was somewhat ambivalent. While he practiced some apparent caste rules he noted that God makes no distinction of caste. So his urge for unification also indicates the development of nationalist consciousness. All these efforts of

Raja Rammohan Roy suggest that he was much advanced than his contemporary Indian society. His approach throughout has been that of a modernizing one through, awareness, reform and development.

## RELIGIOUS REFORMS OF RAJA RAMMOHAN ROY:

Since Indian society is emotionally all ached to its religious beliefs, Raja Rammohan Roy wanted to remove the evil rituals of religion, especially of Hindu religion. Rammohan believed that many learned Brahamans are well aware of the absurdity of idolatry and the nature of purer mode of divine worship, but as in the rites, ceremonies and festivals of idolatry they find the source of their own benefit, they encourage it and utilize it. So he thought about setting up of many reformist religious organizations like the Atmiya Sava in 1815, the Calcutta Unitarian Association in 1821 and Bramho Sabha (1828) which later became the Brahmo Samaj (1830).

Being enlightened with the great knowledge of the Vedas, the Upanishad and many other ancient scriptures of others religions which upheld certain humanistic values he wanted to reform the Hindu religion. He wanted to take the Hindus back to their ancient glory and simplicity of Vedas and Upanishad's. His aim was to cast all the religion and promote the sense of love and brotherhood.

### BRAMHO SABHA AND THE BRAMHO SAMAJ:-

Bramho Sabha was established in 1828 by Raja Rammohan Roy. The first assembly of Bramho Sabha was held on 20 August 1828. According to the Trust directive 'weekly services were held consisting of three successive parts: recitation of the Vedas by Telegu Brahmin in closed apartment exclusively before the Brahmin members of the congregation, reading and exposition of the Upanishad for the general audience and singing of hymns' (Priya Soman).

The Bramho Samaj (1830) which literally denotes communication of men who worship Bramho. The highest reality (Sasthri, 1911). Bramho Samaj did not create discrimination according to caste, colour, and religion. It is an assembly of all sorts of people without distinction meeting publicly for sober orderly and devoted adoration of the Eternal power who is the Author and Preserver of the universe. Actually the members of Barmho Samaj advocated for monotheist doctrine to create until and brotherhood among people. The Samaj



showed its opposition to priesthood, idol worship and sacrifice of any innocent being. The worship was performed by meditation, prayer and reading from the Vedas, the Upanishad and other religious scriptures. The activities of Brahmo Samaj were influenced by modern western ideas. It was the most influential religious movement which contributed in making modern India and it was started in Calcutta. On 20<sup>th</sup> August 1828 the Renaissance of Bengal was started by the reformation of prevailing Brahmoism which led to all religious, social and educational advancement of Hindu community. The main task of Brahmo Samaj was to foster the idea of brotherhood among Indian people since. It advocated for the promotion of charity, morality, piety, benevolence and creation of a sense of unity among men of all religious beliefs. Brahmo Samaj, under the leading of Raja Rammohan Roy, worked to emancipate Indian people from their orthodox mentality and blind beliefs, which were the roots and many evil practices like Sati System, caste discrimination, Untouchability etc.

## **RAJA RAMMOHAN ROY: AS AN EDUCATIONAL REFORMER:-**

Raja Rammohan Roy was one of the first thinkers of India who realized the importance of English education in India. He created a major opinion in favour of western science and thought. He realized that English education could generate a sense of unity among the educated youths of India. His idea of education helped the Government of Lord William Bentinck to introduce European learning system in India. As it was the period when Indian thought felt unavoidable impact of English thought, through the introduction of English system of education, the British not only transmitted the European culture but also the ideas of Bentham, Mill, Carlyle and Coleridge. Rammohan Roy believed that to fight against superstitions and injustice of religious orthodoxies Sanskrit texts were not enough for the Indian to Government to provide a more liberal and all-encompassing education facility including Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Astronomy and other useful sciences.

With the help of Raja Rammohan Roy, David Hare established Hindu College (1817) in Calcutta. In 1822 Rammohan Roy

established Anglo-Hindu School and in 1828 he set up Vedanta College for promoting education in India. He also claimed of the education for Indian women.

Rammohan Roy had an enormous knowledge in several sphere of knowledge. Proficient in about half a dozen oriental and equal number of occidental languages he wrote on various topics of social matters in many language like Bengali, Persian, Hindi, Sanskrit and English. Plunging into journalism, he edited periodicals in three languages – The Brahummunical Magazine in English, Sambad Kaumudi in Bengali and Mirat-ul-Akhbar in Persian. As an editor of newspapers he organized a protest, arguing natural rights. That protest was a turning point in Roy's life. In his newspapers, treatises and books he tirelessly criticized superstitions, idolatry and caste system. He denounced the custom of Sati. His writings embolden the British Government to act decisively on this matter. Through his writings and periodicals Rammohan Roy tried to change the corrupt and orthodox mentality of Indian society. Being greatly influenced by Jon Stuart Mill he believed that the main region of human liberty is the liberty of thought feelings, discussion and publication. Being an ardent admirer of J.S Mill he advocated the idea of expressing grievance and demands as well as before the Government through setting up a liberal mass media. Thus Rammohan set a tradition of giving pressure on the British Government for the betterment of Indian society. He stood to be triumphant for bringing out the first constitutional agitation in our country. He drew up a memorial to the Supreme Court and a petition to the king council against the Press Ordinance of 1828, in which he defended liberty of Press.

His 'Exposition of Practical Operation of the Judicial and Revenue System of India' (1832) represents the evidence, given by him before a Parliamentary Select Committee in London in 1831. This is a remarkable work for its spirited protest against the economic drain in India under the East India Company and the exploitation of the peasantry by rich landlords.

As a social and religious reformer along with organizing campaigns he used his writings to create opinions for his favour. His 'A conference between an Advocate for, and Opponent of the practice of burning widows alive' (1818), 'Abstracts of the Arguments regarding the

burning of widows considered as Religious Rife', 'Address to Lord William Bentinck' 'Anti Suttee Petition to the House of Commons' were very much influencing in abolition of the age-old Sati System.

'Roy's importance in modern Indian history rests partly upon the broad scope of his social vision and the striking modernity of his thought. He was a tireless social reformer, yet he also revived interest in the ethical principles of the Vedanta school as a counterpoise to the Western assault on Indian culture. In his textbooks and treatises he contributed to the popularization of the Bengali language while at the same time he was the first Indian to apply to the Indian environment the fundamental social and political ideas of the French and American revolutions.' (Encyclopedia Britannica)

## CONCLUSION:-

Raja Rammohan Roy was a great personality. His social, religious, educational, economic and political reforms are the harbinger of modernity in India. With his great knowledge scientific temper, broad outlook, Liberal mentality he tried to establish equality and humanism in Indian society. He was one of the few people of his time who realized completely the significance of modern age. He is called the first modern man of India. Rabindranath Tagore called him 'Bharat Pathik'. Bipin Chandra Pal said that the priceless value of Raja Rammohan's effort was struggle against medievalism for which he is honored as 'The Father of Indian Renaissance'. His works are relevant even in 21<sup>st</sup> century India. His socio – educational approach based on scientific temper, brought outlook and liberal mentality led the Indian society on the glorious path of equality and humanism which was destined for modern India.



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