



Arya Samaj and Educational Development in Haryana

Supriya Dhanda

Asstt. Professor (History), Pt. J.L.N. Govt. College, Faridabad

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INTRODUCTION

19th century of Indian History has great importance. Politically, it was a period of servility, intellectually, a period of blind imitation of the west and spiritually, a time of confusion and despair. The country struggled under a crushing load of unreason, in abject slavery to circumstances. Indian society was steeped in superstitious, obsolescent rituals and prejudices. It had, more or less, become fossilized with a crumbling heritage and with no rock to stand upon. Swami Dayanand founded the Hindu reform organization called Arya Samaj on April 14, 1875 in Mumbai, and also created its 10 principles, which are quite distinct from Hinduism, yet based on the Vedas. These principles aimed at advancing the individual and society through physical, spiritual and social betterment of the human race. His aim was not to found a new religion, but to re-establish the teachings of the ancient Vedas. He envisaged a society which would provide equal opportunities to all, irrespective of their caste, creed or sect, and give due regard to womenfolk who were being ill treated in the post Vedic period. For Dayanand, education did not mean the study of letters alone. He took a broader and more comprehensive view of education. It means knowledge that builds character, develops various sides of human personality, sharpens intellect and gives critical, cool headed and calm decision taking power, patience and will power. Swami Dayanand wanted students to achieve proficiency in diverse fields of knowledge including patriotism, love and affection for the society at large. He started many schools in the country, adopting the scheme of learning discussed above but could not, however, achieve much in this direction during his life time. After the death of Swami Dayanand in 1883 people believing in the principles founded by him, made meaningful efforts in the field of education having long lasting impact towards social change.

CAUSES OF SPREAD OF ARYA SAMAJ IN HARYANA

Since the beginning of the 19th century there have been many socio-religious reform movements in India but Haryana remained almost unaffected by them. However, Arya Samaj took the region into its fold. It made untiring efforts to raise the socio-religious status of agricultural communities, to spread education, remove untouchability and to raise the social status of women. It also launched a crusade against social evils like child marriage and female infanticide. With the beginning of the 20th century Arya Samaj emerged as a vital force in Haryana for

agricultural development. The movement played a very important role in the history of the Haryana region. It had a great impact on the life and thinking of the people, particularly of the Hindus in 19th and 20th centuries. It was a Revivalist Movement in form and reformist in content.

The main reasons for propagation of Arya Samaj in Haryana:-

The first reason was the origin of the Vedas in Haryana. The Rishis conducted Vedic researches on the bank of the river Saraswati. Though with the passage of time the process of research might have been lost, its influence was ever felt. That is why, the faith of the inhabitants of Haryana has remained intact in the Vedas. Hence they were tempted to look back to the Vedas, and naturally felt drawn towards Arya Samaj and they continued to be a part of this revolution of Arya Samaj.

Haryana is an agricultural state, at that time all activities related to agriculture depended upon bullocks. Bullocks are the offspring of cows. The status of a person was evaluated on the basis of the num-

ber of bullocks his household had. The families got nourished by the milk of cows. The cow and the bullock were the backbone of the family and agricultural industry respectively. When Dayanand Saraswati raised the issue of cow protection and showed the importance of cow in his book '*Gau Karunanidh*', this principle was appreciated very much by the people of Haryana. Due to the spread of Islam, the cow had been losing its importance among the people of Haryana too. Some followers of traditional Hinduism i.e. Sanatans, too, were against Maharishi Dayanand's cow protection principle but the people of Haryana by and large had been in favour of cow-protection.

In Haryana large cities were yet to come into being. The whole state had abundance of villages. In the village people used to live amicably through the Panchayat system wherein discussions followed before ideas being accepted or rejected. The economic condition of the village depended on the cow. People were vegetarians. Maharishi's opposition to non-vegetarianism was favoured by the people. In this context Maharishi said as follows – "with the non-vegetarian and wine-taking foreign officers feeding themselves on beef, and the flesh of other animals the miseries of Aryans steadily increased. Agriculturalists of Haryana considered it a sin to kill creatures such as cows, bullocks, deer, peacocks etc." This was very close to the hearts of people of Haryana.

Casteism was not very rigid in Haryana. Brahmins too were not very rigid. Here Brahmins along with other castes used to cultivate land. Due to agricultural work they came in contact with the people of lower castes because the work pertaining to agricultural labour was done by lower caste people. Owing to it there prevailed an amicable relationship between all the castes and the Brahmins were not very dogmatic vis-à-vis these castes. The second main caste was that of Jat. Due to the lack of Pauranic knowledge, Jats and Brahmins did not indulge in such serious issues. So when the Arya Samaj treated Jats as Brahmins and gave them the right to wear the sacred thread along with other castes, it was no less than a religious ceremony. Dayanand while describing the story of Jats in the 11th *Samullas* of his book '*Satyarth Prakash*' honorifically addressed them as Jats. As a result, a good number of them became followers of Arya Samaj.

During the Mughal period in spite of compulsions they did not agree to convert. Their belief in the Vedic religion was steadfast.

The people of Haryana understood simple and logical matters. They liked the things stated by Dayanand which were based on logic. Hence on conceptual level too, they were very close to Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati.

At that time in many parts of Punjab the propagation of Christianity was at its peak. Christian missionaries used to propagate Christianity in cities. Due to it the Vedic Hindu followers always remained suspicious. Earlier, the Mughals converted Hindus into Islam and now the Britishers were trying to make them Christians. Maharishi Dayanand proved to be a great reformer. It was natural that they regarded Arya Samaj as a powerful protecting institution. People of the region thus, welcomed its ideology and agreed to become Arya Samajists.

During the period of his stay at Rewari, Dayanand came in contact with Yadavs. Seeing that their Chief, Rao Yudhister Singh had become Arya Samajist, Yadavs agreed to become the members of Arya Samaj. Preachings of Maharishi Dayanand regarding Shri Krishna as Yogiraj and Mahapurush, influenced them to a great extent, they became Arya Samajists in a huge number.

On the eve of Delhi Darbar, Swami Dayanand was present in Delhi. At that time he met Sardar Vikram Singh Ahulwalia, who invited him to the Punjab. On his insistence Swami Ji stayed in Punjab. There were many relatives of the family residing in Haryana, and as a result the Ahulwalias of Haryana became Arya Samajists who established Arya Samaj in the area of Ambala, Kaithal, Yamunanagar, Fatehpur, Pundri etc. Among them Sh. Mansha Ram Ahulwalia of Fatehpur was the main person who left his police service and established Arya Samaj. His colleague master Mukhandilal, rendered great service to Arya Samaj

The biggest work of the propagation of Arya Samaj was done by many dedicated Arya Samaj workers and leaders. The name of Pandit Basti Ram is foremost, who conversed with Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati. He met Dayanand in Rewari. He was a great singer as well as a logician. He sang a song in praise of Maharishi Dayanand. His book of religious songs '*Pakhandkhandi*' and '*Agmarshan Prarthana*' gained great popularity. The preachers of Arya Samaj still sing his religious songs.

EDUCATION IN HARYANA

Education in Haryana was good in the ancient times, but unfortunately, owing to its typical location, it could not retain the tradition. When the British came to Haryana in 1803 the position of education was far from satisfactory even in towns. The history of education of this period is divided into three sub-periods.

- (i) 1800-1857 (under the East India Company rule)
- (ii) 1858-1900 (under the Crown)
- (iii) 1900-1947 (under the Crown in the age of National Awakening)

THE FIRST PHASE 1800-1857

In the beginning of this period we find the word education being taken in a very different sense in Haryana. It stood for nothing more than the knowledge which would make a child proficient in his parental profession. Only a few people sent their sons to the so called indigenous schools - the Maktab and Madrassas (For Muslims) and Chhatshalas, Pathshalas (for Hindu) and Gurumukhi schools (For Sikhs). The Maulvis, Pandits and Granthis in the schools imparted some religious education and nominal instructions in language and arithmetic. There were some Mahajans or 'Landi' schools which were meant for the children of the trading communities, imparting knowledge of accounts. The school buildings were primitive such as private dwelling, the village chaupal, the shade of a tree, a temporary shed, or the courtyard of a temple. The Muslim schools were nearly all connected with village mosques. In such cases, the same endowment would support both the institutions. The remuneration of the teacher was variable and precarious. It frequently consisted of presents, grains and sweetmeats, given by scholars and their parents. But occasionally the whole community subscribed to provide financial aid to the school, each member contributing a specified quantity per plough, which was considered to represent his means: not infrequently, cash payments were also made. Charter Act of 1813 provided in section 43 that education should be taken up as one of the functions of the government. Consequently, one lakh rupees was to be spent for the revival and improvement of literature and for introduction and promotion of the knowledge of western science among the inhabitants of the British territories. Unfortunately, no serious efforts were made for quite some time by the government to implement the above clause of the Act and the money allocated remained unutilised. However, William Frazer, an Assistant of the East India Company established several schools for the children of peasants in the Pargana of Sonapat on his own.

As per the reports for the years 1826 and 1827, in the "Lower region" i.e. the district of Rohtak, Hissar and Gurgaon there were 27 Muslim schools with 28 pupils and 24 teachers, and 70 Hindu schools with 886 pupils and 70 teachers. In the district of Delhi, there were 247 schools, most of them being in the city itself. In the "Upper region," i.e. the district of Panipat etc. the position was equally bad. In pargana Sonapat, there were three schools. In the town of Panipat, there were several ill-supported and thinly attended schools. In the town of Karnal (20,000 inhabitants) there was only one school. Elsewhere in 18 mosque schools, there were 227 pupils. The situation was bad in both the regions. However, some forward looking members of the society set up indigenous institutions for higher learning, viz. Sanskrit

Vidyalayas at Thanesar (Kurukshetra) and Julana, and Shekhawati Brahmacharya Ashram at Bhiwani for higher study of the Sanskrit literature, grammar, astrology and Indian philosophy. Muslim Institutions were started at Jhajjar and Panipat for higher teaching of Arabic, Persian, Holy Quran, Muslim Law, History, etc. In Haryana region, only the indigenous schools functioned during this period. Their description has been given by A. Roberts in his report for the year 1849 in the following words: Panipat district in 1849 had 105 schools. It was composed of the Parganas of Sonipat, Panipat and Karnal. Of 105 schools, 13 were Persian, 15 Arabic, 27 Hindi or rather Mahajani. Sanskrit 32. Mr. Johanson, the Deputy Collector, estimated that proportion of the school taught children to the whole population was 1.8 percent. Delhi district had 321 schools of which 270 were in the city, 8 in suburbs and 43 in the interior district. Rohtak had 46 schools while Gurgaon had 100 schools. Middle schools, on the pattern of Tehsilari schools, were opened in towns, such as Shahabad, Ladwa, Thanesar Kaithal, Sadhaura, Sonipat, Gurgaon, Palwal, Panipat, Hansi, Hissar, Jhajjar, Bahadurgarh and Rohtak. High schools were established at Karnal and Rohtak in 1856 and at Bhiwani, Rewari, and Jagadhari in 1857. In 1856-57 eight Zila or superior schools were also opened at Thanesar, Karnal, Gurgaon, Rohtak, Jhajjar and Hissar, the last had 411 students on its rolls. The government also set up halkabandi or circle schools financed jointly by the Government and the public i.e. one school in every circle (**halka**) comprising 10 to 20 villages to cater to the needs of people living in remote areas. Since the halkabandi schools catered to the needs mostly of the peasantry the subjects taught here were closely connected with agricultural pursuits and requirements.

THE SECOND - 1858-1900

After the Uprising of 1857 was suppressed, the territory comprising Haryana was detached from the North West Province and merged with Punjab. The administration of Sir John Lawrence was very harsh towards the 'Native States'. Except for the petty states of Pataudi, Dujana and Laharu, all others were confiscated. Ballabhgarh and Farukhanagar were merged with Gurgaon District and Jhajjar, Dadri were parceled out among the loyal chiefs of Punjab. Maharaja Narendra Singh of Patiala got the Paragana of Narnaul. Maharaja Sarup Singh of Jind was given the confiscated estate of Dadri and some village in the Khurd (Mahendergarh) Paragana. Raja Bahadur Singh of Nabha received the Paragana of Bawal (Jhajjar State). Post Revolt the Haryana region was divided into two divisions (1) Delhi Division, comprising the district of Delhi, Gurgaon and Panipat with Divisional headquarters at Delhi and (2) Hissar Division, comprising the district of Hissar, Sirsa and Rohtak, alongwith a portion of the confiscated Jhajjar state with divisional headquarter at Hissar. The spread of education in Haryana after the revolt of 1857 was suppressed and the rule of East India Company was replaced by that of the Crown. The new government became interested in education and therefore, the period of later 19th century witnessed a growth in public instruction. In 1860 the modifications introduced were that the Vernacular schools which formed the great majority were transferred to the charge of Deputy Commissioner. To begin with the situation was dismal in almost all the districts comprising the Haryana region. Ambala had 54 schools imparting education to 2894 scholars. It was the maximum number in Haryana. Karnal had 34 schools educating 1130 students only. Gurgaon also had 34 schools. However, the number of scholars was 1895. The situation was almost similar in Rohtak where 1068 students got education in 32 schools. However, Hissar was the most neglected district having 976 scholars on roll in the 23 schools. The table gives the consolidated picture of the number of schools for each districts of Haryana from 1860-61 - 1900-01. In 1863-64 a separate inspectorate of schools was established to supervise the progress of education in Haryana in 1863-64. The Punjab Education Department launched a scheme for the development of education in the areas acquired after 1857. The scheme envisaged improvement of indigenous schools and the establishment of a school at the center of six villages in Haryana region. Since no time limit was fixed for the completion of the project, it moved at a very slow pace upto 1870. But after 1870 when political normalcy had been achieved development of education also got escalated. In 1870-71 Ambala showed a remarkable increase in both the number of schools and the number of scholars. The number of schools increased to 73 and that of the scholars rose to 4929. Karnal also did not lag behind in the number of schools, which rose to 52. However, the scholars only marginally increased to 1399. In Gurgaon the number of schools remained the same. But there was an appreciable increase in the number of schol-

ars to 2224. Rohtak also showed only a little increase in the number of schools, which rose to 34, but the number of pupils showed an immense rise to 1791. There was a marginal increase recorded in Hissar in the number of schools, which rose to 27. However, there was a two fold increase in the number of scholars which increased to 1846. Before 1871 the main difficulty of the education department was financial crunch. The funds mainly came from, the imperial revenues and the local revenues, the latter consisting of Educational Cess, Endowments, Subscriptions and Donations, Fees and Private Contribution. Sunder Mayo's Financial Decentralisation Scheme of 1870 and the Punjab Local Rates Act of 1871, in the course of next few years, the amount hitherto received from the Educational Cess was doubled, and there was. Also increase in assignments made by municipalities. In 1876 the annual expense borne by the state in teaching one student was estimated at Rs.813-10-7 which rose yet further in the following years. In the Haryana region English teaching schools were opened in 1877-78. Karnal had one English Govt School, Gurgaon also had one English Govt, school along with another English Govt . aided school . Same was the situation in Rohtak, whereas in Hissar there was one English Govt. School. During this period the number of schools had shown an appreciable increase to 48 in Rohtak and 67 in Gurgaon, whereas the number declined to 24 in Hissar and 49 in Karnal. To sum up, it can be said that the slow development in education greatly affected the progress of the region in various fields. Even the total expenditure on education was very low. The condition of education in Haryana by 1901 was far from satisfactory. The major factors responsible for the backwardness were as follows. Haryana was economically poor which witnessed drought or famine every three third or fourth year. The government had administrative apathy towards the people of Haryana. The private institutions also did not play any effective role here in this field and there was social in difference towards education. By the end of the First World War (1914-18) the government became serious regarding primary education by passing the Punjab Primary Education Act, 1919. In the district Rohtak alone there came up 271 school for boys and one for girls. 92 Many primary schools were raised to the middle standard and one to the high school standard. Two dozen high schools were started in the region. To satisfy the needs of the people in the field of higher education the government started an intermediate college at Rohtak in May 1927.

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