



RAJA RAM MOHAN ROY'S CONTRIBUTION ON SATI SYSTEM IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Raja Ram Mohan Roy first introduced western education with the help of William Bentick. He fought against idol worship, Sati girls education and thugs. Many schools were opened first in Bengal to educate the people. 19th century witnessed as the era of renaissance & social reformation. He established Brahma Samaj to fight against all the social evils.



KEYWORDS : *Sati – Reformation – monogamy – superstitious – Hinduism – Brahma Samaj – Idol worship – antisocial – restricted.*

INTRODUCTION

In the beginning of nineteenth century there were many antisocial traditions in India. Most of them are directly concerned with the women. The life of a woman was very much affected by the superstitions, blind beliefs and bad traditions in the society. The antisocial customs were present in society. There are bad customs like infanticide, Sati, ban for widow remarriage, Jarath-Kumari vivah, ban on female education, prevailed in the society. Women are very much suppressed under the bad traditions and they could not live their life freely. Hence their life was full of sorrow. Many women are committed to Sati and lost their lives. The so-called prestigious men were not paying attention towards these customs. Raja Ram Mohan Roy paid his attention towards the customs of Sati. As he had an experience of Sati in his family, he made up his mind to do something against the Sati. The custom of Sati prevailed and continued from the medieval period in India. It was a brutal custom because the widow of a man should have committed herself to the funeral fire of her husband. Sometimes her commitment was willing but many times it was a forced attempt. It was an inhuman proceeding which was admired and supported by the other members of the family. The customs of Sati have continued from generation to generation from the medieval period. There were so many reasons for Sati. The family members of a woman forced her to commit herself as Sati. A woman who committed her life to her husband's funeral fire was called as Sati. A woman was forced to do so because of an economical problem of succession in the remaining wealth of the dead. Another problem was considered as to keep so-called great tradition of Sati. Sati was mostly spread in the society at that time and there was no light of hope to rescue the women from this inhuman, brutal custom.

As Raja Ram Mohan Roy had an experience of Sati in his family, he also launched a movement against the practice of Sati, of which his own sister-in-law was a victim-1. As Raja

Ram Mohan Roy had an experience of Satipratha. In his family he was shocked and decided to do something in this regard. He tried to awaken the society about this Satipratha and its nature. Then he driven a movement against Satipratha on ideological level he studied deeply about the Satipratha and Sati cases in Bengal. He also wrote against the Satipratha. As he was learned person he tried to make favourable the literate class of Bengal in favour of the Satibandhi. He tried to originate the learned persons with him. They believed that the teaching of science would help to abolish certain social evils in the Hindu system.² Satipratha was not decreasing from the society. The British officials were in favour of to abolish the Satipratha. The evidence of British intentions lends little support to these views.³ The English language education led the educated persons to contribute in the reform movement. The English language thus opened up an intellectual transformation among educated Indians.⁴ The Brahma Samaj founded by Raja Ram Mohan Roy contributed well to awaken the society regarding the bad customs. The Brahma Samaj did what orthodox Hinduism was powerless to do.⁵ The Brahma Samaj awakened the society regarding the rationalism and new ideas of the modern education. Raja Ram Mohan Roy emphasized on the need of open mindedness for the reforms in the society. He abhorred Sati, infanticide and other cruel practices.⁶ He also wrote more and more on the equality of man and women in his regular articles. Roy really a founder of new rational mind setup class of modern India.

He also awakened Indian Society to abolish the Satipratha. His consistent efforts enabled Lord William Bentinck to ban Sati in 1827. The then British Governor General Bentinck was meant as a liberal officer for the Indians. The Governor General found in Raja Ram Mohan Roy a temper of strength in his crusade against the social evils.⁸ So he admired the efforts taken by Raja Ram Mohan Roy. In 1829 Lord Bentinck passed an act abolishing this inhuman rite and declaring all who abetted the act to be guilty of culpable homicide.⁹ The act enabled the reformers to prevent the Satipratha. The work done of William Bentinck was admired by the Indian Rationalists.

Considering all above discussion it is seen that Raja Ram Mohan Roy was a great social reformer as far as the ban of Sati is concerned. He propagated the movement against the Satipratha. The British Governor General William Bentinck responded to the movement against the Satipratha led by Raja Ram Mohan Roy. The act to abolish the Satipratha was passed in 1829 by William Bentinck but there were many efforts behind it taken by Raja Ram Mohan Roy so he was a real person who contributed well in this area.

CONCLUSION :-

Raja Ram Mohan Roy was a great social reformer and also called the father of modern renaissance. He gave equality to women. He believed in education to change the society. During his times Indian witnessed social and religious awakening. It was a new dawn in the history of India.

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