

Review of Literature

International Recognition Multidisciplinary Research Journal

ISSN: 2347-2723

Impact Factor : 2.0210(UIF)

Volume - 3 | Issue - 8 | March - 2016



RENAISSANCE REFORMATION IN INDIA



Dr. Prakash M. Badiger

M.A., M phil, PhD.,

Guest Faculty, Dept of History, Gulbarga University, Kalaburagi.

ABSTRACT:

The main objective of Indian Renaissance movement was to face the challenge posed by the importation of western ideas and values on Indian culture and social outlook. It has contributed to the revival and restoration of lost individuality, the re-construction of faith in man in the light of secularized view of life. It tried to modernize Hinduism by discarding the irrational rituals, false doctrines, and monopolistic priest craft. The movement has universal rather than sectarian outlook. The aim was the emancipation of the whole humanity from worldly miseries and the radical divine transformation of life. The pioneers of Indian Renaissance, being conscious of the social, political and religious degradation of Indian culture, are forced to interpret the inestimable value of the glorious Indian tradition and its practical significance in daily life.

KEYWORDS: glorious Indian tradition , practical significance , monopolistic priest craft.

INTRODUCTION:

The urgent need for social and religious reform that began to manifest itself from the early decades of the 19th century arose in response to the contact with Western culture and education. The weakness and decay of Indian society was evident to educated Indians who started to work systematically for their removal. The impact of Western ideas gave birth to new awakening. The change that took place in the Indian social scenario is popularly known as the Renaissance. They were no longer willing to accept the traditions, beliefs and practices of Hindu society simply because they had been observed for centuries.

RAJ RAM MOHAN ROY

The central figure of this cultural awakening was Raja Rammohan Roy. Known as the “father of the Indian Renaissance”, Rammohan Roy was a great patriot, scholar and humanist. He was moved by deep love for the country and worked throughout his life for the social, religious, intellectual and political regeneration of the Indians.

In 1814, Rammohan Roy settled in Calcutta and dedicated his life to the cause of social and religious reform. As a social reformer, Rammohan Roy fought relentlessly against social evils like sati, polygamy, child marriage, female infanticide and caste discrimination. He organised a movement against the inhuman custom of sati and helped William Bentinck to pass a law banning the practice (1829). It was the first successful social movement against an age-old social evil.

Rammohan Roy was one of the earliest propagators of modern Western education. He looked upon it as a major instrument for the spread of modern ideas in the country. He was associated with the foundation the Hindu College in Calcutta (which later came to be known as the Presidency College). He also maintained at his own cost an English school in Calcutta. In addition, he established a Vedanta College where both Indian learning and Western social and physical science courses were offered.

Rammohan Roy was a pioneer of Indian journalism. He himself published journals in Bengali, Persian, Hindi and English to educate the public on various current issues. Samvad Kaumudi was the most important journal brought out by him.

Rammohan Roy was a firm believer in internationalism. He held that the suffering and happiness of one nation should affect the rest of the world. He took a keen interest in international events and always supported the cause of liberty and nationalism. He celebrated the success of the revolution in Spain in 1823 by hosting a public dinner.

RELIGIOUS REFORMS:

Rammohan Roy struggled persistently against social evils. He argued that ancient Hindu texts the Vedas and the Upanishads upheld the doctrine of monotheism. To prove his point, he translated the Vedas and five Upanishads into Bengali.

In 1849 he wrote Gift to Monotheism in Persian. Rammohan Roy was a staunch believer in the philosophy of Vedanta (Upanishads) and vigorously defended the Hindu religion and Hindu philosophy from the attack of the missionaries. He only wanted to mould Hinduism into a new cast to suit the requirements of the age

Henry Vivian Derozio and the young Bengal movement:

The establishment of the Hindu College in 1817 was a major event in the history of Bengal. It

played an important role in carrying forward the reformist movement that had already emerged in the province. A radical movement for the reform of Hindu Society, known as the Young Bengal Movement, started in the college.

Its leader was Henry Vivian Derozio, a teacher of the Hindu College. Derozio was born in 1809. He was of mixed parentage his father was Portuguese and his mother was Indian. In 1826, at the age of 17, he joined the Hindu College as a teacher and taught there till 1831

The movement started by Derozio was called the Young Bengal Movement and his followers were known as the Derozians. They condemned religious rites and the rituals, and pleaded for eradication of social evils, female education and improvement in the condition of women.

KESHAB CHANDRA SEN:

Keshab Chandra Sen carried on an intensive programme of social reform. He set up schools, organised famine relief and propagated widow remarriage. In 1872 the Government passed the Native (Civil) Marriages Act legalising marriages performed according to Brahmo Samaj rites.

In 1839, he founded the Tatvabodhini Sabha to propagate Rammohan Roy's ideas. He promoted a magazine to do a systematic study of India's past in Bengali language. The Samaj actively Debendranath Tagore supported the movements for widow remarriage, the abolition of polygamy, women's education and the improvement in the condition of the peasantry.

Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar was both a scholar and a reformer. He was a great humanist and had deep sympathy for the poor and the oppressed. He dedicated his entire life to the cause of social reform which he thought was necessary for modernising India. By admitting non-Brahmin students to the Sanskrit College, he dealt a severe blow to the prevalent caste system.

Vidyasagar was a staunch supporter of women's education and helped Drinkwater Bethune to establish the Bethune School, the first Indian school for girls, in 1849. As Inspector of Schools, Vidyasagar opened a number of schools for girls in the districts under his charge.

Vivekananda proclaimed the essential oneness of all religions. He condemned the caste-system, religious rituals, ceremonies and superstitions. He had a deep understanding of Hindu philosophy and travelled far and wide to spread its message. At the Parliament of World Religions in Chicago (1893), Vivekananda spoke about Hindu religion at length.

His brilliant speech on Hindu philosophy was well received. American newspapers described him as an 'Orator by Divine Right'. He delivered a series of lectures in the U.S.A., England and in several other countries of Europe. Through his speeches, Vivekananda explained Hindu philosophy and clarified the wrong notions that prevailed in Western countries about the Hindu religion and Indian culture.

The religious reform movement contributed a lot towards the making of modern India. As J. Nehru puts it "The rising middle class were politically inclined and were not so much in search of religion

Womens

The British Government did not take substantial steps to educate women. Still, by the end of the 19th century, there were several women who had become aware of the need for social reform. The British Government did not take substantial steps to educate women. Still, by the end of the 19th century, there were several women who had become aware of the need for social reform.

Sarojini Naidu:

Sarojini Naidu was a renowned poet and social worker. She inspired the masses with the spirit of nationalism through her patriotic poems. She stood for voting rights for women, and took an active interest in the political situation in the country. She also helped to set up the All India Women's

CONFERENCE.

- 1) All the reformers propagated the idea of one God and the basic unity of all religions. Thus, they tried to bridge the gulf between different religious beliefs.
- (2) All the reformers attacked priesthood, rituals, idolatry and polytheism. The humanitarian aspect of these reform movements was expressed in their attack on the caste system and the custom of child marriage.
- (3) The reformers attempted to improve the status of girls and women in society. They all emphasised the need for female education.
- (4) By attacking the caste system and untouchability, the reformers helped to unify the people of India into one nation.
- (5) The reform movements fostered feelings of self-respect, self-reliance and patriotism among the Indians.

Contribution of the reform movements:

Many reformers like Dayanand Saraswati and Vivekananda upheld Indian philosophy and culture. This instilled in Indians a sense of pride and faith in their own culture. Female education was promoted. Schools for girls were set up. Even medical colleges were established for women. This led to the development, though slow, of girls' education. The cultural and ideological struggle taken up by the socio-religious movements helped to build up national consciousness. They, thus, paved the way for the growth of nationalism.

REFERENCES

- R.C. Majumdar, Swami Vivekananda-A Historical Review (Calcutta: General Printers.,1965) 14.
Jawaharlal Nehru, The discovery of India (Bombay: Asia Publishing, 1961) 355.
Swami Vivekananda, Complete Works, Vol.VI (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1992) 220.