



"PERFORMANCE OF ARYA SAMAJ IN WOMEN LIBERATION MOVEMENT"

Laxmi Reddy¹, Prof.Dr. Sanghamitra Sarvade²

¹Research student, Shivaji University, Kolhapur, ²Annasaheb Dange College, Hatkanangle, Kolhapur

ABSTRACT

Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati was a great social reformer of 19th century. He brought about an ideological revolution in India for social change. His ideas were practical, progressive, lively, rational as well as authentic to the scriptures. He not only gave a scientific basis to the social reform movement but also gave it practicality. Advocating gender equality, he considered the upliftment of the society and the country impossible without the upliftment of women. Respecting women's freedom and women's power, she tried to elevate her place in the family and society. Maharishi brought Indian women out of the abyss of injustice and oppression and instilled in them a sense of self-respect. Through the Arya Samaj, women's issues and the concrete steps taken to address them created a distinct place in the Indian women's liberation movement.

Keywords: - **Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati, Arya Samaj**

INTRODUCTION

Considering the rise and fall of women from ancient times to the present day, we come across many examples of ancient culture. In the Vedic period, a woman performing yajna, prayer and evening rituals appears to be a symbol of power till the time of the epic. At that time Brahmin girls were taught Vedas and Kshatriya girls were taught to shoot bows and arrows. Apart from this, co-education was given to boys and girls together in homes and ashrams. Patanjali has beautifully described the women throwing spears, Chanakya the women wielding bows, Megasthenes the beautiful Amazon women who are bodyguards to Chandragupta. But in the course of time up to the middle Ages, the dignity and rights of women seem to have declined dramatically. During this period, the growing tendency of people to take sannyas, on the one hand, made the society indifferent towards material life and on the other hand, the tendency to view women as idols of vices. She was seen as a major obstacle in the way of asceticism. Woman is a distant disorder and it was thought to be abandoned. Against this background, in modern times, the Arya Samaj has made significant contribution to the women's liberation movement by taking various measures to improve the plight of women.

In the year 1875, Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati established Arya Samaj in Mumbai and through it created awareness in the society to eradicate child marriage, permanent widowhood, disrespect of widows, veil system, dowry system, polygamy, devadasi system.

AWARD FOR WOMEN'S EDUCATION

Swami Dayanand Saraswati was the first social reformer to assert that Shudras and women had the right to study the Vedas and pursue higher education. He gave equal status to boy and girl. 2 Women have the same right to study Vedas as men. Referring to the Atharva Veda, Swami Dayanand says, "In Aryavarta there are examples of women participating in all fields along with men in the past."

Maharshi Dayanand insisted on educating women but at the same time wanted to make the woman a scholar like the great Vidushi Gargi and Maitrai from the ancient times. According to him, "a woman



deserves respect, not ridicule." In Satyarth Prakash, Swami Dayanand Krantikari, while announcing, writes: Girls should be sent to girls 'schools, boys' and girls' 'schools should be one to two kos away from each other, boys' schools should have only male teachers, girls 'schools should have all female teachers, girls' schools should have five year old boy "Students should also strictly abstain from celibacy and abstain from all subjects. Parents must send their children to school without keeping them below 5 or 8 years of age.

There should be such a political rule. Parents who do not send their children to school should be punished by the government."

Swami Dayanand knew the importance of female education because mother is the first teacher of children. Therefore, it was very important for women to be educated. Swamiji insisted on education but opposed co-education. Therefore, he not only preached that the schools for boys and girls should be independent, but also made it a rule for the teachers who taught them that only male teachers should teach boys and female teachers should teach girls. In fact, he had a far-sighted idea of making this rule to protect the youth from injustice, oppression, rape, physical abuse, immorality, etc., and to prepare them for the task of nation building.

Swami states an all-encompassing sociological truth that "the work in the Grihasthashram can be carried out smoothly only if the husband is pleased with the woman and the woman with the husband. They must learn science, cooking, etc., because without education, they will not be able to carry out the responsibilities of proper arrangement and upbringing, all household chores, proper feeding, taking care of medicines, etc. during the season." That was his opinion. The Upanishad rites of girls were introduced by the Arya Samaj to ensure that women get equal rights with men. As a result, women got the right to education. Followers of the Arya Samaj insisted on setting up separate schools, colleges and hostels for girls. Arya Samaj started separate hostels, schools and colleges for girls in many provinces like Punjab, Ferozepur, Jalindar, Yamunanagar, Amritsar, Talwan for women to study grammar, mathematics, geometry and theology.

OPPOSITION TO CHILD MARRIAGE

Swami Dayanandana has to be given a very high place among those who vigorously promoted women's education and women's freedom in the 19th century. He opposed the practice of parents arranging marriages for minor children. Many years before the issue of consent was raised, Maharshi Dayanandani had thought about this and stated that the best age limit for marriage is 28 for men and 24 for women. Malabari Sheth is generally credited with initiating the movement for raising the age of marriage, but it should be noted that Swami Dayananda had earlier suggested the same for physiological reasons. He has suggested that the marriage should take place only after the meeting of the bride and groom according to their merits and after the ideological exchange of consent. No one seems to have appreciated the freedom of both the parties in the marriage before Dayananda.

SUPPORT FOR WIDOW MARRIAGE

Maharshi Dayanand was a staunch supporter of widow marriage. He says, "It has to be said that it is the injustice of men that he can have multiple marriages and women have to wander through the door after the death of their husbands. The number of widows was very high in the 19th century Indian society. Due to child marriage, many girls became widows at an early age. She had to spend her whole life without her



husband. Recognizing remarriage in such a situation, Maharshi Dayanand said, "A widow should remarry, and a man is not entitled to remarry while his wife is alive, but after her death he has the right to remarry or not. The widow should have the same right." The Aryan socialists also raised awareness by issuing leaflets in various languages in support of widow remarriage. He started many orphanages and widows' homes in Lahore, Mathura and Haridwar and added his thoughts to his work.

SUPPORT FOR SWAYAMVAR CUSTOM

Maharshi Dayanand opposed child marriage and inconsistent marriage. In support of the custom of swayamvar, he said in his Satyarth Prakash Granth, "If parents ever think of arranging marriage, it should not be without the consent of the children. That's the decent thing to do, and it should end there. 'Marriage against the will of marital life can lead to unhappiness and many calamities.

Interracial marriage was first encouraged by the Arya Samaj. Many followers of the Arya Samaj themselves set an example before the society by inter-caste marriages. E.g. Ganapatrao Vaidya, a Brahmin Aryasamaji from Marathwada, had intermarried with a woman named Shantati Devi. Pandit Manohar Lalji and Pandit Shankar Dev Vidyalankar were born Harijans but they were married to Brahmin girls.

Throughout his life in the Latur area, Shaharkar Guruji worked to create awareness among the lower castes for inter-caste marriages.

STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE FAMILY

Founded by Maharshi Dayanand, Arya Samaj has been emphasising on strengthening the family organization for the betterment of the society and the nation since its inception. In his book "Satyarth Prakash", Maharshi Dayanand discusses the worldly life of husband and wife in detail. In the book "Sanskarvidhi", he has given detailed information about what a householder should and should not do.

Maharshi Dayanand honored the three stages of a woman's life, namely, daughter, wife and mother, and considered their place in the family glorious. At one point, he warned ungodly and evil men, saying, "How can you, who consider women to be the vehicle of the feet, wish you to have a civilized and cultured offspring from her?"

WOMEN'S FREEDOM AWARD

In Arya Samaj, women of all castes and religions were given admission and were given all kinds of freedom. Gave high positions to women. Organizations like Arya Samaj Pratishthan Sabha, Arya Shiromani Sabha, Arya Dharmasabha raised their voice against the restrictions imposed on women.

The veil system was another feature of social life between Hindus and Muslims. They had become his symbol. The veil system was a means of social prestige and social security. Maharshi Dayanand opposed the veil system. He took women out of the four walls and advised them to take part in housework, religious activities and various social activities. On the one hand, Maharishi considered women as the driving force behind the development of the universe; while on the other hand, he tried to honor them by taking them out of the deep valley of inferiority.

Maharshi Dayanand could not restrain himself from attacking the vices of women by seeing a disguise in front of the king of Jodhpur, and the same disguise asked his cook to pour poison into Maharshi's meal. Therefore, Maharshi Dayanandana attained immortality in the middle of his life. Maharshi continued



to strive for the development of women till the last moment of his life. He believed that society could not take a single step forward without the development of women.

SUMMARY

The Arya Samaj defended the rights of women while uplifting their status and made an unprecedented contribution to the image of nation building by setting an example before them. The Aryan society, by bringing women out of the mire of child marriage, contributed so much to the formation of her independent personality that she was able to participate in the liberation movement on an equal footing with men. Due to the background of Maharshi Dayanand's efforts for the advancement of women, Mahatma Gandhiji considered women to be half of the population and without her progress India's independence was completely impossible.

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