



Background To The Great Revolt: Rammohan's Historical-Social Thought And Steps

Gopal Dey

Research Scholar of History (Ph.D)

Department of History, YBN University, Ranchi, Jharkhand, India.

Abstract : *Through decades mutinies took place for the movement for independence of great India. Out of those mutinies Sepoy Mutiny was an important one. The Social & Political Causes were present at the background of Sepay Mutiny. The impact of social and political reforms of Raja Rammohan Ray were included in the said Mutiny. Being inspired by following reforms works likes Sati prevention act, Womens Liberty, oppotion of caste system Raja Rammohan Roy the Sepay were motivated to start Sepay Mutiny. They thought that if the single person (Raja Rammohan Roy) can proceed for social and political movement against supersition, why the group of Sepay will be unable to do so.*

One of the most famous Bengali and Indian philosophers of all time, Raja Rammohan Roy was a leader of the Renaissance. Raja Rammohan Roy was one of the few people in his time to realise completely the significance of modern age. His attempt was to establish Indian people in the full conscisness of their own cultural personality, to make them comprehened the reality that was unque in their civilizations in the spirit of sympathetic co-operation. Before Sepoy Muting, Raja Rammohan's thought and works enlightend the society.

When Supersition, poverty, harassment neglect oppression of women, the collapse of Indian education and other social ills dominated Bengali and India's entire societies in the 18th century. Rammohan Roy emerged. The social position, rights, and educateion of women have all deteriorated as a result of the lengthy period of Muslim dominance in India. There were many problems under the East India company's rule, despite the fact that the colonial rulers established some schooling to support their rule and trade. The caste system was surrounded by an air of untouchability, and the social structure was split in to several castes, races, and faiths on the other side, he was able to effect a ground-breaking transformation in India's educational system as well as the preservation of women's lives and rights. The studies objective is to describe and evaluate Raja Rammohan Roy's contribution to Indian society and which impact on great revolt on 1857. The Study used an analytical and documentary to come at a conclusion.

Key Words : *Raja Rammohan Roy, Sati, Supersition, Philosophers, Harassment, Consciousness , Support, East India Company, Dominance.*

1. Introduction :

Raja Ram Mohan Roy was a great social reformer. He modernized Indian society in many ways. Ram mohan as the 'first modern man' of India realized early that social reform was the precondition for the regeneration of the people of our country. Roy believed in, the progressive role of the British rule in India and sought government held in the matter of social reforms, especially in the form of socially progressive legislations. Roy's aim was the creation of a new society based on the principles of tolerance, sympathy and reason, where the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity would be accepted by all, and where man would be free from the traditional shackles which had enslaved him

for ages. He yearned for a new society which would be cosmopolitan and modern. Roy's methods of social reform were multifaceted. He combined all possible means, including even those which were commonly believed to be incompatible. Raja Rammohan Roy and his social steps motivated the sepoy of 1857 revolt.

2. Objectives of the study:

- To analyse the pre-determined goals of Raja Rammohan Roy for making India better
- To explore the historical-social throuht of Raja Rammohan Roy
- To analyse the philosophical importants of his political throuht in Sepoy of Indian great revolt.

3. Methodology of the study :

For conduction this study, researcher uses verious primary and secondary sources such as books , letters, journals, articles & also verious important online materials.

4. Abolition of Sati

Sati is described as a Hindu custom in India in which the widow was burnt to ashes on her dead husband's pyre. Basically the custom of Sati was believed to be a voluntary Hindu act in which the woman voluntary decides to end her life with her husband after his death. But there were many incidences in which the women were forced to commit Sati, sometimes even dragged against her wish to the lighted pyre. The Brahmins and other higher castes in the society encouraged it. Raja Ram Mohan Roy raised his voice against the Sati system. A few rulers of India tried to ban this custom. In 1818, Roy wrote his first essay on sati in which he argued that the woman had an existence independent of her husband and hence, she had no reason to end her life on the demise of her husband. The society had no right over her life. Right to life of both man and women was equally important. Roy found that ignorance of the women about their legitimate rights, their illiteracy, customary denial of the property rights to the widow and the consequent helplessness, dependence, misery and humiliation were some of the causes behind this practice. According to Roy, Sati was nothing short of murder and was therefore a punishable offence under the law. It was Raja Ram Mohan Roy's efforts, bore fruits and this practice was stopped by an Act passed in 1829 during Lord William Bentinck. Thus, a long prevailing ugly practice of the Hindus was uprooted. After that, being inspired the group of sepoy in 1857 revolt.

5. Religious Reforms

Ram Mohan raised his voice against idolatry. In his book 'Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhidin' he championed the cause of Monotheism. He criticized idol-worship by the Hindus. He rejected polytheism, idol-worship and rituals of different religions. He advocated monotheism or unity among gods. He also advised people to be guided by the conscience. He inspired men to cultivate rationality. To all he appealed to observe the principle of unity of God. Further, he formed 'Atmiya Sabha' in 1815 to carry on discussions among scholars on religion and philosophy. Through this, he raised his voice against religious and social malpractices, Champion of Women Liberty Raja Ram Mohan Roy was a champion of women's rights in India. He laid the foundations of the women's liberation movement in this country. He revolted against the subjection of women and pleaded for the restoration of their rights. Raja Ram Mohan Roy advocated the liberty of Women. He was determined to give women her proper place in the society. Besides abolishing Sati, he advocated in favor of widow remarriage. In 1822, Roy wrote a book entitled 'Brief Remarks Regarding Modern Enroachments on the Ancient Right of Females'. He argued that like the sons, daughters have also their right over parental property. He also influenced the British government to bring necessary modification in the existing law. He raised voice against child-marriage and polygamy. He was the advocate of women education. Brahmo Samaj which he founded paid

6. Voice against idolatry:

Ram Mohan raised his voice against idolatry. In his book 'Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhidin' he championed the cause of Monotheism. He criticized idol-worship by the Hindus. He also opposed the principle of Trinitarianism (God, Son Jesus and the holy spirit) of the Christianity. He rejected polytheism, idol-worship and rituals of different religions. He advocated monotheism or unity among gods. He also advised people to be guided by the conscience. He inspired men to cultivate rationality. To all he appealed to observe the principle of unity of God.

In his words—

"I travelled in the remotest parts of the world. And I found the inhabitants there of agreeing generally in believing in the existence of one being who is the source of creation and the Governor of it." Further, he formed 'Atmiya Sabha' to carry on discussions among scholars on religion and philosophy. When the Christian missionaries criticized him, he silenced them by writing a pamphlet- 'An appeal to the Christian public in defence of the precepts of Jesus'.

7. Champion of Women Liberty:

Raja Ram Mohan Roy advocated the liberty of Women. He was determined to give women her proper place in the society. Besides abolishing Sati, he advocated in favor of widow remarriage. He also told that like the sons, daughters have also their right over parental property. He also influenced the British government to bring necessary modification in the existing law. He raised voice against child-marriage and polygamy. He was the advocate of women education. Thus, he advocated women's liberty out and out and awakened them. Laxmi by also championed in 1857 by Rammohan thought.

8. Opposition to Caste System:

The caste system was a very ugly practice prevailing in Indian society right from the later Vedic age. Indian society was fragmented by the name of different castes. The higher castes like Brahmins and Kshatriyas looked down upon the Sudras, Chandalas and other aboriginals. Ram Mohan opposed this ugly system of the Indian society. To him everybody was a son or daughter of the God. So, there is no difference among men. There should not exist hatred and animosity among them. Everybody is equal before God. Thus, ignoring differences among themselves they should embrace each other ignoring differences. Then, the true purpose of God will be materialized. By advocating this equality among men. Ram Mohan became the eyesore of many higher caste Indians. When British Government divided the sepoy, they protest of the system.

9. Advocate of Western Education:

Raja Ram Mohan Roy was a great scholar having sharp intellect in the Vedas, Upanishads, Quran, Bible and several other holy scriptures. He very well realized the importance of English language. He could visualize the need of a scientific, rational and progressive education for the Indians. During his time, when controversy was going on between the orientalist and occident lists, he sided with the latter and advocated in favour of the introduction of the English system of education. He liked Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, Botany, Philosophy. At the same time he also desired that the Indian Vedic studies and philosophical systems were to be studied and analyzed properly.

He supported the move of Lord Macaulay and championed the cause of the English system of education in India. His motto was to take Indians the path of progress. He established English school in 1816 and Vedanta College in 1825. He wanted to introduce modern system of education. Of course, he could not live to see the introduction of English system of education in India in 1835. However, his efforts and dreams were materialized into reality even after his death.

10. Father of Indian Journalism:

Raja Ram Mohan Roy was the 'Father of Indian Journalism'. He believed in the freedom of press. He edited a newspaper in Bengali named 'Samprad Kaumudi'. He was also the editor of Mirat- ul-Akbar. When restrictions were imposed on the publications of newspapers, he reacted sharply and criticized the British authorities vehemently.

In his editorials, he reflected important social, political, economic, religious and other problems with which the Indians were grossly entangled. This brought public consciousness. His writings were so powerful that people were deeply moved by this. He could express his view in powerful English.

11. Economic Ideas:

Ram Mohan's economic ideas were tinged with liberalism. He wanted the state intervention to protect the property of the individual. His article 'Essay over the Rights of the Hindus over Ancestral Property' was a pointer in this direction. One's claim over the ancestral property was to be maintained.

Further, he advocated that the peasants should be protected by the government from the tyranny of the landlords. He was well aware of the dangerous consequences of the permanent settlement of 1793 introduced by Lord Cornwallis. So, he wanted the British authority to intervene in the affairs of the Zamindars to protect the peasants.

He advocated the right of Hindu women over property. As a liberal economic thinker he was deeply concerned with the economic strangulation of the poor in the century. That is why he had resented strongly against the existing revenue system of the country whose first prey were the landlords.

12. Reforms through Brahma Samaj:

Brahmo Sabha which was transferred into Brahma Samaj in 1830 became the vehicle of Ram Mohan's socio religious reforms. It preached monotheism. It condemned idolatry. It saw no difference between man and man because it accepted the fatherhood of God and brotherhood of mankind. It condemned ritualistic practices like animal sacrifice, offering of Prasad and so on. It also fought for the emancipation of women. Thus, many evil practices like caste system, Sati, Child marriage. Polygamy etc. were the targets of the Brahma Samaj.

The Brahma movement gained momentum through Debendranath Tagore and Keshab Chandra Sen later on. Thus for the creation of a healthy society, Brahma Samaj was determined. This definitely created a milestone in the cultural heritage of India.

13. Champion of Nationalism:

Raja Ram Mohan Roy believed in the political freedom of man. In 1821 he had written to J.S. Buckingham, the editor of the 'Calcutta Journal' that he believed in the freedom of European and Asiatic countries. When Charles X abdicated the throne of France due to the July Revolution in 1830, Ram Mohan became very happy.

He advised Indians to have self-freedom in thought and action. He showed a bright example by condemning the Jury Act of 1826 which had introduced religious discrimination in the law courts. According to this Act a Hindu or a Mohammedan could be tried either by a European or a native Christian but not vice versa. Ram Mohan protested against it. He wrote a letter to J. Crawford, one of his English friends in this way—

"... a country like India could not possibly be expected to be suppressed by force as Ireland had been." Thus, his nationalism was blatant. He definitely fought for the legitimate rights of the Indians and championed the cause of Indian nationalism. Further, Ram Mohan Roy himself proceeded to London to plead a case on behalf of Akbar n, the Mughal Emperor. This reflected his nationalism.

14. Love for Liberty and Constitutionalism:

Liberty and constitutionalism were the two important aspects upon which Raja Ram Mohan emphasized. He preferred a constitutional form of Government for every nation. Despotism or autocracy, he hated from the core of his heart. He told that a constitutional government could only give guarantee of Individual freedom. When the people of Naples broke the shekels of Austrian despotism. Ram Mohan was a happy man. He wrote —

“..... Enemies to liberty and friends of despotism have never been and never will

be ultimately successful.” Thus, he advocated individual liberty and constitutionalism. This clearly project that Ram Mohan was a champion of human liberty.

15. Conclusion:

In conclusion, Ram Mohan started his crusade against dogmatism and evils that engulfed the then Indian society. He consistently endeavored to free the Indian society from the clutches of immorality, untouchability and impurity and to make it healthy in every aspect. Of course Prof Sumit Sarkar and Rajat Ray do not appreciate much, because, the Raja failed to check the oppressive middle class.

Further, Ashok Sen criticizes him for rendering helping hand to the British to make India a colonial power. However, a little lacuna is to be ignored in case of the Raja, because he started single hand his operation to eradicate evils from the society.

In true sense of the term, Raja Ram Mohan Roy acted as a bridge between the East and West. He was the Father of Indian Renaissance'. He was an intellectual of a superb order and still simple and bold. His ideas and ideals inspired nationalism in India. Against the hazards. Ram Mohan carried on his reforms and set standards for other Indians to follow. Undoubtedly, Raja Ram Mohan Roy was regarded as the morning star of Indian Renaissance. Through all his activities he tried to reawaken the masses of India and make India a better representative across the globe. Bing inspired by following reforms works which made by Raja Rammohan Roy the sepoy of great revolt 1857 were motivated to start sepoy mutiny.

REFERENCES:

- i) Apurvananda, Swami : Yugpravartak Vivekanandaa (Hindi) : Jayanti Prakashan, 163, Lower Circular Road, Calcutta-14.
- ii) Avinasingam, TS. : Education : Sri Ramkrishna Mth, Mylapore, Mdraas-4.
- iii) Alcaz, K.P., Harmony of Religions : The Relevance of Vivekaanda, Puthi Pustak, Calcutta, 1993.
- iv) Arora, Vijay Kumar, The Social and Politicla Philosophy of Swami Vivekananda, Puthi Pustak Calcutta-1968..
- v) Banhatti, G.S. : The Quintessence of Vivekananda Svichr Prakashna Mandal, Nagpur.
- vi) Sharma, H.D. (2002) Raja Rammohan Roy – The Renaissance Man, Rupa & Co. P.8.
- vii) Mehrotra, Arvind (2008). A concise history of Indian literatre in English. Raniket Permanent Block. P-1.
- viii) Simgh klbir (17July 2017) Rammohan Roy. The father of the Indian Renaissance young Bities.
- ix) Biswas, DilipKumar, Rammohan Samikha-. Saraswat Libray, 206 BidhanSarani, Kol. 700006
- x) A Article on Rammohan Roy, Anandamela, ABP Ltd. Kolkata,