INTRODUCTION
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The Arya Samaj is, undoubtedly, one of the most significant socio-religious reform movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in India. Sri Aurobindo described Dayanand Saraswati, the founder of the Arya Samaj, as "one of its great and formative spirits."\(^1\) Jordens, the biographer of Swami Dayanand, has described him as "one of the giant figures of his era."\(^2\) The Arya Samaj established by Swami Dayanand in 1875 showed that Hindus, long hibernating in a self-enclosed world of its own, was beginning rapidly to awake and face the realities of the nineteenth century. It also revealed that:

There was fire within the great body of Hindus which, if struck by a competent hand, could be coaxed into a blaze of life and energy. The concept of the gentle and often servile Hindu began to disappear.\(^3\)

No less significant was the role of the Arya Samaj in enhancing the cause of nationalism. Of course, it did

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\(^2\) Jordens, J. T. F., *Dayanand Saraswati - His Life and Ideas* (Delhi, 1976), p. XIII.

\(^3\) Karan Singh, *loc. cit.*
not take part in politics as a body; but it did provide fighting weapons like "Swadeshi" and "Boycott" to realise the dream of independence. Some of its leaders like Lala Lajpat Rai took active part in national politics. Annie Besant has remarked, "We recognise the Arya Samaj and its patriotic vigour, as one of the strongest currents in the stream of Indian nationality." 

India was in danger of its being completely supplanted by European ideals. The Anglicising process appeared to have gone far. Swami Rayanand and his Samaj preached that the Indians should be bold, self-reliant and manly. If loving one's country and one's people was good, the Samaj stood for it and was not ashamed of it. Whatever the Samaj did; it did openly. It discouraged sycophancy and double-dealings of all nature. In fact, the founder of the Samaj was himself "too bold, too honest, too open to be a disguised political missionary masquerading as a religious and social reformer." It is quite a different thing that the process of religious teachings and social reform may open the eyes of the people and awaken in them a desire for political betterment. Jawaharlal Nehru has also expressed that,

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"It is significant to know that great political mass movements in India have had a spiritual backgrounds behind them. No wonder, the activities of Swami Dayanand and his Samaj came to be seriously watched by the British Government. As the activities of the Arya Samaj gained momentum and popular appeal, government's fears and apprehensions increased simultaneously. The government came to believe that the Arya Samaj was largely responsible for fostering anti-British propaganda in the country. They concluded that it was a "dangerous," "political" movement cleverly disguised in the garb of socio-religious organisation. The adverse reports of the C.I.R., Christian Missionaries and the Anglo-Indian press against the Arya Samaj all the more infuriated the British Government against this body.

Much work has been done on the contribution of Arya Samaj in the field of socio-religious reforms and its work in the field of education. There are also many biographies of the founder of the Arya Samaj. But no serious and exclusive attempt has so far been made as to deal with the British attitude and policy towards Arya Samaj, which is very essential, specially when the founder of the Arya Samaj and his Samaj were very bold and outspoken and national struggle for independence was afoot.

6Karan Singh, op. cit., p. 7.
"Arva Dharma" by K.L. Jones is a masterly study about the life of Swami Dayanand and the contribution of the Arya Samaj as a socio-religious movement particularly in the Punjab. The author does discuss "The Arya Samaj and the Government," but that is too little to be enough for a topic which needs a more detailed investigation. Dhanpati Pandey in his Ph.D. thesis, "The Arya Samaj and Indian Nationalism," explores the contribution of Arya Samaj towards Indian freedom movement. He has also devoted one chapter to "British attitude towards Arya Samaj." Pandey traces the hostile British attitude towards Arya Samaj from 1907. He emphatically states, "It was in 1907 that the Arya Samaj first heard its criticism and condemnation." But the present study reveals the roots of the hostile British attitude towards this body since its very inception. The British even foiled some of the earlier attempts made by Swami Dayanand to establish Arya Samaj. Moreover, the study completely ignores some important and relevant sources like the Viceroy's private papers, the Anglo-Indian Press and the reports of the Christian Missionaries. "Contribution of Arya Samaj in the Making of Modern India - 1875-1947" (Jaipur, 1965), another Ph.D. thesis by Madhey Shyam.

7 Jones, K.L., ARYA DHARMA (New Delhi, 1976), pp. 299-309.


9 Ibid., p. 141.
Pareek and "Arya Samaj in Punjab (1877-1901)" M.Phil. dissertation, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1979, by Devendra Kumar Chaudhary, also suffer from similar shortcomings. Some of the other works on Swami Dayanand, and Arya Samaj and its activities are J. Reid Graeme's unpublished Ph.D. thesis "The Arya Samaj as a reformation in Hinduism with special reference to caste," available in microfilm in Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi, and "A Critical Study of the Contribution of the Arya Samaj to Indian Education" (Delhi, 1965), a Ph.D. thesis by Kum. Saraswati S. Pandit. These have limited scopes as their topics speak of, "Dayanand Saraswati - His Life and Ideas," (New Delhi, 1976) by J.T.F. Jordana is a comprehensive biography of the Swami, dealing with his early and later views as discussed in the first and second editions of the Satyarth Prakash. Whereas Jordana could have gone into the details of the relations between the Swami and the British, he has, however, not discussed this important aspect of Swami's life much in his work. Another biography Swami Shraddha Hans: His Life and Causes (New Delhi, 1961) by Jordana is the latest and much needed work on the great personality. In this work, Jordana has also tried to explore the British suspicion over the Swami and his Gurukula. Since the whole Arya Samaj could not come to the purview of the topics, limitations of
Thus in the absence of a comprehensive study on the British Government's attitude and policy towards Arya Samaj, I became all the more interested to take up the task. Moreover, it is always essential to keep in view the government's attitude and policy, specially a foreign government towards a movement which had dominated the Indian scene at a time when the struggle for Indian independence was in its infancy.

I have spread the present study in six chapters followed by a conclusion. The first chapter has been devoted to the study of the life and teachings of Swami Dayanand, foundation of the Arya Samaj and its activities in socio-religious and educational fields. Founded in 1875 at Bombay, Arya Samaj soon became a popular movement. "By the end of 1920 there were about 1,800 Samajas all over India and a few hundred in Burma, Africa, Fiji and Southern America." The first and foremost work taken up by the Samaj was the educational advancement of its people. In fact Arya Samaj managed not only arts colleges and schools but also institutions of many other disciplines. "No other religious body except the

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Christian held so many institutions in its charge. The educational programme of the Arya Samaj laid emphasis on self-reliance, vigour and pride in the past, which were not relished by the British Government. Hence the government began to look upon the Arya Samaj's institutions as breeding grounds for "seditious" and thus "dangerous" for the existence of their Raj. Equally devoted was Arya Samaj to the cause of social uplift. "Outside the Christian circles, Arya Samaj was the first purely Indian Association to organise orphanages and widow-homes." Arya Samaj was in the forefront of organising famine-relief led by their leaders like Lala Lajpat Rai. But the British suspected their intentions. The British feared that, "Lajpat Rai's efforts for relief of famine in U.P. were inspired not by philanthropy but by hatred of the British lest the hearts of the people should be drawn to the British Officers."12

Arya Samaj also did yeoman's service in time of pestilence in Multan, Rawalpindi and Delhi. They also did wonderful work in the Kamar earthquake. They succeeded where government failed. A casual traveller to the distressed valley remarked, "The Government relief

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measures are anything but satisfactory. Of all the private organisations engaged in taking relief to the suffering, the work of Anarkali Arya Samaj is simply beyond praise."

The Arya Samaj was also in the forefront to fight the social evils viz., inferior position of women, ban on widow-mARRIAGE; PURDHY dOWRY, prostitution, caste and untouchability. Their work in these fields went a long way in bringing a social catalyst on the Indian scene. But in all these works they came in direct clash with the Christian missionaries. No wonder, the British officials came in line with their fellow Christians to combat the Arya Samaj’s activities through their adverse reports about this body to the government.

In chapters II to IV, I have endeavoured to explore the thinking of the British about the Arya Samaj and the development of their attitude and policy towards this organisation. In the second chapter I have tried to unearth the roots of the hostile attitude of the British towards the Arya Samaj stemming not from the foundation of the Samaj, but because of the British Government’s adverse attitude towards its founder, Swami Ramanand, much before the birth of the Samaj. Many British

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13 The Peniache, 11 May, 1906.
Government officers and Christian missionaries had come in contact with the Swami even before the establishment of the Arya Samaj. Many of them had formed the opinion, that Swami Dayanand was a "rebel." Even Lord Northbrook, the Viceroy of India (1873-76), on his meeting with the Swami, formed a similar opinion and instructed his government "to keep a strict watch on the activities of that "rebel."" It was because of this hostile attitude of the British towards Swami Dayanand that the first attempt made by the Swami to establish Arya Samaj did not succeed.

Arya Samaj was recognised by most of the British officials as a political body. Of course, the Aryan Sabha (The Executive Committee) of the Samaj considered the matter in its meeting of 12 November, 1866 and passed a resolution, "...politics is beyond the scope of the Arya Samaj." But still the wave of suspicion continued over the Arya Samaj. Of course, the opinion of the officials differed from person to person. Sir Maskworth Young, Lt. Governor of the Punjab called Arya Samaj as, "The most active and at the same time most dangerous of

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these societies in the Punjab. But Elgin, the Viceroy, could find no evidence to support this view. He wrote to Hackworth:

"It so happened that I had a file on that subject before me lately and though I could find plenty of denunciation of the society, I could discover very little direct evidence that their teaching was political or hostile to government."

In fact it was true that "Arya Samaj was not a political organisation nor did it, as such take part in the current politics. But every Arya Samajist was a heretic and an iconoclast. His opposition to Christian missionaries and their proselytising work, his uncompromising attitude towards corruption and official oppression made him conspicuous in every sphere of life." Government officials also condemned Arya Samaj as a political body because of its participation in "anti-kine-killing agitation." Its Shuddhi movement aroused the antagonism of the Christian missionaries and thus of the British Government. The British officials "seek to do all that lies in their power to co-operate with the men..."

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16. Elgin Papers, Hackworth Young to Elgin, Letter No. 35 (sp), 15 July, 1897, Microfilm (NAI).

17. Ibid., Elgin to Hackworth Young, Letter No. 9 (sp), 18 July, 1897.

and women whom we call missionaries because they have been sent out with the distinct object of making India a Christian country. In fact, the Arya Samaj was "confusedly out to do what the missionary was doing and to prevent him from doing what he was out to do." Lajpat Rai also remarked that "The Arya Samaj has the disadvantage of being accounted "anti-British" because it is "anti-Christian." Of course, till then the government had not evolved a definite policy towards Arya Samaj; its activities and preachings were, however, seriously watched by the government officials at all levels. Lala Lajpat Rai has written:

In its early history, the Samaj was looked upon with suspicion by the government. Sir Lepal Griffin and Sir Robert Egerton did not have a good opinion about the Samaj. They believed the Samaj to be a dangerous movement for the government. They were much bewildered by the progress of the Samaj.

As the activities of the Arya Samaj gained momentum and popular appeal, government's fears and apprehensions increased simultaneously. Government's

19. The East and East 1915, Article "The Attitude of Europeans in India towards the Spread of Christianity" by a retired Indian Officer.


21. Ibid., p. 305.

failure in arresting the murderer of Pt. Lekh Ram, a prominent Arya Samaj Leader, all the more excited the Arya Samajists against the government. The Government believed that the Arya Samaj was largely responsible for the spread of communal riots and for fostering anti-British propaganda in the country. The period from 1906 to 1907 became a period of persecution for the Samajists at the hands of the authorities. The persecution of "The Panjabes." Rawalpindi trials, deportation of Lala Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh are some of the many stringent measures taken by the government. Men like Valentine Chirol, the special correspondent of The Times, London, expressed that much of the anti-British sentiment in India stems from the teachings and activities of the Arya Samaj. "...There is still a very strong under-current of anti-British feeling...it is rife wherever the Arya Samaj is known to be most active..."23 Aryas were, of course, prominent in "Swaraj" and "anti-partition" agitation. They also provided leadership to the peasants smearing under the repressive and unjust agrarian policies of the government. But they were there not as a body but in their individual capacity. They did not represent any Arya Samaj nor did any Arya Samaj pass a resolution to that effect. F.A. Robertson, Judge, Chief

Court, on having talks with the "Advanced Party" concluded that "Lala Lajpat Rai was the heart and soul of the political side of the Arya Samaj."²⁴ Ibbetson, on assuming charge as Lt. Governor of the Punjab, wrote to the Viceroy about the situation in the Punjab as "threatening - the active spirits belong almost without exception to the Arya Samaj, a society founded primarily with a religious object, but which in the Punjab at least, has always had a strong political bent."²⁵ The Governor-General-in-Council acted on the advice of the Lt. Governor, and ordered the issue of warrants under Regulation III of 1818 for the arrest of Lala Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh and their confinement in jail at Manday. After the deportation of the two leaders a deputation of the Arya Samajists waited upon Mr Ibbetson and protested that "The Arya Samaj had nothing to do with the recent disturbances and that their movement was a religious and educational one having nothing to do with politics." But the Lt. Governor confronted this with the opinion of his Deputy Commissioners that "Wherever there was an Arya Samaj, it was a centre of seditious talk."²⁶ Of course,


²⁶ The Punjaban, 29 May, 1907.
the government could not produce anything against the deportees. Morley, the Secretary of State for India, had to face strong opposition in the Parliament. Now, Minto, the Viceroy and Morley were convinced about the innocence of Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh and they were released against the wishes of Ibbetson, who still wanted to keep the two leaders in detention. But the release definitely relieved Morley of his mental tension which he had since the deportation of the two leaders.

Aryas thought that peaceful days might be ahead for them since the Viceroy and the Secretary of State were clear that in deporting Lala Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh, they were misled by the false reports of Ibbetson. But their hopes were belied. They were still suspected and prosecutions were launched against them for some reason or the other. Criminal Intelligence Department supplied exaggerated accounts of their "Seditious" activities to the government. Arya Samajists were accused of manufacturing bombs. It was reported that "their intention is to spread information among the frontier tribes about the manufacture and use of bombs." Bhai Parmarand was convicted of possessing a document on the manufacture and use of bombs.²⁷ He was transported

²⁷Home Political Department, Proceedings B-Jan., 1900, No. 19.26.
for life with forfeiture of property. Of course, the
Advocate General was convinced that it was a false case;
so was convinced C.F. Andrews. Similarly, at Patiala
*s... Police arrested eighty-four Arya Samajists and
charged them with sedition. Later arrests brought the
figure to 110, nearly all the leading Samajists within
Patiala. Temples, offices and houses were searched,
publications seized and all work of the Samaj brought to
a standstill.*28 All this was done at the instance of a
British officer Harborton. Later it was proved that it
was all a fabricated case expressly done by the British
Officer to please the Maharaja for keeping his job intact.

It was not till Neston, Lt. Governor of U.P.,
visited Gurusukul and had the first hand information about
its working that the mist of suspicion over the Arya
Samaj came to be cleared. On his visit, he was impressed
by the working of the Gurusukul and the discipline of the
students. He remarked, "I will not talk political aspect
of the question where politics are unknown."29 Similarly,
Lord Chelmsford also visited the Gurusukul and other
Samajist institutions and spoke highly of their
activities. This was also due to the untiring efforts of

28 Munshi Ram, Ram Deb, etc., pp. 62-63.

29 The Tribune, 11 March, 1913. Also Seth Baden
Kohm, High Government Officials on Arya Samaj and Akh
C. F. Andrews who was equally close to these high officials and the Arya Samaj leaders. Thus he worked as a mediator between the two and did very much to lift the cloud of official suspicion which then hung over the Arya Samaj. But the C.I.D. still harboured doubts, suspicion and hostility towards this body. Influenced by their reports, Arya Samajists in government service were still harassed and were forced either to leave Arya Samaj or their service.

In the events of 1919, the ring leaders were reported by the officials from all over, to be the Aryas. The government considered that, "The movement was anti-British, anti-European and anti-Christian because its prime conductors were the Aryas." 30 A. C. Elliot, Commissioner, Ambala Division suggested:

The only steps government could possibly take should be to see that no institution of this kind or any other institution primarily run by the Arya Samaj and for the Arya Samaj gets any grant from government; through confidential orders can let it be understood that no applicant educated in any Arya Samaj institutions should be recommended for government employ or taken in any district office. And that in selecting from Zaildars, Insaadans and all Lambardars where possible no candidate, who has been educated in a Arya institution should be appointed. 31

30 The Madia News, August, 1920, Article "The Punjab Disorders and the Arya Samaj."

31 Official Report on "Punjab Disturbances, 1919" (Note of A.C. Elliot, Commissioner, Ambala Division), p. 34.
Stringent punishments were reserved for the members of this society. Michael Dyer writes:

... while the Samaj does not include perhaps more than five per cent of the Hindu population of the Punjab, an enormous proportion of Hindus convicted of sedition and other political offences from 1907 down to the present day are members of the Samaj.

It was strange that, "The statement of official witnesses before Lord Hunter Enquiry Committee as well as the trials held by the Commissioners entirely disproved the assumption that the Samaj was connected with the recent disorders."33

Stringent punishments experienced by the Arya Samajists during Roxelt Hills agitation, Jallianwala Bagh atrocities and the Martial Law regime convinced them that they must fall in line with the national stress. No wonder, when a special session of the Indian National Congress was held in Lahore, the Chairman of the Reception Committee was Swami Shradha Nand and most of its members were also staunch Aryas. Similarly, when the non-cooperation programme was launched by Gandhi, Arya Samajists extended their whole-hearted support. Of course,

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33 *India Magazine*, August, 1920.
some of the Aryas were against the programme of boycott of schools and colleges by students. Lala Hans Raj, Principal, R.A.V. College, Lahore, was one of the strongest opponents of this programme. But the students of R.A.V. College were by and large for boycott. So much so that they asked the R.A.V. College management "to disaffiliate their college from the government university." They also went on strike to meet their demand. According to an official version, "out of a total number of 950 students in the R.A.V. College, only forty attended the college on 27 January, 1921."  

Thus the Aryan Samaj had been continuously under British suspicion since its foundation. Even the activities of Swami Dayanand were watched, and at times he was not allowed to deliver his lectures. The Government considered Aryan Samaj "A Political Body." The repeated resolutions passed by the Aryan Samaj that it was not so, carried no weight with the British officials. Christian missionaries and Anglo-Indian Press all the time exhorted the British officials against this body. The Christians could not swallow the bitter pill, Shuddha, initiated by the Samaj because it was likely to shatter their dream of making India "Christian." They could not relish the Aryan entry into the field of social service viz., establishment of

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35 *The Tribune*, 28 January, 1921.
orphans, famine-relief, opening of schools and colleges etc., because these were the fields where Christians used to reap their harvest. Christian missionaries had an easy access to the British officials and they would generally speak about the "Political" and "Seditious" character of the Arya Samaj.

Similarly, the Anglo-Indian Press worked as the spokesman of the government. Arya Samaj was a movement "national" in character, it could not escape the blunt of the Anglo-Indian Press. The Civil and Military Gazette, the Pioneer, the Englishman were specially hostile to the Arya Samaj. Valentine Chirol, special correspondent of the Times, who visited India during 1907-10, made a special note about this movement. He wrote that, "The whole drift of Dayanand's teachings is far less to reform Hinduism than to range it into active resistance to the alien influences which threatened in his opinion, to denationalise it." Motivated and exhorted by the reports of the Anglo-Indian Press, the government brought out fresh weapons from its quiver to fight this movement tooth and nail.

To analyse the British attitude and policy towards Arya Samaj, I went through the (Home) Public and Political Department files of the Government of India. This is a very

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rich source of information for determining British policy and attitude towards Arya Samaj. Another very important source, which has not been tapped much in any earlier study on the Arya Samaj is the Viceroy's Private Papers. I went through these private papers from Lord Northbrook to Lord Chelmsford, available in microfilm in National Archives of India and Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi. A study of the reports of the Anglo-Indian Press was also rewarding because this agency had been in tune with the government's views. The Civil and Military Gazette, the Pioneer and the Englishman throw a flood of light on the topic in hand. Utmost care has been taken to analyse the reports of this agency in comparison to the reports of the native press. Thorough study of The Tribune, which has generally been taken as a non-partisan paper since its birth, has been made. The Panjab, the Arya Patrika, the Veda Magazine, the Arya Gazette, N.A.V. College Magazines and N.A.V. College Managing Committee proceedings and reports have also been consulted. The study of the Selections of the Native Newspapers reports of the Punjab, U.P. Agra and Oudh and N.W.F. Provinces, where Arya Samaj predominated throw considerable light on the topic.

Full justice would not have been done to the study but for going through the reports of the Christian missionaries about the activities of the Arya Samaj and
their reaction to that body. Most of these reports are available at Christian Brotherhood Library, New Delhi, and Barin Union Christian College, Batala (Punjab). Study of the Census Reports was all the more essential to know about the development and progress of Arya Samaj during the period of the study as also to know its relations with other contemporary socio-religious organisations. These reports also reflect enough material about the British Government's attitude and policy towards this body.

Apart from it, some transcripts and other private papers of some contemporary eminent Arya Samajists preserved in the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, have also proved useful in getting first hand knowledge about the Arya Samaj. Study of articles on Arya Samaj by eminent writers in The Modern Review, The Asiatic Review, The Panjab Past and Present, and some other journals proved very valuable in the present study. Some unpublished theses on Arya Samaj, some available in microfilm in Nehru Memorial Museum and Library and others in personal possession of some scholars and in some university libraries also widened my knowledge on the subject. Private correspondence of Munshi Ram and C.P. Andrews; Gokhale and Lajpat Rai have provided interesting and very informative accounts of the subject.