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Arya samaj and Indian education system

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Abstract

During the colonial period, Indian political and social conditions were unsatisfactory, Indian culture was sagging in the collapse, and people had forgotten their glorious past. Therefore, several social and religious movements emerged in different parts of India at the end of the nineteenth century. Dayanand Saraswati was the founder of Arya Samaj, who gave an indigenous orientation to Indian people from a different point of view and tried to destroy the ignorance, incest and darkness of society. He considered that education means overcoming this ignorance; establishing several Gurukuls and Dayanand Anglo Vedic Schools, Arya Samaj paved the way for India's cultural development. The present research study examines the relevance of educational reforms done by Arya Samaj. The paper also discusses the higher educational ideals of Arya Samaj in the context of the Indian education system.

Keywords: Anglo, culture, gurukul, sanskriti, vedic

Introduction

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, intellectual and cultural upheaval was the main feature of Indian society, which became increasingly infested with many evils. At the beginning of this century, the Renaissance period started; a new awakening emerged in the people with the influence of modern Western thoughts and the consciousness of being defeated by a foreign power. The intellectual Indians came to know the weaknesses of their society and started looking for different ways to overcome them. Many social-religious movements started; the objective was to develop the social, cultural, economic, educational and personal development of the Indian people. The movements played an active role for the equal rights of women, the abolition of child marriage and raising their voice on remarriage of widows. Arya Samaj was one of the social - religious movements; Dayanand was the founder of Arya Samaj who was born in 1824 in an *Audichya Brahmana* family in *Tankara*, the state of *Morvi* of South Gujarat; he expressed his faith in ancient Indian ideas and institutions. He formulated a national educational plan and established schools to provide education through the Hindi medium; the main objective was to encourage the study of the national language and vernaculars. (Rai, 1915) ^[1] Swami Dayanand had a great love for the Hindi language, so he directed his followers to spread and promote Hindi. He has written his book 'Satyarth Parkash' in Hindi, giving it a respectable place. Arya Samaj's aimed to revive Indian society intellectually, ideologically and spiritually.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are

1. To examine the relevance of educational reforms done by Arya Samaj.
2. To analyze the role of Arya Samaj in promoting female education.
3. To highlight the Gurukul System.
4. To discuss the purpose of education according to Arya Samaj.

Research Methodology

The research approach used in the study is historical and analytical—the Primary data collected from several public records and autobiographies. Secondary sources are made available by critically analyzing books, journals and conference proceedings written by learned scholars.

Arya Samaj and Indian Education System

During the nineteenth century, many social reformers realized that it would be useful to

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assimilate the essential element of modern Western thoughts in Indian society. It is noteworthy that the Hindu society was forgetting its ancient cultural unity and divided into several castes and sub-castes. The caste had rules that all members had to follow. It had become birth-based; the social level of a person was dependent on what caste he was born into. The caste had determined his occupation and social relations. A person had no choice but to change his caste. The condition of untouchables became worse; they were allowed to stay outside the village and debarred from the right to use the public wells and tanks; entry into the public temple was forbidden. So caste discrimination was the main target of the reform movements and initiated social-religious reforms considering the freedom of humans as essential and believed that a new society could be formed, based on liberal principles, in which everyone has personal, social, political, religious and economic freedom. *Brahmo Samaj, Prarthana Samaj, Young Bengal Movement, Ramakrishna Mission, Theosophical Society, Aligarh Movement and Arya Samaj* were such social-religious movements. (Desai, 1948) ^[2].

Swami Dayanand Saraswati founded Arya Samaj, which aimed to revive Indian society intellectually, ideologically and spiritually. The word Arya means superior and progressive. Arya Samaj means a progressive society that strives to follow the Vedas and inspire others to follow. *Maryada purshottam* Shri Ram and *Yogiraj* Krishna are the ideals of Arya Samaj. The principles of the Arya Samaj are based on the Vedas. Dayanand Saraswati tried to re-establish the ancient *vedanta* philosophy as some Indian people were influenced by Western education and converted to Christianity. (Pruthi, 2004) ^[3] They had forgotten their glorious ancient history, dharma and ethnic pride. Various social malpractices had crippled Indian society. In such a situation, Swami Dayanand Saraswati made education a medium for social reforms. He had an unwavering belief that education can lead any society on the path of progress. Swami Dayanand said that education is a process that contributes to the natural development of the innate powers of humans; develops personality and makes such changes in behavior, thoughts and attitudes that are beneficial to society, country and the world. Swami Dayanand called for a return to the Vedas to arouse the confidence of the young people in Indian culture which meant to spread education. He had the opinion that Vedic education could remove the darkness of ignorance from society. Veda contains the truth of religion and knowledge of science and art. (Ghosh, 1940) ^[4] He believed that through the spread of education, awareness would come in every corner of the country. (Vidhyalankar, 1983) ^[5] He had the opinion that the purpose of education is not merely personal development but to create such males and females in society who can properly perform their duties. Along with this, he believed that education should also supplement the work of moral and spiritual development of the child and it should be given in the mother tongue.

Arya Samaj emphasized practical education

Arya Samaj mandated practical education for students and presented a list of general and specialized courses so that students do not have to face economic problems in real life. This work done by Arya Samaj was useful as the child taught the practical work. It has emphasized a compulsory and free education for the children. Arya Samaj believed

that it is impossible to achieve prosperity without giving education to every individual. They had given the idea of practical education based on craftsmanship. According to Arya Samaj, education should be such that it makes the children self-reliant. (Saxena, 1999) ^[6].

Arya Samaj emphasized the parent's role

Arya Samaj gave the importance of children's education and strongly clarified that the parent's role in the child's elementary education is very important. Fathers and Mothers should always give their children good counseling to make refined them in character and manners. (Chiranjiva, 1915) ^[7] Arya Samaj emphasized that parents must guide their children to make them cultured and civilized individuals of society.

Promote Women's Education

Arya Samaj considered women education as important as men education. Swami Dayanand Saraswati was unhappy to see the sufferings of women folk for denial of educational facilities, *child marriage, purdah paratha, sati, polygamy, forced widowhood* and several other social practices faced by them. No doubt from ancient times, except in the early Vedic period, women do not have the equal status in society. Dayanand Saraswati strongly opposed those who considered female education against the scriptures; he said, it is not written in the Vedas that women do not have the right to education or to read the Vedas.

Arya Samaj made many efforts to spread and promote women's education. Arya Kanya Schools were established for girls; *Kanya Mahavidyalaya, Jalandhar*, was the first women's school under the auspices of the Arya Samaj. (Upadhyaya, 1940) ^[8] Swami Dayanand believed that the early education of a child starts from the mother's womb. Therefore, the mother must be educated and qualified. Thus, the importance of female education is described in today's era; Swami Dayanand had put this great philosophy in front of people long ago. Arya Samaj believed that equal opportunity for development should provide to males and females. (Pandey, 1972) ^[9].

Gurukul Education

Arya Samaj established many Gurukuls in the different parts of India. They promoted the construction of institutions in the natural environment for the education of students. According to Arya Samaj, the school should be four *kos* away from the town or village. All the children should be treated equally without any discrimination in these organizations, where students study under the supervision of well-educated teachers. The purpose of the Gurukul education system was to provide physical, mental, spiritual and moral development to the children to generate faith towards ancient Indian values, provide a rightful place for Vedic literature and make the mother tongue the medium for every kind of education. However, after Dayanand, Arya Samaj established many Dayanand Anglo-Vedic Schools, where English language was also taught along with Sanskrit and Vedas. But the dominance of Vedas and Sanskrit would be the first rather than English the only reading and writing language, whose place would be secondary. Dayanand Anglo Vedic School was established in Lahore in 1886, Dayanand Anglo Vedic College in 1889 and Gurukul Kangri in 1902. The Gurukul Kangri is an independent university. (Sharma, 1912) ^[10] Apart from this, *Jwalapur*,

Vrindavan, Dehradun, Baroda and Sani Gurukuls are also important. In modern times, Dayanand Anglo Vedic College and schools in almost every district of India are doing a great job promoting education.

Results and Discussion

Arya Samaj particularly emphasized the moral education of the child. They considered moral education as the right kind of character building. However, the current education system is failing to achieve the goal of character building. There is a steady decline in the character of students. The moral and spiritual development of a person is not possible in attaining the comforts of cosmic life. Excessive materialism has led to a decline in moral values. In such a situation, the philosophy of education presented by Swami Dayanand is very important and needs to be adopted on a large scale.

The purpose of the work done by the Arya Samaj was the development of humanity. Dayanand considered all beings in the world equal. According to him, the development of the spirit of love, sacrifice and brotherhood in the masses should be the ultimate goal of education and the purpose of human is to serve the human race living in this world. Arya Samaj motivated the people to do the work for social reform and to infuse moral values and ideals in life which are still praised in our society. (Rloand, 2006) ^[11] Arya Samaj has given importance to the spirit of universal brotherhood. The goal of universal brotherhood in education can prove to be a great boon for today's education system. It is essentially a philanthropic movement and maintains various institutions of public utility and importance. (Bakshi, 2002) ^[12].

Conclusion

The educational ideas of Arya Samaj have great significance. Arya Samaj attempts to make education effective from all perspectives i.e. national, international, idealistic and practical and presents such an education system for the country which is economically, socially, morally and ideologically based on welfare. Dayanand, the founder of the Arya Samaj, presented a framework to solve national and international problem. The education philosophy presented by Arya Samaj not only represents the Indian conscience but also provides an education system based on humanity and the consciousness of the present age.

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