Preface

The modern education was disseminated not only by the Britishers in the late colonial India, but a lot of contribution was also made by social reformists and nationalist leaders. In this respect we can quote the examples of Aligarh College Movement, formation of Banaras Hindu University and same thing was done by the Arya Samajists in the late 19th and early 20th century. Although the influence of the Arya Samaj movement was spread throughout the India but I have selected for my research particularly colonial Punjab region with special reference to the process of social upliftment, communal mobilisation and political articulation of the Punjabi society through the educational agenda of Arya Samaj. Annexation of the Punjab (1849) in British Empire developed a cultural interaction of European and Indian traditions. This process of interaction constituted a new middle class in the Punjabi society and produced radical forms of group consciousness with ideological competition. British Empire opened new opportunities for wealth, power and prestige among English educated Punjabi. This new educated generation of the Punjabi society provided the bases for identity associations and socio-religious movements. During this process of social transition Arya Samaj movement with its educational programme emerged as most prominent socio-religious reform movement in late colonial Punjab. Although, many researches have been done on the contribution of Arya Samaj as a religious reform movement but any serious and exclusive attempt has not so far been made to explore the contribution of Arya Samaj in disseminating of education in the late colonial North India.
The major thrust of my research is to explore the social background and dimension of educational movement of Arya Samaj in Punjab region. The focus of my thesis is also on to find out the level of nationalist consciousness among the Arya Samajists of this region. I have explored the relations between the radical experiments of Gurukul movement and their Hindu revivalist ideology which led communal tensions within Punjabi society during late 19th and early 20th century. The issue of women education, raised by Arya Samajists and their efforts for emancipation of women with a critical approach, is important finding of my study. I have also explored the contribution of Arya Samaj educational institutions in the Indian freedom movement with special reference to Swadeshi movement and relations with Indian National Congress during the early Gandhian era.

This study has been possible only after tapping most of the important primary sources like the Government of India, Home Political Files, and Selections from Native Newspaper Reports, Selections from Educational Records, Census Reports, Proceedings and Reports of D. A. V. College Trust and Management Society, a vast literature on Arya Samaj, some of the contemporary newspapers, Anglo-Indian journals, private papers of other Indian leaders as also personal interviews.

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