

Advocacy for Women's Rights and Political Empowerment: Raja Ram Mohan Roy's Contribution to Indian Polity

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ABSTRACT

Having particular emphasis on women's liberties or empowering women, the paper aims to analyse the evolution or expansion of a socio-religious changes initiated by Raja Ram Mohan Roy in the 18th century. Raja Ram Mohan Roy founded the Bengali as Persian weekly publications Sambad Kaumudi as well as Mirat-ul Akhbar to serve as the foundation for his reformist revolution in India. This paper also emphasises Raja Ram Mohan Roy's contributions in reporting, that he subsequently utilised to communicate with the public or disseminate his contemporary views for India's cultural renewal or modernity. He believed that his nation could not advance socially or economically with knowledge. In order to set the way for socio-religious changes in the nation, he vigorously promoted contemporary education. This paper also attempts to analyse Raja Ram Mohan Roy's challenges in persuading the public to support women's education or the outlawing of cruel practises like sati. Roy was the driving force behind giving women more control over their lives as well as securing their honourable place in society. He established the Brahma Samaj in 1829 in an effort to extend the support for his socio-religious reformation agenda.

Keywords- Women's Rights, Contribution, Indian Renaissance.

I. INTRODUCTION

Raja Ram Mohan Roy, also affectionately referred to as the "Father of Modern India's Renaissance," worked tirelessly for social transformation. He is recognised for bringing about a modern age of enlightened with liberal development in India. Considering a significant accomplishments he made to India's development in both the 18th- 19th centuries, Raja Ram Mohan Roy is usually known by the title "father of modern Indian renaissance". Such advancements enhance Indian civilization in all aspects. Nevertheless, few individuals in Raja Ram Mohan Roy's era were fully aware of the emerging age's importance^[1]. The goal of mankind's society ought to be interconnectedness among individuals or countries instead of sovereignty in solitary existence, which must pertain to both persons as well as countries.

His goal was to completely revive the Indians to their individual distinct cultures as well as to help them gain insight into the facts that were unique to their

separate societies in the attitude of compassionate collaboration. In this paper, Researchers discuss or explore Raja Ram Mohan Roy's remarkable existence including the accomplishments that he provided to community. Perhaps among the many people in his time who truly comprehended the significance of the beginning of a modern era is Raja Ram Mohan Roy^[2]. He considered that mutual dependency between people or countries, rather than sovereignty within solitude, must be the aim of human civilization. His goal was to fully awaken Indians regarding their distinct identities as cultures and to help them understand the realities that were particular to their societies in an atmosphere of compassionate collaboration. People shall learn about Raja Ram Mohan Roy's inspirational career as well as national accomplishments in this piece of writing.

With the home of many social classes, tongues, faiths, sages, as well as patriotic individuals, India is revered. India is diverse but united. Throughout the past, this nation had philosophers like as Shabar, Yajnavalkya, Balmiki, Barista, Durbasa, Atri, Bishwamitra, Byasdev,

Kashyap, Bharadwaj, Jamadagni, Pulastya, Gargi, Ghosha, Apla, Maitri, etc., as well as the present day, Rabindranath, Gandhiji, Nivedita, Swamiji, Rokeya, Rammohun Vidyasagar, and others sages are notable. Raja Rammohan Roy, the architect of contemporary India, is one of them. The modern period of India was launched by Raja Rammohan Roy, according to the great poet Rabindranath. He was the forerunner of Indian patriotism as well as the founder of the Indian Renaissance. Rammohan being the only exception, contemporary Indian discourse or thought is thus nearly entirely lacking. Apart from being the advocate for social change, it also had a lasting impact on religious, financial, or communal problems as well as women's rights or educational opportunities in India.

He established women's rights or East-West education integration, which helped Bengal or contemporary India flourish. He put forth a lot for effort to defend the liberties of the Indians. He was given the moniker "The Father of the Bengal Renaissance." as a result. Another significant turning point around the world's historical past periods, known as Renaissance in modern Asia had capable for significantly alter Indians' thoughts, intellectuals, and outlook on the outside world starting around the middle of the 19th century^[3]. Contemporary Hindustan was brought out by the intellectual's revolution of this particular period.

II. THE FOUNDER OF THE MODERN INDIAN RENAISSANCE

The period of enlightened for liberal reforming modernization of India was ushered in by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, as relentless social reformer known as the "Father of Modern India's Renaissance." Because of the amazing improvements that brought about across Indian throughout both the -and 19th centuries, Raja Ram Mohan Roy is known as the father of the Modern Indian Renaissance. The expulsion of the vicious or barbarian Sati Pratha stood out among his deeds most significantly^[4].

His initiatives have aided in the elimination of marriage between children or the brutal regime.

- 1) To learn regarding Raja Ram Mohan Roy's revolution in society.
- 2) To learn concerning Raja Ram Mohan Roy's advocacy for women's rights.
- 3) Discussion about Ram Mohan's impact on education.
- 4) Examine the current significance of Ram Mohan's theories on women's rights or literacy.

III. IDEOLOGY

1. Ram Mohan Roy placed a strong emphasis upon rationality as well as a contemporary experimental perspective or was heavily inspired by west contemporary philosophy.

2. Ram Mohan Roy's primary issue was Bengal, this possess country, which had fallen into religious or cultural decline.

3. He thought that rather than working for enhance societal circumstances, religious orthodoxies now harm the community, are bad for interpersonal interaction, causing individuals problems or confusion.

- Raja Ram Mohan Roy came to the conclusion that religious reformation entails societal or ideological modernization^[5].

- Ram Mohan thought that each offender must atone for his transgressions, which should be done by penance or its own purification rather than via offerings or ceremonies.

4. He was a passionate opponent of the caste system because he thought that all people should have socioeconomic justice.

5. The monotheistic of Islam appealed to Ram Mohan. He claimed that Vedanta's core teaching on monotheistic is also true.

- His concept of a solitary, unitarian deity served as an amendment to both the tritheism of traditional Christianity or the multiple deities of conventional Hinduism. He thought that monotheistic favored one overarching social paradigm.

6. Raja Ram Mohan Roy held the opinion that Hindu civilization cannot advance until women are liberated through inhuman varieties of tyranny including child marriage, illiteracy, sati, and purdah.

- He defined sati as an infringement of all humanitarian or cultural values which is a sign of a race's ethical degeneration.

IV. SOCIAL REFORMS: RAJA RAM MOHAN ROY CONTRIBUTION

The late 18th century, also known as the "Dark Age," was a period when Bengali culture was burdened by a variety of terrible ceremonies or regulations. The majority among the many rites or stringent moral laws that were implemented were erroneously interpreted or modified from prehistoric civilizations. Polygamy, Child marriage, or Sati was examples of prevalent societal practises which were harmful to women. The Sati Partha considered the obscene of such traditions^[6]. The surviving spouses would self-immolate at their partner's funeral bonfire as a component of the ritual. While women were first allowed to get involved in the custom, it ultimately evolved into a necessity, especially for Brahmin or high-caste households.

Adolescent girls got married too much older men in return for dowry payments so as allow males could take advantage from those ethical benefits by their spouses' Sati sacrifices. Although the women did not consent to become the victims of such wrongdoing, women were

usually forced or perhaps poisoned under submission. Raja Ram Mohan Roy opposed or denounced this cruel treatment. He openly as well as honestly expressed his opinions to the East India Company's top brass. The Bengali Sati Compliance, formerly known as Bengal Code Regulation XVII, A. D., was created as a consequence of the Governor-General, Lord Bentinck, comprehending Roy's intentions as well as sentiments. Despite ferocious opposition from traditional Christian groups, the measure was finally adopted in 1829. Someone caught conducting Sati Daha in Bengal Province would be subjected to legal repercussions since it was against the law^[7]. Raja Ram Mohan Roy is going to be regarded as a significant supporter of women, not just for his role in ending the Sati ceremony as well as for his support of equitable property privileges for women or his opposition to promiscuity or child marriages. He was also passionately opposed to the rigid distinctions between castes that prevailed at the time.

Reformist religious organisations were seen by Raja Ram Mohan Roy as tools for bringing about changes in society revolution politics.

- He established the Calcutta Unitarian Association in 1821, the Atmiya Sabha in 1815, or the Brahma Sabha, that eventually evolved into the Brahma Samaj.
- He ran an anti-caste, anti-untouchability, anti-superstition, anti-alcohol program.
- He was renowned for his innovative ideas or deeds for the liberation of women, particularly the outlawing of sati or remarriage of widows.
- He urged the right to title or ownership for women as well as criticized women's illiteracy, or widows' deplorable condition.

3.1. Brahma Samaj

- Brahma Sabha, subsequently referred to as Brahma Samaj, had been established around 1828 by Raja Ram Mohan Roy.
- Its main objective was to adore the everlasting God. It was opposed to offerings, ceremonies, or monarchy.
- It put a lot of emphasis on praying, reflecting, or perusing the Bible. It held that all faiths were interconnected.
- Throughout contemporary India, it was the country's first academic reforming campaign. It caused knowledge or rationality to flourish in India, that subsequently backed the cause of nationalism.
- It served also the model for all subsequent contemporary Indian religious, social, or political revolutions. The Brahma Samaj of India, headed by Keshub Chandra Sen, or the Adi Brahma Samaj, headed by Debendranath Tagore, broke apart from it in 1866.

3.2. Notable Leaders: Keshub Chandra Sen, Debendranath Tagore, Rabindranath Tagore and Pt. Sivnath Shastri.

V. RAJA RAM MOHAN ROY CONTRIBUTION: EDUCATIONAL REFORMS

- Roy made significant efforts to educate his compatriots about the advantages of contemporary education. In 1817, he helped David Hare establish the Hindu College while Roy's English school offered classes on mechanics with Voltaire's philosophy.
- He founded Vedanta College in 1825, which provided instruction in both Indian or Western political as well as physical disciplines^[8].

VI. RAJA RAM MOHAN ROY CONTRIBUTION: POLITICAL OR ECONOMIC REFORMS

- **Civil rights:** Roy was awed as well as inspired by the British form of constitutional governance because of the civil rights it afforded its citizens. He intended Indians to share in the advantages of that kind of administration.
- **Press liberty:** He contributed to the struggle for unfettered media throughout India by his papers as other endeavors.
- Ram Mohan discovered 3 periodicals when Lord Hastings abolished media regulation around 1819: The Brahmanical Magazine (1821), the Bengali weekly Samvad Kaumudi (1821), including the Persian weekly Mirat-ul-Akbar.
- **Reforms to taxes:** Roy urged the establishment of minimal rentals as well as denounced the repressive methods employed by Bengali zamindars. He also pushed for the repeal of tax on exempt areas.
- He demanded the elimination of the East India Company's commercial privileges as well as a decrease in exporting taxes on items made in India.
- **Administration-wide changes:** He pushed for the separation of the executive branch from the legal system as well as the Indianization of higher service. He advocated that European or Indians ought to be treated equally.

VII. THE RAM MOHAN ROY FEMINIST MOVEMENT

The initiator of the Indian Renaissance Movement as the country's finest feminist was Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1722–1833). He was an activist for social change, a freedom warrior, the creator of the Indian vernacular press, the Brahma Samaj, also a journalist for the Jana Jagaran. 'The Father of the Bengali Renaissance' is the moniker bestowed upon him by the British government. Akbar Shah II, the fictitious Mughal Emperor of Delhi, bestowed upon him the appellation of "Raja." Rabindranath Tagore addressed Raja Ram Mohan Roy as "Bharat Pathik." He was highly well-read or knew

a number of dialects, including English, French, Persian, Hebrew, Latin, Greek, Arabic, or Sanskrit, all of which had an impact on the way he thought about God^[9]. He provided English translations of holy texts including the Quran, Upanishads, or Vedas. Raja Ram Mohan Roy battled opposed societal ills such child marriage, female murdering an infant, multiple marriages, or sati including advocated a number of societal changes like inter-caste marriage, widow remarriage, property ownership for women, or literacy for women.

7.1 Raja Ram Mohan Roy Regarding the Status of Women Back in The Day

All men or women received treatment equally throughout prehistoric India, according to Raja Ram Mohan Roy. He promoted gender equality as well as asserted that women were neither ethically nor cognitively inferior to men. Hindu civilization cannot advance, according to Raja Ram Mohan Roy, until women are liberated from barbaric kinds of tyranny including lack of education, underage marriage, sati, and purdah. Roy believed that high caste or affluent widows were 3 options given their conditions present in Bengal in that duration: initially, to endure an awful life as slaves or to provide for others^[10]. The second step they lead an unethical life to maintain their autonomy. Lastly, it showed gratitude to their relatives for them to pass away upon the memorial flame of their respective positions deceased husbands.

7.2 Raja Ram Mohan Roy: on Polygamy

Raja Rammohan Rai had been a member of odd Bengali elite throughout the era. The quality of the weddings that a family's female descendants entered into determined their status. A non-kulin girl might bring respect to her relatives by married into an excellent kulin residence, but a kulin Brahmin household (individuals having names Mukherjee, Chatterjee, Banerjee, or Ganguly) might lose their status by having their child marriage into a bad kulin house. This led to promiscuity. In the majority of Bengal, kulin boys began their professions as skilled bridegrooms at the age of 10. When they were 20 they typically married a large number of women who ranged in age from 5 to 50. The kulins developed a type of professions around marriage. This strategy had the unfortunate result of rendering many women infertile and miserable. Since they were widows or wedded with partners some didn't often live by, ladies became infertile^[11]. He attacked polygamy using the shastras as a foundation. Although there were several prohibitions within the Shastras that forbade polygamy as this wasn't the case in Bengal. If a man's initial spouse was still living, he required appealing to the legal system with justifications for needing another wife; only after receiving the court's approval might he remarried.

7.3 Raja Ram Mohan Roy on Women's Right to Property

Establishing ownership privileges for Hindu women became a key component to the societal justice effort. The Hindu widower remained under the discretion

of her spouse's family under the prevailing customs since woman has no claims or entitlement on the assets of her husband with the exception from the entitlement to support. A booklet titled "Brief Observations Concerning Contemporary Encroachment on the Traditional Liberties of Females" was published in 1822 by Raja Ram Mohan. Roy used the ancient Indian law to demonstrate in the brochure that the shastras supported women's ability to acquire land. All widows were entitled to a portion from their deceased partner's fortune and belongings, regardless of if they had children and not. In addition, each daughter had the authority to acquire their father's assets, although spouses had to be supported^[12]. Raja Ram Mohan asked the British administration to establish a legislation to do rid of these inherited restrictions to give widow financial autonomy or independence. These initiatives culminated in the passage of the Special Marriage Act of 1872, which included provisions for separation including the transmission of assets to women. The Married Women's Property Act of 1874 enhanced women's rights for possession or acquisition through extending the definition of stridhan (women's ownership). Additionally, it granted a widow an entitlement to both her husband's part as an amount equivalent to a son's portion of the assets.

7.4 Raja Ram Mohan Roy: Abolishing Sati Pratha

Raja Ram Mohan Roy was raised in the horrifying Sati practice, in which widows as young as 12 had to leap into the bonfire of their deceased spouses. He made a commitment to doing away with the custom; in order to that end, he frequented burial sites to convince widows not to set themselves on fire. He established surveillance organizations to safeguard women beginning around 1818, enlisted the aid of other affluent Bengali categories, he wrote papers to demonstrate that the custom of widow combustion, or sati, was not authorized by any ancient Hindu shastras or writings^[13]. The Sati Regulation Act, issued throughout 1829 under Lord William Bentinck, outlawed the custom of sati in India and declared it to be unlawful or punished by law. The British administration outlawed Sati by establishing legislation, but Raja Ram Mohan Roy was in charge of putting the ban into practice at the local level.

7.5 Raja Ram Mohan Roy: Woman's Education

There were numerous educated women in ancient India. Hindu Brahmadinis, those women who remained single and learned the Vedas for the whole of their existence, or the Sadyodvahas, who's evaluated the Vedas up until they were, tied the knot, were two different sorts of learned women. Old Indian scholars Lilavati, Bhanumati, and Gargi Maitrayee were well-versed in every major Sastras and ancient writings^[14]. He advocated for gender equality as well as said that women did not act less intelligently or ethically than males. Therefore, Raja Ramhohan Roy was a great advocate for women's educational opportunities and held to opinion so women must not be kept in purdah or restricted within their houses, must rather receive a similar educational

opportunity as men to ensure individuals might confront against the injustices committed towards females and combat many societal ills. Roy established the Anglo-Hindu school around 1822, so that boys or girls could attend classes there together^[15] He founded the Brahma Samaj, which performed great effort to promote women's educational opportunities or persuade households to send their daughters as well as women to attend school, in 1828.

VIII. CONCLUSION

When he lived in India, Raja Ram Mohan Roy considered the most prominent feminist. He waged a fight against cruel or inhumane Hindu traditions including child marriage, polygamy, or the hierarchy of castes, whereby a widowed woman imitates oneself on the spouses of pyre deceased husband. His actions were crucial in getting rid of the purdah regime as well. He battled for women's ownership as well as legacy liberties, supported the remarriage of widows, and promoted girls' education. He also promoted women's independence as well as privileges. By a result, it is clear that Raja Ram Mohan Roy was a pathfinder in his day for releasing women from a variety of societal ills, enabling them to pursue education or self-empowerment.

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