

A STUDY OF ARYA SAMAJ MOVEMENT IN GUJARAT DURING THE
19th AND 20th CENTURIES

A

SYNOPSIS

OF THE THESIS TO BE SUBMITTED TO

THE MAHARAJA SAYAJIRAO UNIVERSITY OF BARODA, VADODARA

FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

HISTORY

BY

SUNITA CHALAVARIYA

UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF

DR. DILIP KATARIA

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

FACULTY OF ARTS

THE MAHARAJAH SAYAJIRAO UNIVERSITY OF

BARODA

VADODARA

2024

INTRODUCTION

Of all movements in India for the political regeneration of the country so potent as the Arya Samaj. The ideal of this Society proclaimed by its founder is a free and independent form of National Government.¹

Indian Sociologist
May 1908

The 19th and 20th centuries were marked by the emergence of several social-religious reform movements, which aimed to reform the Indian Society and bring out social change. These movements were primarily divided into two groups 1) Western oriented - influenced by contemporary Western ideas 2) Revivalist Movements - reviving ancient traditions and emphasizing the importance of preserving cultural and religious heritage.

An example of a Western oriented movement can be seen in the form of the Brahmo Samaj founded by Raja Ram Mohan Roy in 1828, this movement aimed to reform Hinduism by promoting monotheism and denouncing idol worship and the caste system. Similarly, Prathana Samaj, which was founded by Atmaram Pandurang in 1867, aimed to reform Hindu society by promoting social equality and women's education. Arya Samaj, the Revivalist Movement founded by Swami Dayananda Saraswati in 1875 aimed to revive the Vedic way of life and promote the idea of "Back to the Vedas". It vigorously strove to revolutionize every facet of human society that was founded on the principles of the ancient Vedic culture. Revivalist movements played a crucial role in shaping India's cultural and social landscape, and their impact can still be felt today. They were instrumental in bringing about social reforms, promoting education, and raising awareness about India's rich cultural heritage.

The need for Western oriented movements in India during the 19th and 20th centuries can be attributed to the social, political, and economic disorder created as a result of British rule. Initially, the British had no intention of ruling over India but after the Industrial Revolution, they began to control the political and economic structure of India. They transformed India's economy into a colonial one, focused on serving the interests of the British Empire. The

¹ Yadav, K. C., & Arya, K. S., *Arya Samaj and the Freedom Movement*, Manhor Publication. New Delhi, 1998, pg-12

consequences included economic exploitation, the destruction of traditional industries, and the disruption of rural livelihoods. In 19th Century Continue Foreign Domination led to the Economic Destruction as well as many social evils like child marriage, sati, female infanticide, polygamy and so on crept out in society. The earliest expression of reform was in Bengal, initiated by Rammohun Roy. He founded the Atmiya Sabha in 1814, which was the forerunner of Brahmo Samaj organized by him in 1829. The spirit of reform soon manifested itself in other parts of the country. The Paramahansa Mandali, Prarthana Samaj, Kayastha Sabha, Satya Shodhak Samaj and other Western oriented movements were established in different parts of India. However, these movements were primarily urban phenomena and were limited to upper castes and classes. This condition began to change after the failure of the revolt of 1857, a realization dawned upon the intelligentsia that to influence the masses a resounding faith in their ancient culture needed to be regenerated. This led to the rise of several revivalist movements in the Subcontinent. An attempt was made to restore faith in the ancient glory of India. Out of the many movements that arose around this time, the most prolific one was Arya Samaj.

Arya Samaj is a society of noblemen and women. To understand the importance of the establishment of this institution, it is imperative to understand the word "Arya". The word Arya has its origin in the Sanskrit language. It means pure, noble, righteous, and progressive person. The word Arya is not indicative of any particular sector race or region. The importance and role of the Arya Samaj Movement is expressed in the words of the Danpat Pandey.

*"Arya Samaj Movement was one of the important Socio-religious reform Movements which tended to have a national Scope and a programme of reconstruction in the Socio-religious sphere."*²

The foundation of Arya Samaj was laid by Swami Dayanand Saraswati in Rajkot which was then a princely state. Unfortunately, the organisation could not take off due to political problems. It was again successfully established in Bombay in April 1875. After that many centers of the Arya Samaj were established in different parts of India. It introduced social, political, educational and many other reforms in society. The educational contribution of the Arya Samaj can be seen that till 1975 Arya Samaj managed and ran more than 300 colleges and high Schools, 2000 middle and primary schools, 710 girls Schools, 322 schools for

² Pandey Danpati, *Arya Samaj and Indian Nationalism*, S.Chand & Co. Pv.t. Ltd., New Delhi, 1972, pg-72

backward cast and 40 *Gurukuls*.³ The political contribution of the Arya Samaj can be seen in Swami Dayanand Saraswati who introduced the Indians to the concept of ‘Swadeshi’. I can see it from the words of renowned Parsi Patriot Dada Bhai Naoroji who first used this word in the Calcutta Session of Congress in 1906. When Lokmanya Balgangadhar Tilak asked him after this session that have you become an Arya Samajist? He reply that

“No, I get great inspiration and respiration from Swami Dayanand Saraswati’s work in the struggle for Swarajya”

He not only introduced the Swarajya concept but most of the goals that have been adopted during the Indian independent movement. Swadeshi was the main goal during the Movement of Bengal. Another achievement, which we can trace from the words of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, an Iron Man of India that

“Swami Dayanand Saraswati laid the foundation of India’s freedom..... In the Indian Constitution, untouchability has been declared a crime and Hindi is the National language. It was Swami Dayanand, through himself a Gujarati, who first propagated that Hindi be made the National Language”

Thus, Arya Samaj played an important role in raising cultural revivalism during the late 19th century and 20th century. It questioned the Western influence when it was at a high peak and tried to reestablish the pristine purity based on the Vedas.

Arya Samaj, Gujarat

The thesis is limited to Gujarat, a region separated from Bombay in 1961. It comprises various areas where Arya Samaj was established during the late 19th and 20th centuries. As mentioned earlier, Arya Samaj was first established in Rajkot and then spread to different parts of Gujarat. Swami Dayanand Saraswati was invited by Hargovind Das Diwarkar, who was the local secretary of the Prathana Samaj. Dayanand then visited various parts of Gujarat to spread the message of the Vedas. He was also invited by T. Madhava Rao of Baroda, where he delivered a lecture on Rajdharma to a large gathering.⁴ After that, he visited Rajkot, Ahmedabad, and other parts of Gujarat. It was observed that the popularity of any reformer's

³ Vedalankar Nardev Pandit, “*Arya Samaj and Achievements*”, Veda Niketan (Arya Pratinidi Sabha, S. Africa) Durban, South Africa, 1875-1975, pp -1-20

⁴ Bhavanilal B., “*Maharishi Daynanad ka Baroda Pravash*”, Arya Pariwar, Aryanidam, Baroda, 1955, pp-15-20

organization increased after the death of its reformer. Following the Same principle after the death of Swami Dayanand Arya Samaj became popular in the early 20th century.

In Gujarat, Arya Samaj was supported by the wealthy class of traders. They donated a large amount of wealth for the development of the Arya Samaj and its institution. Arya Samaj introduced many educational, Social and political reforms in Gujarat. Arya Samaj's philosophy and literature influenced a large number of writers in Gujarat like Narmad, Dalpatram, Govardhan Tripathi and many others. They tried to restore the ancient Aryan Culture's glory with the movement of Sanskrit Revivalism.

In Gujarat, Arya Samaj also played an important role in the politics of Gujarat. Many leaders gave their service to the governmental sector. Many Arya Samajis participated in the independent movement of India. They also participated in Hyderabad Satyagraha and *Hindi Rakshan Andolan*. Arya Samaj also established a large web of educational institutions. These institutions made memorable contributions to women's education. At a time when foreign travelling was considered a sin, Arya Samaj of Baroda took the group of Girls Arya Kanya Vidyalaya, to different parts of the world mostly in Africa. Arya Samaj also works for the upliftment of the Harijans and the tribal caste.

Many things that we consider simple and easy today were considered complicated a century ago. The greatness of Dayanand and the Arya Samaj lies in their courageous opposition to the difficulties they faced. In the early days, followers of the Arya Samaj principles had to endure many hardships, including communal boycotts from their opponents, restrictions on social contact with others, and being forbidden from obtaining water from public wells. They were also subjected to assault, violence, and insults by their opponents. Despite this opposition, the Arya Samaj worked continuously for the betterment of society and the nation.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This literature review offers a comprehensive analysis of the existing literature on the Arya Samaj and its impact on various aspects of Gujarat Society. It includes the historical context of the organization, its theoretical frameworks, and empirical findings related to its role in shaping the Gujarat Society. Additionally, the review covers the role of Arya Samaj in different parts of India, including the various centres of Arya Samaj and its efforts in reforming society.

Satyaketu Vidyalkar's book "Arya Samaj Ka Itihas"- This fascinating book provides a detailed account of the life and times of Swami Dayanand Saraswati, as well as the origins

and evolution of the Arya Samaj movement. The author delves into Swami Dayanand Saraswati's views on a range of topics, including politics, religion, society, and education, shedding light on Swami's unique perspective on these important issues. The book is also an excellent resource for anyone interested in the Arya Samaj movement, offering an in-depth exploration of the different centres of the movement located in the northern regions of India.⁵

Satyketu Vidalanker, Haridatt Vidayalanker and Bhavanilal Bharti's book "Arya Samaj Ka Itihas" Part- 2 - The book provides a detailed insight into the Arya Samaj's educational centres, spread across various parts of India, including some in Gujarat. It beautifully captures the essence of the Arya Samaj's educational reforms and their significant achievements. The book is a comprehensive guide for anyone looking to explore the world of Arya Samaj's education and its contributions to the Indian educational system.⁶

The new Cambridge History of India, "Socio-religious Reform Movement in British India"- This book sheds light on the social reform movement during the 19th and 20th centuries. It describes the meaning of "social Movements" and "religious Movements" and presents that social and religious Movements are possible because of the literacy rate and translation in regional languages. It described Arya Samaj as an 'Acculturative Socio-religious Movement'.⁷

Danpat Pandey's book "The Arya Samaj and Indian Nationalism" - The Arya Samaj role in development of Nationalism in India. It also focuses light on the Social reconstruction, national education, Swadeshi, Stimulus to nationalism. It also bring detail that after 1907 Arya Samaj start to work to with Indian National Congress with the help of many Arya Samaji like Lala Lajpat Roy, Lokmanay Tilak and many others. It also discuss the British attitude towards the Arya Samaj and even Britishers tried to present Arya Samaj as a political Movement. By this, they want to stop the influence of Indigenous Movement Arya Samaj.⁸

Lala Lajpat Roy's book "Arya Samaj" - An Account of Its origin, doctrine and activities: with biographical sketch of his founder". Author discusses Swami Dayanand Saraswati and his

⁵ Satyketu Vidalanker & Vedalanker H. D., *Arya Samaj Ka Itihas, Part I*. Arya Swadhyay Kendra, New Delhi, 1983

⁶ Satkythu Vidalanker, Vedalanker, H. D. and Bharti B.L., *Arya Samaj Ka Itihas, Part II*, Arya Swadhyay Kendra, New Delhi. Kendra, 1984.

⁷ Johnson, G. (Ed.), *The New Cambridge History of India: Socio-religious reform movements in British India*, C. A. Bayly & J. F. Richards (Assoc. Eds.), General editor, President of Wolfson College, and Director, Centre of South Asian Studies, University of Cambridge. Cambridge University Press, 2008.

⁸ Dhanpati Pandey, *The Arya Samaj and Indian Nationalism (1875- 1920)*, S. Chand & Co., New Delhi, 1972

teachings on the importance of liberty of thought, liberty of conscience, and liberty of action for individuals. The book delved into the teachings of Swami Dayanand Saraswati that were based on Vedas and also highlighted the Social, Educational, Shuddhi Movement, and Philanthropic Activities of Arya Samaj. It was interesting to read about the organization of the Arya Samaj and its philanthropic activities, which were carried out in various parts of India.⁹

Meenakshi Jain's book "Sati: Evangelical, Baptist Missionaries, and the Changing Colonial Discourse" - In her book, she describes how British Orientalists, Evangelicals, and Utilitarians had the sole intention of controlling the administration of India and spreading Christianity. She explained that the British misinterpreted the data they saw, which showed more cases of Sati in Bengal, but in reality, it was more prevalent in Rajasthan, Gujarat and Punjab. They did this because, at that time, Bengal was the centre of Nationalism, and the British wanted to suppress the wave of Nationalism in Bengal for their longer rule.¹⁰

"The Women Question and Arya Samaj" by Indu Bala, Proceeding of Indian History Congress Vol.I 63 (2002), Pp-918-925. - The article discusses various social evils that are perpetrated against women. It also highlights the significant role played by the Arya Samaj in eradicating these social evils. The author refers to Satyarth Prakash, a book written by Dayanand Saraswati, to support her argument. Additionally, the article discusses the educational initiatives undertaken by the Arya Samaj, which included the efforts of Lala Hansraj and Bhai Pramanad. Several magazines like Panchal Pandita and Bharti were also published to promote women's rights.¹¹

"Arya Samaj and Caste System: A Study of United Province" by M. Meera - This article discusses the role of Arya Samaj in the United Province to combat social evils like untouchability. The author also discusses the Shuddhi movement and its role in the purification of untouchables.¹²

"The Role of the Arya Samaj in the Indian Struggle for Independence" by Radash Singh - The text describes the role of the Arya Samaj in the Indian Struggle for Independence. It

⁹ Rai, L., *The Arya Samaj: An Account of Its Origin, Doctrine, and Activities with Biographical Sketch of Its Founder*. Longmans, Green and Co., 1915.

¹⁰ Jain, M., *Sati: Evangelicals, Baptist Missionaries, and Changing the Colonial Discourse*. Aryan Book International, New Delhi, 2017.

¹¹ Bala, I., *The Women Question and Arya Samaj*, Proceedings of Indian History Congress, 2002 918-925.

¹² M. Meera, *Arya Samaj and Caste System: A study of United Province.*, ISOR Journal of Humanities and Social Science, Volume 19, 2014.

portrays Arya Samaj as a reforming and rejuvenating movement. The essay discusses the political influence of Arya Samaj through people like Swami Shardananad, Lajpat Rai, Veer Savarkar, and Madan lal Dingra. The essay then goes on to describe the view of the great historian Pannikar, who believed that the Arya Samaj inspired 80% of those who participated in the freedom movement.

“The Arya Samaj and Indian National Movement” by Sumitra Gupta, This article sheds light on the Arya Samaj as a nationalist movement that inspired the spirit of nationalism in northern India. It describes the role of Bhai Parmanand in association with Gandhi. Gurukul Kangri began the 'Dudhia Bandh' movement to provide financial aid to the Satyagrahis in Africa.¹³

Significance of the topic

In Gujarat, Arya Samaj played a vital role in every sphere. There would be very little work on the history of Arya Samaj in Gujarat. The existing body of literature is limited to an overview not a detailed description of Arya Samaj's work in society, politics, education, and literature influence or role in independent movement. The thesis aims to provide in detail the description of Arya Samaj's role in social, educational, political, and literary influence and the national movement mostly in Gujarat. Besides this, the thesis also aims to establish connections with the present times. The current government has shifted its focus towards the Indian knowledge tradition and has initiated changes in the administrative structures and education system. After the Ayodhya Movement, there has been a surge in Hindu nationalism and more importantly the newer generation's renewed emphasis on reviving traditional cultural practices and values.

Research objectives

- I. To analyze the role of the Arya Samaj in Gujarat's society and its reaction toward the ideology and activities.
- II. To study the Arya Samaj's role in the politics of Gujarat.
- III. To understand the contribution of Arya Samaj towards the rise of the Nationalist Movement in Gujarat.

¹³ Gupta, S., *The Arya Samaj and Indian National Movement*, Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, 63, 2002. pp-722-732

- IV. To evaluate the contribution of the Arya Samaj towards the education of the backward cast and women in Gujarat.
- V. To evaluate the views of different scholars towards Arya Samaj and its influence on Gujarati literature.

Hypothesis

The History of Arya Samaj goes beyond its involvement in the Shuddhi Movement or religion. Arya Samaj played a significant role in Gujarat's society, education, literature, politics, and even in the struggle for independence. The contributions of Arya Samaj in these areas are noteworthy and have been given more attention.

Research Methodology

Primarily, the study is based on the archival research method. It attempts to focus on the facts and their context to study the Arya Samaj contribution in Gujarat. The research seeks to provide a historical as well as an analytical perspective on the subject matter. The research uses both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources included the written work of Swami Dayanand Saraswati and the followers of Arya Samaj in Gujarat, Magazine, and Annual Reports of activity and official documents from the British government. Secondary sources like books, articles written in peer review journals, national and local dailies, weekly and fortnightly magazines as well as articles from the internet will also play a significant part. The archival sources of Baroda will be included in Research. The research will also include interviews, newspaper reports, and reports of the working committee of Arya Samaj and Gujarat Arya Pratinindi Sabha.

OUTLINE OF THESIS

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an introductory overview of the current research on Swami Dayanand Saraswati and Arya Samaj. It also covers the main objectives of the research, the hypothesis, and a review of the literature.

CHAPTER 2 -ARYA SAMAJ AND ITS PHILOSOPHY

This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the background of the entire research. It delves into the fascinating history of Swami Dayanand Saraswati, who travelled extensively across India. In addition, the chapter describes in detail the principles of the Arya Samaj, an important religious movement in India. The religious views of Arya Samaj are also explored,

including its beliefs in Ekesharwad, Avatarvad, Idol Worship, Rendering of Tretaism, and Shad Darshan. Moreover, the chapter throws light on the reinstatement of the Vedic period, which is of immense historical and cultural significance. It also covers other relevant details related to the political, social, and educational fields, which provide a deeper understanding of the context in which the research was conducted. All of the information presented in this chapter is based on the description given in the Satyarth Parkash, a seminal text that sheds light on the beliefs and practices of the Arya Samaj.

CHAPTER 3 – ESTABLISHMENT AND EXPANSION OF ARYA SAMAJ IN GUJARAT

This chapter is an intriguing account of Gujarat's geographical features, as well as Swami Dayanand's remarkable travels across Gujarat to propagate the message of Vedas. His journey involved meeting with numerous distinguished individuals in Gujarat, including Narbadashakar and T. Madavrao of Baroda. During his travels, he passionately delivered numerous lectures that shed light on the Vedic teachings and revealed the exploitative policies of the British that solely benefited them. Swami Dayanand observed that the British, with the aid of Christian missionaries, created a culture in India that mirrored Westerners, leading to the establishment of Arya Samaj in various parts of India in the late 19th and 20th centuries. This chapter also elaborates on the participation of Arya Samaj in the world fellowship of faith and the development of various centres of Arya Samaj in Gujarat. It further highlights the names of the noteworthy individuals who contributed significantly to the development of these centres. Additionally, it gives insights into the progress of Arya Samaj in foreign lands through the Gujarati community.

CHAPTER 4 – ARYA SAMAJ AND SOCIAL REFORM MOVEMENT IN GUJARAT

This chapter gave a detailed explanation of Arya Samaj as a social movement. It described how Arya Samaj tried to change the social strata of society with the help of Education. There would be the names of the people who participated in different social reform Movements in Gujarat. All of them have to face exile from society because of their revolutionary works. This chapter deals with a detailed description of the different Social works of Arya Samaj for Untouchables, focusing on the work based on Caste System Women, Widow Remarriage, Child Marriage and foreign travelling. Role of Maharaja Sayajiao, Pandit Ananadpriyaji and Atmaram Amritsari in diminishing the untouchability in the different part of Gujarat. They also opened the Anatyajay School for the Untouchables. Arya Samaj tried to question the

social status or Social dominion of the Brahmins. Then there would be a description of the Arya Samaj works for the Bhil Tribe. List of the festivals which was celebrated by the Arya Samaj and last there would be the description of the many Philanthropic Activities of Arya Samaj in different parts of Gujarat.

CHAPTER 5 – ARYA SAMAJ & EDUCATION IN GUJARAT

This chapter deals with the Swami Dayanand Saraswati view on education, which has been written in the fourth Chapter of the Satyarth Prakash. It described the background of the British New Education policy which destroyed the Ancient education system. British Rule introduced many policies and acts for education but by these policies, they only wanted to establish the superiority of Western education. On the contrary, Arya Samaj opposed it and introduced a new educational system based on ancient tradition also Supported the training of the craft education. Many educational institutions were established under the Arya Samaj in Gujarat. Role of the many educational institutes in women empowerment and tried to make them self-efficient. Some of them were Arya Kanya Gurukul Porbander, Arya Kanya Vidyalaya Baroda, Shrimad Dayanand Kanya Vidialya Jamnagar and many others. It also sheds light on the similarities between the New Education policy (2020) and the Arya Samaj Educational philosophy which has been described in Satyrath Prakash.

CHAPTER 6 - IMPACT OF ARYA SAMAJ ON GUJARAT'S POLITY

This Chapter delves into the political climate of Gujarat throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, followed by an exploration of Swami Dayanand Saraswati's political beliefs as expressed in the Satyarth Prakash. The British administration regarded the Arya Samaj as a political group due to its mission of bolstering Indian nationalism, resulting in efforts to prohibit it. Additionally, the text delves into the structure of the Arya Samaj and elucidates the notion of Swaraj, which was adopted by the Indian National Congress during the 1906 Calcutta Session. The text below describes the involvement of the Arya Samaj in the Indian National Congress. It covers how various leaders of the Arya Samaj participated in the political activities of the Congress and many Arya Samajis joined and worked with the Congress. The text also includes a list of people from Gujarat who were involved in the political structure of the government. Furthermore, there is a brief description of the Hindu Mahasabha and its relationship with the Arya Samaj.

CHAPTER 7 – IMPACT OF ARYA SAMAJ ON GUJARATI LITERATURE

This chapter is a detailed analysis of the profound impact that Arya Samaj's philosophy has had on Gujarati literature, with a focus on the different phases of Arya Samaj's literature. It also delves into the rich literary legacy of Swami Dayanand Saraswati, highlighting the importance of literature as a reflection of society's social conditions. Additionally, the chapter illuminates the Sanskrit Revivalism Movement in Gujarati literature, which aimed to revive the ancient glory of literature. The works of influential writers such as Narmad Govardhanram, Madhavram Tripathi, Manilal Nabhubhai Dvivedi, and Narsinrao Bholanath Diwadi, who were deeply influenced by Aryan culture, are also explored in detail. Furthermore, the chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the literary contributions of various Arya Samajis and briefly touches upon the Arya Prakash Prabandhan Simiti.

CHAPTER 8 –ARYA SAMAJ AND HINDU NATIONALISM

This chapter deals with the meaning of Hindu Nationalism according to Arya Samaj. It described the contribution of the Arya Samaj to the Rise of Hindu Nationalism in India. Swami Dayanand's Views on nationalism have been discussed as well as the role of Arya Samaj in Nationalism and the Shuddhi Movement. This chapter also deals with the role of Arya Samaj in the rise of Hindu Nationalism in Gujarat. Arya Samaj from the late 19th century tried to spread their nationality through the help of different educational institutes. Post-Moplah revolt was responsible for the strength of the Hindu identity. Its contributions to the rise of Hindu identity and the Indian Independence Movement cannot be ignored.

This chapter also presented the role of the Arya Samaj in the Independence Movement of India, Hindi Rakshan Andolan, and Hydarbad Satyagraha. The Arya Samaj was also actively involved in the Indian Independence Movement. Many prominent Arya Samajis, such as Lala Lajpat Rai, Swami Shraddhananda, and Madan Mohan Malaviya, participated in the movement and played a crucial role in India's struggle for freedom. The organisation also supported the Hindi Rakshan Andolan, which aimed to promote the use of Hindi as India's national language. There would be a description of the names of the Arya Samaji who participated in the different independence movements of India.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we will delve deeper into analysing and examining the primary and secondary data collected during the research. This will involve a thorough examination of the data to

gain insights into the research questions and objectives. It aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the data and its significance in the context of the research.

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