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## **ROLE OF ARYA SAMAJ IN BRITISH ATTITUDE AND POLICIES**

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# Role of Arya Samaj in British Attitude and Policies

Mandeep Chahal\*

M.A. (History) From Kurukshetra University Kurukshetra, Haryana-136118, India

**Abstract – India in the 19th century looked like a shadow of a once vibrant civilization. Politically, it was a period of servility, intellectually, a period of blind imitation of the west and spiritually, a time of confusion and despair. The country struggled under a crushing load of unreason, in abject slavery to circumstances. Indian society was steeped in superstitious, obsolescent rituals and prejudices. Since the beginning of the 19th century there have been many socio-religious reform movements in India but Haryana remained almost unaffected by them. However, Arya Samaj took the region into its fold. It made untiring efforts to raise the socio-religious status of agricultural communities, to spread education, remove untouchability and to raise the social status of women.**

**Keywords:- Shadow, Blind Imitation, Arya Samaj, Agricultural Communities etc.**

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## INTRODUCTION

India in the 19th century looked like a shadow of a once vibrant civilization. Politically, it was a period of servility intellectually, a period of blind imitation of the west and spiritually, a time of confusion and despair. The country struggled under a crushing load of unreason, in abject slavery to circumstances. Indian society was steeped in superstitious, obsolescent rituals and prejudices. It had, more or less, become fossilized with a crumbling heritage and with no rock to stand upon. Swami Dayanand founded the Hindu reform organization called Arya Samaj on April 14, 1875 in Mumbai, and also created its 10 principles, which are quite distinct from Hinduism, yet based on the Vedas. These principles aimed at advancing the individual and society through physical, spiritual and social betterment of the human race. His aim was not to found a new religion, but to re-establish the teachings of the ancient Vedas. He envisaged a society which would provide equal opportunities to all, irrespective of their caste, creed or sect, and give due regard to womenfolk who were being ill-treated in the post Vedic period. At the time of the establishment of Arya Samaj Swami Dayanand Saraswati said:

जिंदगी को मैं तपाये द रहा हूँ,  
स्वर्ण को कुन्दन बनाय द रहा हूँ  
आंधियों का रोशनी मिलती रहेगी,  
आज वह दीपक जलाये दे रहा हूँ ।

For Dayanand, education did not mean the study of letters alone. He took a broader and more comprehensive view of education. It means knowledge that builds character, develops various sides of human personality, sharpens intellect and gives critical, cool headed and calm decision taking power, patience and will power. He wanted the students to practice five Yamas: namely – Ashima (Non-violence), Satya (truth), Brahmacharya (self-control), Asteya (No greed for wealth). Also, the student practiced five niyam as:- namely – shucha (cleanliness of body, purity of mind and soul), Tapa (penance), Swadhyaya (selfstudy), Santosha (contentment and ishvara pranidhana, love and devotion for God). Also the student should not take to wine, meat eating, scents or perfumes, flowers, company of women and killing of living beings.

## FACTOR FOR THE SPREAD OF ARYA SAMAJ IN HARYANA

Since the beginning of the 19th century there have been many socio-religious reform movements in India but Haryana remained almost unaffected by them. However, Arya Samaj took the region into its fold. It made untiring efforts to raise the socio-religious status of agricultural communities, to spread education, remove untouchability and to raise the social status of women. It also launched a crusade against social evils like child marriage and female infanticide. With the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Arya Samaj emerged as a vital force in Haryana for agricultural development. The movement played a very important role in the history of the Haryana region. It had a great impact on the life and thinking

of the people, particularly of the Hindus in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It was a Revivalist Movement in form and reformist in content.

Among the earlier followers in the region were Lala Lajpat Rai, Pandit Lakhpal Rai, Lala Churamani, Hiralal and Chandu Lal, who set up a branch of Arya Samaj in Hissar in 1889, and built a temple there in 1893. During 1880s, they intensified their activities among the Jats especially in Hissar, where Lala Lajpat Rai practiced law. After sometime, the message of Arya Samaj spread to other districts – Ambala, Karnal and Gurgaon.

#### The main reasons for propagation of Arya Samaj in Haryana :-

1. The first reason was the origin of the Vedas in Haryana. The Rishis conducted Vedic researches on the bank of the river Saraswati. Though with the passage of time the process of research might have been lost, its influence was ever felt. That is why, the faith of the inhabitants of Haryana has remained intact in the Vedas. Hence they were tempted to look back to the Vedas, and naturally felt drawn towards Arya Samaj and they continue to be a part of this revolution of Arya Samaj.

2. Haryana is an agricultural state, at that time all activities related to agriculture depended upon bullocks. Bullocks are the off spring of cows. The status of a person was evaluated on the basis of the number of bullocks his household had. The families got nourished by the milk of cows. The cow and the bullock were the backbone of the family and agricultural industry respectively. When Dayanand Saraswati raised the issue of cow protection and showed the importance of cow in his book '*Gau Karunanidhi*', this principle was appreciated very much by the people of Haryana. Due to the spread of Islam, the cow had been losing its importance among the people of Haryana too. Some followers of traditional Hinduism i.e. Sanatans, too, were against Maharishi Dayanand's cow protection principle but the people of Haryana by and large had been in favour of cow-protection.

3. In Haryana large cities were yet to come into being. The whole state had abundance of villages. In the village people used to live amicably through the Panchayat system wherein discussions followed before ideas being accepted or rejected. The economic condition of the village depended on the cow. People were vegetarians. Maharishi's opposition to non-vegetarianism was favoured by the people. In this context Maharishi said as follows – "with the non-vegetarian and wine-taking foreign officers feeding themselves on beef, and the flesh of other animals the miseries of Aryans steadily increased. Agriculturalists of Haryana considered it a sin to kill creatures such as cows, bullocks, deer, peacocks etc." This was very close to the hearts of people of Haryana. Casteism was not very rigid in Haryana. Brahmins too were not

very rigid. Here Brahmins along with other castes used to cultivate land. Due to agricultural work they came in contact with the people of lower castes because the work pertaining to agricultural labour was done by lower caste people. Owing to it there prevailed an amicable relationship between all the castes and the Brahmins were not very dogmatic vis-à-vis these castes. The second main caste was that of Jat. Due to the lack of Pauranic knowledge, Jats and Brahmins did not indulge in such serious issues. So when the Arya Samaj treated Jats as Brahmins and gave them the right to wear the sacred thread along with other castes, it was no less than a religious ceremony. Dayanand while describing the story of Jats in the 11<sup>th</sup> Samul'as of his book '*Satyarth Prakash*' honorifically addressed them as Jats. As a result, a good number of them became followers of Arya Samaj.

4. The biggest work of the propagation of Arya Samaj was done by many dedicated Arya Samaj workers and leaders. The name of Pandit Basti Ram is foremost, who conversed with Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati. He met Dayanand in Rewari. He was a great singer as well as a logician. He sang a song in praise of Maharishi Dayanand. His book of religious songs '*Pakhandkhandi*' and '*Agmarshan Prarthana*' gained great popularity. The preachers of Arya Samaj still sing religious songs. Table given below shows the spread of Arya Samaj in Haryana in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries :-

Table 2.1<sup>20</sup>

Establishment year	City/Town	Name of Persons	Members
1880	Rohtak	–	10
1880	Rewari	–	21
1883	Karnal	Swami Omanand	–
1885	Jhajjar	–	13
1886	Jagadhari	Pandit Lekh Ram	–
1889	Hissar	Lala Lajpat Rai, Lala Khabi Rai and Ramji Lal	59
1890	Hathin	–	5
1890	Bhiwani	–	36
1890	Ambala City	Sardar Kala Singh	14
1891	Ambala Cantt	Gurdayal Singh	21
1892	Sirsa	Lala Shiv Naryana, Lala Kesiram, Master Shivaji Ram	19
1893	Sahabad	–	–
1894	Thanesar	Lala Kaka Ram, Lala Bhagirathmal	15
1896	Ballabhgarh (Faridabad)	–	10
1897	Kaithal	Pandit Atama Ram,	30
1898	Jind	Bhagwan Das	-
1900	Ladwa	–	8
1900	Pundri	–	20
1900	Kaithal	–	30
1901	Gurgaon	Chandulal	–

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Arya Samaj revolutionaries worked strenuously for India's freedom in foreign countries too. In

England, Shyamji Krishna Varma, a follower of Swami Dayananda started an English monthly,

"The Indian Sociologist"

-An organ of political, social and religious reform and freedom movement in 1905. In the same year he also formed the India Home Rule Society with the following objectives:

1. To secure Home Rule for India.
2. To carry on propaganda in the U.K
3. To spread among the people of India a knowledge of the advantages of freedom and national unity.

## CONCLUSION

Started, as it was as a crusade to purge the old Sanatan Vedic religion of the idolatrous impurities which had crept into it, and at the same time to break the superiority of Brahmans, Aryasim, like other missionary religious, has found it difficult to make much impression on the stubborn rock of Hinduism, and there is now a noticeable weakening in their campaign against the priestly Brahman. Although their numbers have increased proportionally in this province to a very considerable extent, the actual total of those who follow its doctrines is still infinitesimal compared with the Hindu community as a whole. Of late years not only have their own schemes, as has been seen above, been very materially advanced, but the Samaj's influence on the views and social activities of the orthodox Hindu community has been most marked, and has made for the amelioration of the lot of considerable numbers of the populace, which redounds greatly to the credit of the organizers and followers of the Samaj.

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## Corresponding Author

### Mandeep Chahal\*

M.A. (History) From Kurukshetra University  
Kurukshetra, Haryana-136118, India

E-Mail – [arora.kips@gmail.com](mailto:arora.kips@gmail.com)