



Women's Empowerment In India: Pioneer Role Of Raja Ram Mohan Roy.

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Abstract

This study explores Raja Ram Mohan Roy as a remarkable figure for women's empowerment in 18th-century India and the ripple effect continue till 21st' century. It analyzes his multiple complex reforms – fighting Sati, advocating for education, and promoting widow remarriage – that challenged social norms. While highlighting his advanced influence on subsequent legislation in India like The Hindu Marriage Act (1955), the study acknowledges potential gaps. Roy's focus on Bengal and limitations in reaching beyond upper-caste women warrant further investigation. Examining the long-term evolution of his ideas would provide benchmark understanding. Raja Ram Mohan Roy's legacy remains significant, inspiring ongoing struggles for gender equality in India.

INTRODUCTION:

During the tragic time of 18th century India, amid harsh traditions and full of injustice, rose Raja Ram Mohan Roy as a gifted pioneering reformer. He would become a remarkable figure, a revolution for women's empowerment. He was born on 22 May in 1772, Ray, having witnessed firsthand the inflicted on women, refused to accept the status quo. Restricted by social dictates and disenfranchised by brutal practices, women's voices were silenced. But the fire of disobedience was kindled in Roy's desire to dispel the darkness of ignorance and oppression.

Research Objectives:

1. To study the various reforms of Raja Ram Mohan Roy in the field of education and empowerment of Indian women.
2. To study the relevance of Raja Ram Mohan Roy in context of present women rights in India.

Research methodology: A secondary research method is applying. All data are collected from various sources of Books, Magazines, Journals and government data.

A journey of wisdom and compassion:

Roy's journey was not one of grand proclamation, but of quiet introspection. He dug through ancient scriptures, discovering verses that spoke of a forgotten past where women had an equal place. Enlightenment ideals, with their echoes of freedom and individual rights, promised a different future. However, the reality of his own time was harsh: the barbaric rite of sati-immolation that consumed widows, the denial of education and the suffocating suppression of child marriage. Each injustice becomes a seed of rebellion, nurturing his resolve to fight for a brighter dawn for Indian women.

Weapons of Intelligence and Social Reform:

Raja Ram Mohan Roy's reform efforts were fueled by his intelligence and his commitment to social justice. Even before the establishment of the Brahmo Samaj, he founded the Kinship Council in 1815. This reformist society addressed issues such as idolatry, rigid caste structure and meaningless rituals. When press censorship was relaxed under Lord Hastings in 1819, Roy seized the opportunity. He launched three journals: The Brahmanical Magazine, It was an English language magazine set up and was first published in 1821. It attempted to avoid the effects of the missionaries' propaganda. And next a bangali version news paper The Sambad Kaumudi appeared on December 4, 1821. It was an advertised bring facility of people of India. And number three, The Persian weekly magazine Mirat-ul-Akhbar in 1822. These publications became powerful tools for promoting his ideas of reform and awareness of social evils.[9]

He was not just a thinker, but a man of action who used various means to promote his vision for a better India. His weapons were not of steel, but of wisdom and grace. He wielded the pen, produced essays and pamphlets that dissected social evils with absurd arguments. He set up safe space for women – kinship meetings and Brahmo Samaj – where they could seek refuge, learn and speak their minds. The Anglo-Hindu School, a revolutionary beacon founded by Roy, defied tradition by allowing girls and boys to study side by side. It challenged age-old restrictions that denied women access to knowledge.

The War Against Sati: A Defining Moment

But Roy's greatest battle was against sati-immolation. The fuel of blind faith and social pressure devoured not only the life but the soul of womanhood. With unwavering determination, he exposed scriptural misinterpretations, inflamed public discourse, and tirelessly appealed to the British government. His voice, amplified by a growing chorus of reformers, finally led to the historic abolition of sati-immolation in 1829. It was a victory not only for the protection of individual life, but for the inherent dignity and right to life recognized in every woman.

Beyond Sati: A Broader Vision

Roy's revolution extended beyond the flames of sati-immolation. He supported widow remarriage, supporting women finding happiness and purpose after loss. He challenged polygamy, demanding monogamy as the basis of true honor and partnership. He condemned child marriage, recognizing its violation of innocence and its detrimental effect on girls' well-being. Although the existing of limitations particularly regarding his focus on upper-caste Bengali women, Roy's approach sparked a national conversation about women's empowerment. He sowed the seeds of education, challenged oppressive traditions, and ignited the fires of reform that still burn today. His legacy is a testament to the power of a voice, a pen, an indomitable spirit to shape a more just and equitable world for all, especially those long relegated to the shadows – for the women of India.

The ongoing Impact: women's rights Legislation in India and influence of Raja Ram Mohan Roy

Raja Ram Mohan Roy's arguments and relentless for women's rights in the 18th century laid the preliminary work for significant legislative progress in 19th and 21st-century India. His reforms, like fight against sati, widow remarriage, and women's education, directly influenced the course of legal reforms aimed at achieving gender equality.

Eliminating Sati: A Catalyst for Change

Roy's relentless campaign against sati, the barbaric practice of burning widows alive on their husband's funeral pyres, stands as a pivotal moment. His writings and public debates exposed the cruelty of the practice and garnered international support. This pressure, coupled with Roy's tireless efforts, at the end led to Lord William Bentinck, the Governor-General of India, prohibiting sati in 1829 through the Regulation XVII, A. D. 1829 [10]. This act, a direct consequence of Roy's movement, marked the first major legislative victory for women's rights in British India.

Widow Remarriage and Property Rights

Roy's support for widow remarriage challenged another deeply entrenched social norm. Widows were often ostracized, denied inheritance rights, and forced to live a life of discomfort. Roy argued for the social and economic empowerment of widows, advocating for their right to remarry and inherit property. While the path was long, his ideas influenced later legislation like the Hindu Widow's Remarriage Act of 1856, which legalized widow remarriage for Hindus [13]. Additionally, the Hindu Inheritance (Removal of Disabilities) Act of 1928 granted Hindu women inheritance rights, a crucial step towards their economic independence [13].

Education: Empowering Women Through Self Realisation.

Roy strongly believed that education was the key factor to women's empowerment. He established schools for girls, promoting literacy and knowledge accession as tools for self-reliance and social development. His vision resonated with later reformers and social movements, eventually influencing the national government to concentrate on girls' education enshrined in the Constitution of India (1950) [12]. Furthermore, initiatives like the Right to Education Act : 2009, aim to achieve gender parity in education enrollment and completion rates [11].

The Web of Effect: Law Reflects progress After Independence.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy's pioneering efforts, especially his fight against sati-immolation, advocacy for education and campaigning for women's agency, undoubtedly paved the way for the legal and social progress witnessed in India in the protection of women's rights and freedoms. Although his direct influence on specific legislation may not always have been linear, his work served as an important foundation for advances such as,

1.The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955: After drawing pictures of Ray's fight against multiple marriage and child marriage.

2.The Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956: While Raja Ram Mohan Roy specifically fought for widow remarriage, his extensive campaigning for women's right to choice and self-determination paved the way for the Act which gave women the right to adopt.

3.The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961: Although Roy did not directly address dowry, his fight against social evils that defeated women laid the foundation for challenging incorrect practices like dowry. This is consequent effects of Roy's ideas.

4.The [Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 - India Code](#): Roy's support for education and equal opportunities for women fueled the economic empowerment movement, ultimately contributing to legislation that mandated equal pay for equal work.

5.The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971: Although it is not directly linked to Ray's work, this act is consistent with his view of women's agency and freedom to make decisions about their own bodies.

5.The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986: Verdict's fight against exploitation of women resonates with the purpose of the Act to protect women from objectification and misrepresentation.

7.The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1993: Although not directly linked to the judgment, these Acts embody the principle of equal participation and representation, which is consistent with its vision for women's empowerment by providing increased representation to women in local governance.

8.The Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994: This Act addresses a contemporary issue, but echoes the judgment's emphasis on the protection of women's agency and their right to make choices regarding their reproductive health.

9.Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005: It was coming much after the time of the judgment, this Act reflects the ongoing struggle for women's protection and freedom from harm, a cause which is consistent with its broader vision gender equality in the twenty first century.[4]

CONCLUSIONS

Raja Rammohan Roy's legacy was vary complicated. While his direct influence on specific laws may not always have been easy, his pioneering efforts - particularly his fight against sati-immolation, advocacy for education and campaigning for women's agency - undoubtedly paved the way for the legal and social progress that our country has

witnessed in protecting women's rights and freedom. His loyal spirit continues to inspire the current struggle for social justice and gender equality in the twenty first century.

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