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# Raja Ram Mohan Roy's Contributions to Indian Society

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**Abstract:** *One of the most famous Bengali and Indian philosophers of all time, Raja Ram Mohan Roy was a leader of the Renaissance. When superstition, poverty, harassment-neglect-oppression of women, the collapse of Indian education, and other social ills dominated Bengali and India's entire societies in the eighteenth century, Ram Mohan Roy emerged. The social position, rights, and education 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 into several castes, races, and faiths. The caste system, both high and low, affected women's lives and educational opportunities. This essay aims to demonstrate that Ram Mohan Roy was influential at the time and helped to break down discrimination in the traditional culture and create a modern one. 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 study's objective is to describe and evaluate Raja Ram Mohan Roy's contributions to Indian society. The study used an analytical and documentary approach to come at a conclusion.*

**Keywords:** *Social Reform, Political Reform, Educational Reform, Religion and Journalism.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The "Father of Modern India's Renaissance," Raja Ram Mohan Roy, was a tireless social reformer. In India, he is credited for ushering in a new era marked by enlightenment and liberal change. He is frequently referred to as the "father of modern Indian renaissance" because of the important contributions he made to India's growth in the 18th and 19th centuries. Every aspect of Indian culture is enriched by these developments. Few people in Raja Ram Mohan Roy's time had a clear grasp of the significance of the new age, however. Interdependence between people and nations rather than independence in isolation should be the objective of human civilization, and this should apply to individuals as well as nations. In the spirit of sympathetic cooperation, his objective was to fully reawaken the Indians to their



distinct cultural identities and to assist them in better comprehending the realities that were specific to their respective civilizations. In this article, we talk about and examine the influential life of Raja Ram Mohan Roy as well as the contributions he made to society.

## **2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE**

The purpose of this paper is to discuss and evaluate Raja Ram Mohan Roy's contribution on Indian society.

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

The majority of the data required for this inquiry comes from primary and secondary sources. This was done so that the objectives of this work could be met. The gathering of information was started with the intention of making it easier to conduct research on the role that Raja Ram Mohan Roy contribution in the development of Indian society throughout the 19th century. An objective conclusion was able to be reached as a result of the employment of documentary and analytical approaches, which led to the establishment of the framework for the study. The secondary sources of data consists books, national and international periodicals, state reports, newspaper, web services etc.

## **4. DISCUSSION AND RESULT**

One of India's most tireless social reformers, Raja Ram Mohan Roy is widely recognised with helping to usher in the country's current era of enlightenment and liberal modernisation. Another nickname for him is "Father of Modern India's Renaissance." Ram Mohan Roy was profoundly influenced by modernist Western ideals, particularly an emphasis on rationalism and the scientific method. The rapid decline in moral and social standards in Ram Mohan Roy's native Bengal was the most pressing issue facing him at the time. He was of the opinion that adherents to religious orthodoxy were contributing factors to the deterioration of social life, as well as a source of conflict and confusion for the general populace. He believed this to be the case because religious orthodoxy was not working to improve the state of society. Raja Ram Mohan Roy came to the conclusion that social reform and political modernization are inextricably linked to religious reform. In Ram Mohan's view, it was not necessary to provide sacrifices or participate in rituals in order to atone for one's transgressions; rather, this should be accomplished by practising self-purification and showing contrition. He was a staunch opponent of the caste system because he held the belief that all people should enjoy the same social standing. The Islamic monotheistic was something that appealed to Ram Mohan. He asserted that monotheism is also the primary lesson that can be derived from Vedanta. His concept of a monotheistic, Unitarian god served as a rebuttal against the polytheism of traditional Hinduism as well as the trinitarianism of traditional Christianity. He was of the opinion that monotheism upheld the existence of a single universal blueprint for humanity. Indian civilisation cannot grow unless all forms of female oppression; including illiteracy, child marriage, and the purdah are removed. Raja Ram Mohan Roy held this position. In Roy's opinion, this was the case. Sahib said that sati is a manifestation of racism since it violates every humanistic and social sentiment it represents. Satta was, in his opinion, a violation of every humane and societal ideal.

#### **4.1 Raja Ram Mohan Roy Contribution: Social Reforms.**

Bengali culture was saddled by a number of evil rites and laws in the late 18th century (sometimes referred to as the Dark Age). Numerous ceremonies and strict moral rules were imposed, most of which were incorrectly translated and adapted from ancient cultures. Common social norms that hurt women included child marriage, polygamy, and Sati. The most perverse of these customs was the Sati Partha. At their husband's burial pyre, the widows would self-immolate as part of the rite. Although women had the opportunity to participate in the tradition in its original form, it later turned into a necessary practise, particularly for Brahmin and higher caste families. In order for much older men to benefit from the karmic blessings of their wives' Sati sacrifice; young girls were wed to them in exchange for dowries to much older men. The ladies were frequently pushed or even drugged into obedience because they did not choose to be subjected to such crimes. Raja Ram Mohan Roy objected and spoke out against this inhumane behaviour. He presented his views to the higher-ups of the East India Company in an open and direct manner. The Governor-General, Lord Bentinck, understood Roy's motivations and feelings, and as a result, the Bengal Sati Regulation, also known as Bengal Code Regulation XVII, A. D. 1829, was passed in spite of strong opposition from the orthodox religious community. Anyone found practising Sati Daha in Bengal Province would be punished under the law, which forbade it. Raja Ram Mohan Roy will be remembered as a major benefactor of women, not only for aiding in the abolition of the Sati ritual but also for advocating for equal inheritance rights for women and speaking out against child marriage and polygamy. He also vehemently opposed the strict caste differences of his period.

#### **4.2 Raja Ram Mohan Roy Contribution: Educational Reforms**

Traditional languages such as Sanskrit and Persian were a focus of Ram Mohan Roy's studies. Later in life, he was exposed to the English language and made the decision to become fluent in it in order to advance his career with the British. However, due to his talent as a writer, he devoured works of English literature as well as publications in order to take in as much information as possible. In spite of the fact that ancient texts such as the Vedas, Upanishads, and the Quran instilled in him a profound reverence for philosophy, he came to the realization that his education was lacking in scientific comprehension and logical reasoning. He came to this realization despite the fact that ancient texts instilled in him a profound reverence for philosophy. He campaigned for the construction of an English Education System in the region, which would include the study of scientific subjects like as mathematics, physics, chemistry, and even botany. Specifically, he wanted to see these subjects taught in English. In the year 1817, he and David Hare built Hindu College, which went on to become one of the most prominent educational institutions in the world. Hindu College was also responsible for the development of some of the most creative minds in India. Because of his efforts, the educational system in India was able to experience a shift that was nothing short of revolutionary. He first established the Anglo-Vedic School in 1822, and then the Vedanta College twenty years later, in 1826, with the purpose of merging traditional philosophical teachings with more modern reasoning classes. Both schools were founded in England.

#### **4.3 Brahmo Samaj: India's first Reform Movement**

In the year 1828, the reformist movement that would later be known as Brahmo Samaj was started in Calcutta by Raja Ram Mohan Roy. Another noteworthy contribution made by Raja



Ram Mohan Roy is exemplified by this one. It was the first movement of its kind in India, and its major goal was to reform the Indian community and make the genuine teachings of the Vedas, Upanishads, and other Hindu scriptures accessible to the common man. This movement was the first of its kind in India. In the 1840s, a considerable number of influential political personalities, such as Debendranath Tagore and Keshub Chunder Sen, were active members of the Samaj. Among these influential political figures was also Keshub Chunder Sen. The movement was vital in the process of modernising Indian society. It did this by bringing attention to ancient practises such as the dowry system and the caste system. Additionally, it instituted educational reforms with the purpose of educating the general people. One of the most forward-thinking and progressive reformist movements in India was the Brahma Samaj. They campaigned for an end to child marriages, polygamy, the practise of Sati, and the way widows were treated in India. Additionally, they championed the empowerment of women. In addition to preaching monotheism, the Samaj fought against polytheism and idolatry that were practiced inside the Hindu religion. In addition to this, they outlawed the criticism of the teachings of other religions and absorbed ideas from other world religions. Following reorganization, the Atmiya Sabha became known as the Brahma Sabha. This was an organization that came before the Brahma Samaj. Monotheism, freedom from the scriptures, and opposition to the caste system were the guiding ideas behind this new religious movement that was gaining traction. Brahma worship traditions were constructed in accordance with Christian or Islamic prayer practises and cleansed of the Hindu ceremonialism that had been incorporated into them. With the passage of time, the Brahma Samaj transformed into a major progressive force that drove social reforms in Bengal, particularly educational opportunities for women.

#### **4.4 Raja Ram Mohan Roy Contribution: Journalistic Contributions**

He was a staunch supporter of the principles of free expression and the right to speak one's own. Ram Mohan Roy He took a stand in defence of the vernacular press's right to freedom of expression. In addition, he was the publisher of the Bengali monthly "Sambad Kaumudi" and the Persian newspaper "Mirat Ul- Akhbar," which together translate to "the Mirror of News" (the Moon of Intelligence). Back then, news pieces and stories could not be distributed until the government gave its permission to do so. According to Ram Mohan, there shouldn't be any restrictions placed on the media, and the government also shouldn't be able to cover up the truth simply because they don't want it to be publicized. In the year 1830, Raja Ram Mohan Roy made the journey to England in order to petition the Imperial Government for an increase in the royalty payment made to the Mughal Emperor and to ensure that Lord Bentick's Sati Act would not be repealed. At the year 1833, while Raja Ram Mohan Roy was visiting the United Kingdom, he contracted meningitis and passed away in Stapleton, Bristol. His passing took place on September 27th of this year. It was determined that he would be laid to rest in the Arnos Vale Cemetery in Bristol, which is located in the city of Bristol.

#### **4.5 Raja Ram Mohan Roy Contribution: Religious Contributions**

Ram Mohan Roy was adamantly opposed to the needless ritualism and idol worship that was encouraged by the priests of his time, and he voiced this opposition often. After conducting research on the Holy Scriptures of a number of different religions, he came to the conclusion that Hindu Scriptures, such as the Upanishads, provided evidence in favour of the idea of

monotheism. In addition to that, he had studied the Bible. This served as the impetus for him to search for a religious upheaval that would return the teachings of ancient Vedic scriptures to their original, unaltered state. Specifically, he was looking for this. In 1928, he laid the groundwork for what is now known as the Atmiya Sabha, and on August 20 of that same year, the religion that had just been birthed held its inaugural gathering. After some internal rearranging, the assembly that was once known as the Atmiya Sabha was rechristened the Brahma Sabha. This organization existed prior to the Brahma Samaj and served a similar purpose. This new religious movement that was gaining traction was guided by the notions of monotheism, freedom from the scriptures, and resistance to the caste system. All three of these concepts were central to the movement. Brahma worship traditions were built in accordance with Christian or Islamic prayer practises and cleansed of the Hindu ceremonialism that had been infused into them. This was done in order to make them more in line with Christian or Islamic prayer practises. With the passage of time, the Brahma Samaj morphed into a significant progressive force that propelled social reforms in Bengal, particularly educational possibilities for women. This occurred during the time period of the British Raj.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

One of the few individuals in his era, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, fully understood the significance of the contemporary age. He understood that the objective of human civilization is a brotherhood of interdependence between individuals and nations, not an isolation of independence. His goal was to fully awaken Indians to their unique cultural identities and to help them understand the realities that were particular to their civilizations in the spirit of sympathetic cooperation.

Roy lived during the time of the revolutionaries and freedom warriors. He never openly called for India's independence, but he did fight for the civil rights of Indians and criticized the idea that Europeans were a superior race. Dwarka Nath Tagore oversaw Brahma Samaj for a while after Roy's passing. Indians still cherish and remember Roy's inspirational comments.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy was a strong and logical thinker who provided innovative and integrative thought to light up the dim nineteenth-century Indian civilization. Bengal is therefore seen as one of the renaissance's founders. He is still respected for being a pioneer in Indian society, culture, and education. Ram Mohan Roy thus "inaugurated the modern period in India," according to Rabindranath. Ram Mohan is the prophet of the new India, according to a different foreign biographer who has written about him. The quote from Mrs. Cole on Raja Ram Mohan Roy, "His role was that of an Enlightener," is crucial. His contribution to society's general development will always be cherished. He aimed to create a prosperous and healthy India. Her views on women's rights and education have given rise to a new perception of Bengali society, culture, and religious change. In the eyes of enlightened future generations, he represents India. Due to his remarkable accomplishments, Raja Ram Mohan Roy was referred to as a "Bharatpathik" by Rabindranath Tagore. Therefore, Ram Mohan Roy's contributions to India society and the rest of the globe are still very relevant today.

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