CHAPTER I

FOUNDING OF THE ARYA SAMAJ: ITS GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT (1875-1920)
CHAPTER 1

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In the middle of the last century, the Indian society was like unto a stagnant pool in a jungle. Inlets and outlets were choked up with muck. Over the bosom of water was spread a thick layer of dirty green scum. The destruction of Indian polity, the transformation of its economy and the attacks upon its social system and culture, threatened to reduce the people not only to political subservience for ever, but also to the status of an economic colony and a cultural province of the West. Against this political dependence and intellectual slavery, there arose a protest which gathered momentum as time passed.

The religious scene among the Hindus in the nineteenth century had become morbid. Many religious beliefs and practices prevailed in Hindu society which were not an essential and ineradicable part of Hinduism. Religion began to be equated with temple, idol-worship, observance of shraddha ceremony, pilgrimage to holy places, observance of fasts in expectation of earthly rewards and
belief in astrology. The true spirit of religion was replaced by more external religious ceremonialism which resulted in the domination of priestly classes.

There were many social ills in the nineteenth century which had sapped the vitality and vigour of the Hindu society. Some of these social evils were the widely prevalent child marriage, ban on widow re-marriage and enforced widowhood, rigid caste-barriers, large scale observance of untouchability, rigorous ban on foreign travel, the inferior status accorded to women etc. With the spread of Western education and under the influence of Western culture and civilisation, the old superstitions and prejudices came to lose their force as well as appeal.

Thus a number of schools of thought arose which argued that their political failure and resulting misfortune were due to the moral decline and social deficiency which had resulted from neglect of true religion. Among the reformers there were many groups. In the advanced liberal group, there were such stalwarts as Ram Mohan Roy, Rabindranath Tagore, Keshab Chander Sen, M.C. Banerjea, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Raj Narayan Bose among the Hindus; and Syed Ahmed Khan, Ameer Ali and Muhammad Iqbal among the Muslims. The group firmly devoted to ancient tradition consisted of Dayanand Saraswati, Ramakrishna Paramhansa, Vivekananda, and
Benkin Chender Chaterjee among the Hindus and the
promulgators of such sects as Ahl-i-Hadith and Ahl-i-
Quran and the sadhaks among the Muslims. Although,
there were differences among them on the content of the
traditions, rejection and of approval of old dogmas,
rites and religious sects, but almost all of them
repudiated the caste, superstitions and irrational
practices which had grown up in the past.

Swami Dayanand Saraswati, who felt the pulse of
the time, was the most forceful. He wanted to realise
the idea of unifying India nationally, socially and
religiously. Swami Dayanand’s mission was to purge human
society of all the evils it suffered owing to wrong
beliefs. This he ventured to do by establishing the Arya
Samaj in 1875.

EARLY LIFE

Dayanand was born in an Audishya Brahmin family
at Tarkara in the Morvi state of Gujarat (Kathiawar) in
1824. His father Krishenji Lalji Trivedi or Trami held
the office of Revenue Collector in Tarkara village. His
early name was Nool Shankar. He commenced studying
Dharmashastr and within a short time he could grasp long series
of religious hymns and their commentaries. When he was
eight he was invested with the "sacred thread," given
practical lessons of the "Vedanta-Sastra" and taught the "Yajurveda Sarasita" starting first from the "Studentuva".

Dayanand's father had the highest devotion to Shiva and so did he teach his son that Shiva's worship was the most divine of all religions. In 1837, on the Shivaratri day, his father took Dayanand to the Shiva Temple to participate in the night long vigil. Whereas he kept awake, he was surprised to see his father and the President falling asleep one after the other. Soon Dayanand found a mouse running up and down the image. "I feel it is impossible," he replied "to reconcile to the idea of an omnipotent, living God, with this idol which allows the mice to run over his body and thus suffers his image to be polluted without the slightest protest." Dayanand awoke his father from his sleep and asked questions one after the other. He was not satisfied with the explanation given by his father. Dayanand went home and broke his fast.

From now onwards Dayanand began to devote his whole time to studies and completely gave up the regular worship in the temple. Dayanand's parents were perturbed at it. They decided that he should be betrothed and the marriage ceremony performed as soon as he should be twenty. But

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Dayanand had determined to live a life of seclusion, contrary to the wishes of his parents.

In 1846, Dayanand left his home without informing his parents. He reached Sichpur and took abode in the temple of Mahadeva. In the meantime a Valmiki despatched a letter to Dayanand's parents informing about his whereabouts and intentions. On hearing about this his father came down to Sichpur with his men and took Dayanand unaware. "He reproached me violently, accusing me of bringing eternal disgrace to my family.... Regardless of my promises to follow him, he gave me in the charge of his sepoys, commanding them to watch me night and day, and never leave me out of their sight for a moment." But one day Dayanand escaped and reached Ahmedabad. From there he proceeded to Baroda and had discussions with Brahmanand and other holy men, who established to my entire satisfaction that Brahma, the deity, was no other than my own self, my ego." Here Dayanand got an opportunity to discuss various scientific and metaphysical subjects with a learned person, Setshidanand Parshwanath. From him he also came to know about the Samyagis and Brahahas of Gansada Kanyali. Consequently Dayanand went to that place of sanctity on the banks of the Narmada.

Ibid., p. 23.

Ibid., p. 24.
and met a great Sanyasi named Chidashama and several other Brahmanes. After some discussion Dayanand was placed under the tuition of one Purnenanda Purneshana, and for several months he studied Vedanta.

Aryabharividhanika, Vedanta Paribhashe and other philosophical treatises. Now Dayanand asked his Desam friend to recommend him for Sanyas to Swami Purnenand which he promptly did. At first this Sanyasi declined to do so but on the third day he consecrated me into the order, delivering to me a janda (Staff) and naming me Dayanand Saraswat.\footnote{Ibid., p. 26.}

After living here for some time, Dayanand went to Vyas Ashram where he began learning science of Yoga from a Sanyasi named Yogendra. Now he proceeded to Simor and met Krishan Sastri under whom Dayanand perfected himself in Sanskrit.

Now Dayanand went to Tehri\footnote{Tehri is a town in the district Garhwal, U.P.} where he studied Tantras. From there he reached Okhi Nath\footnote{A Nath in the Himalayas.} where the high priest called Mahant tried to induce Dayanand to remain with him and finally succeed him in Mahantship which Dayanand declined. Now he came to Garhiwate, on the banks of the Ganges. Here he found a dead body floating in
the river which he took out. He cut it open from the naval to the ribs and a portion of the head and neck and examined and compared it with the description in the books. "Finding that they did not tally at all," Dayanand "tore the books to pieces and threw them into the river after the corpse." From that time gradually Dayanand came to the conclusion that "with the exception of the Vedas, Upanishads, Patanjali and Sankhya, all other works upon science and Yoga were false." 7

It was on 14 November, 1860 that Dayanand met Swami Virjanand, a learned Sanyasi at Mathura. Virjanand held that India had degenerated greatly owing to the neglect of the study of the Vedas, Upanishads, Darshanas and Sampradayas. Swami Virjanand taught Dayanand philosophic interpretation of the Vedas and then charged him with the mission to purge Hinduism of all its ugly aberrations and deviations.

Virjanand was so much pleased with Dayanand that he used to address him as Kalivasa and Rukhabas, which respectfully meant "one whose tongue completely destroys untruth," and "firm as rock." Soon Dayanand's outlook changed; his doubts vanished. When Dayanand finished his education with Virjanand and wanted to take leave of him, the latter demanded as Rukhabas: "Take a vow before me

7See Dr. H.L. Bailey, Life of Dayanand Saraswati (Ajmer, 1946), p. 17.
that so long as you will live, you shall work incessantly
to spread \textit{Artha} literature (Literature composed by the
Rishis) and a true knowledge of the Vedas and condemn
works which teach false doctrines and tenets, and that
you shall even give up your life if necessary, in re-
establishing the Veda religion.\textsuperscript{6}

Taking the message of the Guru, Dayanand travelled
far and wide and keenly observed the conditions of the
times. He was now determined to establish the Veda
religion. In order to spread his tenets beyond his
immediate audiences, he wrote \textit{Satyarth Prakash}.

In 1867, Swami Dayanand went to Haridwar where
\textit{Kumbh} fair was being held. Here Dayanand adopted the
practice of entering into \textit{Shaatara} (Religious debates)
with Brahmins and showing them their ignorance and
errors. In 1873, Swami Dayanand gave a series of lectures
on the Veda Dharma as he understood it. Radam Blavatsky
has written that "There was no better or grander orator in
Hindi and Sanskrit than Swamije Dayanand throughout the
length and breadth of this land."\textsuperscript{7} No wonder, large
number of people attended the lectures every evening and

\textsuperscript{6}Ibid., pp. 34-35.

\textsuperscript{7}Blavatsky, H.P., \textit{Collected Writings}, Vol. VI,
returned home fully convinced that the Vedic Dharma as preached by Swamiji was the true faith. This encouraged Dayanand to consider the idea of forming a society so that his work be consolidated and carried on further.

The first attempt to establish Arya Samaj was made at Rajkot where Swami Dayanand reached on 31 December 1874, and he delivered a series of eight lectures. But it was not successful and came to an end after about five months. A second attempt to establish Arya Samaj was made at Ahmedabad on 27 January, 1875 but that also failed.

From Ahmedabad Swami Dayanand arrived at Bombay on 29 January, 1875. A serious attempt was made here to establish the Samaj. Rules and regulations were also framed. Pandit Lokh Ram has mentioned 10 April, 1875 as the date of establishment of the Arya Samaj at Bombay. The Times Of India also suggests 10 April, 1875 as the date of the foundation of the Samaj at Bombay. 10

On the first of January, 1877, Queen Victoria was proclaimed "Empress of India" in a magnificent Durbar held by the Viceroy, Lord Lytton, at Delhi. Dayanand was also present there as one of the guests of the native princes. It was here, he met some people from the Punjab

10 The Times Of India. 10 April, 1875.
who gave him a pressing invitation to visit their land of five rivers. Swami Dayanand gladly accepted their invitation and shortly after visited Ludhiana and then Lahore. It was at Lahore that Swami Dayanand was successful in establishing a Samaj. "So great was his success in this later city, that the Arya Samaj founded there very speedily eclipsed the society founded in Bombay; and Lahore became the headquarters of the movement." Later Swami Dayanand visited many other important towns of Punjab viz., Amritsar, Jullundur, Ferozepur, Rawalpindi, Jhelum, Gujrat, Nagirabad, Gujranwala and Multan. The Swami found this land of five rivers a better soil for sowing seeds of his mission.

There were many reasons behind this phenomenon. The Hindus of the Punjab had suffered rigours of frequent invasions the most and were ever ready to rally round a leader who could arouse them out of the stupor of depression and defeatism, remind them of their race and tell them that there was still hope for them. This was the message Swami Dayanand brought to the Punjabis and reminded them of the "Golden Age." Moreover, the

conservatism and ignorance in which the whole of India was steeped during Muslim rule had received a rude shaking at the hands of Guru Nanak and his successors in the Punjab. Orthodoxy had been weakened. "But with the passage of time, the followers of the Guru went back to the observances from which their forefathers had been weaned." Swami Dayanand's message brought them fresh hopes. Now the Punjabi Hindus gained confidence to face the attacks of Christian missionaries and Muslim fanatics, with the logical presentation of the Aryanized philosophy of the Vedas. Moreover, Arya Samaj was a mass movement.

"Wherever the Arya Samaj is a reality, there has been a marvellous elevation of the masses. It is essentially a democratic religion; its work is the fruit of middle class and lower middle class guidance and the hearty cooperation of all ranks." Of course in 1879, two years before the establishment of the Bombay Arya Samaj, a reformatory movement in Sikhism known as Simh Sabha movement had come up in Punjab, but this movement could not gain support of the masses and remained a movement of the landed aristocracy. "Supporters of Simh Sabha initially met with strong opposition especially in the


13 Ibid.
villages. They were scorned and ridiculed for their so-called novel ideas.\(^14\) Impressed by the mass appeal, anti-idolatrous, and democratic principles of the Arya Samaj, "Many a well meaning Sikh, preferred to join this movement. Bhai Jemadar Singh, Bhai Pit Singh and several other Sikhs worked zealously for the Arya Samaj and for the establishment of the D.A.V. College, Lahore, started as a school in 1866."\(^15\) Thus it was in Punjab that Arya Samaj found a very congenial soil for growth.

For the next six years Dayanand lived and worked in North India. He made extensive tours. It was during this period that he came into contact with Theosophical Society which had been founded in New York in 1875. In 1876 the founders, Col. Olcott and Madame Bhavatsky wrote to Dayanand and they suggested a union of the two movements on the ground that their aim was the same; Dayanand accepted the proposal. The Theosophist leaders came to India in January, 1879 and met the Swami at Saharanpur. The strange union continued until 1881. During all this time Col. Olcott and M. Bhavatsky were all praise for the Vedic faith and talked in a way so as


to show that they were followers of the Vedic faith. Rumours were afloat that the Arya Samaj had become a branch of the Theosophical Society and vice-versa. But when the two leaders of the Theosophical Society were on their way to Simla to meet the Viceroy, the Madam told Swami Dayananand that her companion and herself had no faith in God. The Swami was astounded to hear this confession and this was the beginning of differences between the founders of these two societies. The Theosophist view says, "The theosophical society was unascetic and cosmopolitan, while the Arya Samaj had its chief aim the purification of Hinduism."  

Another contemporary movement which influenced the Indian scene and which came in contact with Arya Samaj was Brahmo Samaj established in Bengal in 1828 by Raja Ran Mohan Roy. He also launched a crusade against social evils like sati, child marriage, ban on widow remarriage. He was also convinced that Hinduism had degenerated from its pristine purity of the ancient times. He launched a vigorous offensive against the caste system, branding it as undemocratic, inhuman and anti-national. The Arya Samaj was in agreement with

these views of Brahma Samaj. But still it could not be one with Brahma-Samaj. Brahma Samaj was nourished and fed mainly by European learning in India and had therefore a greater leaning towards Western knowledge and institutions and tools of the Western civilization, whereas the Arya Samaj was a movement purely inspired and fed by the high ideals, learning and civilization of the Vedic period of the ancient India. Whereas the Brahma Samaj favoured European learning through the English language, the Arya Samaj held dear the ancient Vedic cultural learning through Sanskrit and Indian regional languages.

Brahmo Samaj under Kashab Chandra Sen (1836-84), emphasising the unity of all religions, came under the influence of Christianity which Dayanand could not reconcile. Hans Kohn has also beautifully epitomised the respective contributions of the two prominent socio-religious movements of the nineteenth century. He says:

Both are children of the one and the same revolution . . . . But it was the Arya Samaj which by reawakening the India of the past did most to pave the way for the India of the twentieth century.17

Similarly K.C. Vyas has compared Brahma Samaj, the Rama Krishna Mission and Arya Samaj movement as under:

... Brahma Samaj was a mere group of intelligentsia. It made no persistent efforts at reforming Hinduism. The first persistent effort at doing this and at pointing out the imperfections of Western culture and civilization came from Rama Krishna Param Harna. ... Vivekanand carried his banner forward and preached the superiority of Eastern spirituality over Western materialism. But it was Dayanand, who saw the need for a real national religion which would unify all diverging forces.

Dayanand's mission was an attempt at the consolidation of the amorphous mass of the Hindus. This he tried to accomplish by giving them a common belief in one deity, in one scripture and a common mode of worship. During Swami Dayanand's stay at Lahore, it was felt by him that the rules and regulations of Arya Samaj framed at Bombay needed revision so as to make them brief. The re-casting was done by Swami Dayanand in collaboration with L. Bhai Des, L. Jinam Des, L. Val Raj, K.A. District Judge and a few other gentlemen. Later on, these Mivams (Rules) and Upivams (sub-rules) announced

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on 24 June, 1877 at Lahore, were also adopted by the Bombay Samaj and recognised by all the Arya Samajas in India or outside it. Following were the principles:

1. The primordial root - the eternal unseen sustainer of all true knowledge and of objects made known by true knowledge eye of all these is the supreme God.

2. God is personification of existence, intelligence and Bliss. He is formless, Almighty, just, Beneficent, unembodied, Endless, and Infinite, Unchangeable, Beginningless, Incomparable, Supporter of all, Lord of all, All pervading, Omniscient, and Controller of all from within, Undying, Imperishable, Fearless, Eternal, Holy and Maker of the Universe.

3. The Veda is the scripture of true knowledge. It is the paramount duty of every one to learn and teach the Veda, to hear it, read and recite it to others.

4. We should ever be ready to embrace truth and forsake untruth.

5. All acts should be done in accordance with dharma, deliberating what is right and what is wrong.

6. The prime object of the Arya Samaj Veda Church is to do good to the world, that is to promote
physical, spiritual and social good of every sentient being.

7. Our conduct towards all should be guided by love, righteousness and justice.

8. We should dispel Avidya - Nescience and promote Vidyā-science, spiritual and physical.

9. No one should be content with promoting his own good only; on the contrary, he should look for his good in promoting the good of all.

10. All men should subordinate themselves to the laws of society calculated to promote the well-being of all. They should be free in regard to the laws for promoting individual well-being.

Organisers and founders of societies are generally anxious to be defied or honoured in various ways but nothing was farther from Swami Dayanand's heart than this Gunadas. At one of the meetings Babu Barsa Prasad Bhattacharya proposed that the title of "Patron of Arya Samaj" be conferred upon Swamiji. The suggestion met the approval of everybody present but Swamiji smiled and said "The word patron suggests Gunadas which I am cut to destroy. I don't want to find a new seat and become a Guru myself. Such titles prove detrimental to the
cause itself in the long run. The Babu then suggested that Swamiji should at least accept the title of Parama Sahayaka, to which Swamiji's reply was, "If you call me Parama Sahayaka by what name are you going to call the Almighty. If you insist on putting down my name, put it down as an ordinary Sahayaka." Rai Behadur Mulraj also writes that Dayanand wanted to revive the study of the Vedas and of the works of Rishis and thereby to resuscitate the Hindus. He had no intention of founding a new religion or forming a new sect.

Arya Samaj did not have strict rules for its membership. According to Rai Behadur Mulraj, the first President of the Lahore Arya Samaj

A person who agrees to act according to the Niyama (rules) of the Arya Samaj is enrolled as a member of the Arya Samaj. He is not required to believe in the articles of faith as detailed in the Matsya of Swami Dayanand Saraswati, or in the philosophical tenets, theories and doctrines propounded in his works. Nor is he asked to acknowledge the Bhagava (commentary) of Swami Dayanand on the Vedas as true and free from mistakes, and to accept him as an infallible guide. They were bound to act according to the ten Niyama only.

21 Ibid.
23 Ibid., pp. 234-35.
Shani Dayanand died on 30 October, 1883 at the age of fifty-nine.

Dr Griswold has compared Shani Dayanand Saraswat with Luther. "Pandit Dayanand Saraswat became finally emancipated from the authority of Brahmanism in some such way as Luther became emancipated from the authority of the Church of Rome,... The watchword of Luther was 'Back to the Bible.' ... The watchword of Pandit Dayanand was 'Back to the Vedas,' with this religious watchword was implicitly, if not explicitly, combined namely India for the Indians, ..." Dr Griswold also expressed the view that:

The founder of the Arya Samaj was a kind of Indian Elijah or John the Baptist, who felt himself called to turn the hearts of the degenerate children of modern India to their fathers of the glorious Vedic age, to reconcile the present with the past, ... Elijah was not specially gentle in his dealings with the prophets of Baal, nor was Luther very tender toward the Roman Church. In like manner Pandit Dayanand Saraswat stood with his back to the wall, facing on the one hand the attacks of the Brahmanical hierarchy and on the other the assaults of the foreign religions, Islam and Christianity. Under these circumstances we can hardly wonder that he struck back as hard as he could.24

Thus the movement inaugurated by Dayanand made an
decade to awaken the spirit of self-reliance and
strengthen the sense of self-respect among Indians.

SPREAD OF THE ARYA SAMAJ

No doubt Arya Samaj met with stiffest opposition
from the orthodox Hinduism, Islam and Christianity, but
still it met with great success and grew at a considerable
pace. Even during the lifetime of Swami Dayanand, Arya
Samaj engulfed almost whole of Northern India specially,
Punjab, U.P. and Rajputana. "There can be no doubt,"
reported ARYA PATRIKA of 4 July, 1885. "That the movement
of the Arya Samaj has made a rapid progress during a short
period of about ten years. The name of the Arya Samaj is
known in every town and village throughout the length and
breadth of India, and the number of Samajes in different
provinces and localities exceeds two hundred and is ever
increasing."25

The Aryas came to be enumerated, from the Census of
1891, separately. The Census Superintendent for the 1891
Census of India remarked:

I think the general impression is that the
number of Aryas increased very rapidly between
1877 and 1883 but that since the death of

Dayanand or at least since 1865, it has stagnated, if not decreased in number, but it is quite possible that a steady increase is still going on. 26

But the number of Arya Samaj membership continued to swell in the nineteenth and even in the first quarter of the twentieth century.

By the end of 1920 there were about 1,200 Samajes all over India and a few hundred in Burma, Africa, Fiji and Southern America. The following table will show the strength of Aryas in India from 1891. 27

**TABLE 1**

**Showing Expansion of the Arya Samaj (1879-1930)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Members of the Samaj</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Females</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>Not recorded</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>22,024</td>
<td>17,372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>27,031</td>
<td>40,388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>13,700</td>
<td>1,05863</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>2,59,888</td>
<td>2,07,693</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

27 Ibid.
The above table is an index to the rapid spread of the Arya Samaj. Census of India, 1921 depicts that their total strength in 1911 exceeded 2,43,000 or about two and a half times what it was ten years ago and six times the number returned in 1891. In 1971 almost doubled from that of 1911. Of the 468 thousand Aryas in India, 205 thousand resided in the United Provinces and 223 thousand in the Punjab and Delhi. 23,000 in Kashmir and 45,000 in Bihar. The community has increased by 92 per cent. Since 1911 the increase in the United Provinces being 56 per cent and in the Punjab 68 per cent.²⁸

But number of Aryas depicted in the census is not the correct test of their strength. Census Superintendent of 1891 Census writes that:

The number may in places be slightly underestimated as the political connection of the Samaj have doubtless rendered a certain number of adherents shy of acknowledging themselves in the census papers as such, and some found who returned themselves as 'following the Swami' (i.e. Dayanand) have not been shown.²⁹

Similarly about the number of Aryas in Kashmir, it is reported in the Census of 1921.

²⁹ Census of India, 1921, Vol. XIX, p. 178 f.n.
The Superintendent thinks that the Aryan community is probably rather larger even than the figures represent since here was some deliberate suppression of the return of the Aryans in Srinagar and other cities by enumerators hostile to the seat.

Sheshadri Sinha also said that:

It was a mistake to judge the Aryan Samaj by census figures alone, as there was a large number of persons throughout India, who like himself did not wish to be designated as Aryan Samajist in recognised acceptance of the term but who had all the same a great liking for the movement and its work in many directions. 31

As for the popularity of the movement, there were many causes. The success of the efforts of the society to proselytise especially during the decade (1912-21) by the process known as shuddhi is undoubted. Because of social equality among the Aryans a large number of people from the depressed classes joined this movement. Aryan Samaj movement was also welcomed by the English educated and patriotic Indians. *Far from holding rationalism at a distant, the Aryan Samaj welcomes rationalism, fosters indeed rather too much the spirit of open discussion and only limits it by authority of revealed scriptures. It thus fits in with the present revolutionary epoch of the


31 The Tribune, 24 October, 1914.
age of reason and free enquiry."

Moreover, Arya Samaj was a theist movement which satisfied a large section of the society. Arya Samaj also recognised the equality of sexes and so progressive women too welcomed it. The young generation was particularly drawn to it for its social basis and democratic spirit. Then the Arya Samaj had a good organisation. "As the sub-regional centres gained strength, they penetrated the surrounding countryside, sending their members, as well as paid missionaries into the nearby villages and towns. In addition, the social position of most Aryas as teachers, lawyers and doctors brought a steady stream of people to them who were often influenced favourably towards Samaj doctrines." The forces that brought the Samaj into Sind and other outlying areas were more economic and bureaucratic than religious. "The spread of British business and administration carried Punjabis and the Arya Samaj to the west and south. Just as Bengalis brought Brahmoism with them, Punjabi Hindus carried Aryanism as their primary ideological innovation. A few decades before the establishment of the Arya Samaj, foreign travel was considered a sin among the Hindus. Swami Dayanand not only condemned it but also sent one of his devoted disciples, Shyamji Krishna Verma, to England and Germany to study

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science and other allied subjects. It was with these practical examples that Arya Samajists too were motivated to endeavour for their mission abroad in which they proved successful resulting in multiplication in their number and Samaj. In due course of time they would take their Arya ideals to the Caribbean, Africa, and South-East Asia, following lines of commerce and the British Empire. 

About the Arya success abroad, C.F. Andrews has described as thus:

I have seen in East Africa, the Arya Samaj flourishing and thriving in the midst of a singularly foreign and unpropitious environment. While other personal religious loyalties and beliefs were struggling for a breath of fresh air in a stifling situation to survive, the Arya Samaj was taking root in the soil and was putting forth new shoots.

In fact Arya Samaj has made history by its rapid spread not only in India but also in far off lands across the seas, such as South Africa, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, East Africa, Guyana, Surinam, Trinidad, Mauritius, Fiji, Thailand, Singapore, Burns, etc., by its service, especially to the people of Indian origin. The advent of the Arya Samaj was hailed as the arrival of a saviour and

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a pioneer. First Arya Samaj abroad was established at Nairobi on 5 August, 1903. *Arya Pratinichi Sabha*, East Africa, was established in 1920. Since then it has been the centre of Arya Samajic activities in that region. It was perhaps in recognition of the services of Nairobi Samaj that the conference of international Aryan League was held there in 1976; it was held in London in 1980.

**ORGANIZATION OF THE ARYA SAMAJ**

There was no central organisation to control the Arya Samaj established within the country and without. It was on 27 February, 1880 that *Pareekarini Sabha* was established. This Sabha had twenty-three members. His Highness Sajjan Singh, Maharana of Udaipur was its president. The establishment of the Sabha came into being according to Dayanand’s will. It read:

I, Dayanand Saraswati, entrust these twenty-three persons the sole-incharge of my clothes, books, money, *yajentalaya* and write this *Sakkar Patra* to use the same for altruistic purposes.35

Swami Dayanand also laid down the size and objects of this Sabha with guidelines for a constructive programme. The financial assets of the Sabha were to be spent in:

35 *Dayanand Saraswati, Sakkar Patra* (n.d.) quoted by Harnef Shyam Pareek, *op. cit.* p. 64.
a) reading and teaching *Vedas* and *Vedangas* and in getting the Vedic granthas printed,

b) in sending *undeshak mandalics*, or bands of preachers to diffuse Vedic knowledge in foreign countries and

c) to help the poor and the orphans,

d) only such persons would be entitled to continue as members who live righteously. Unrighteous persons were to be removed,

e) No vacancy could remain for a long time. No dispute arising in the Sabha could be taken to court unless an attempt had first been made in the Sabha itself to solve it.

Dayanand entrusted his press, books and public money to this Sabha in his life time.

**ARYA PRATINIDHI SABHA**

After the death of Swami Dayanand, it was felt that a high level body like *Pracharini Sabha* alone would not be able to accomplish much. High powered bodies at provincial level fully elective and democratic, it was felt, were essential. Mahadeva Govind Panade proposed to establish *Arya Pratinidhi Sabhas* in various provinces. Thus the first *Arya Pratinidhi Sabha* was established in 1885 in Punjab followed by the State of U.P., Rajasthan in 1886.
and 1888 respectively. According to Government records, as far back as 1909, there were seven principal associations called 'Pratinidhi Sabha,' to each of which were affiliated a number of sub-associations or Samaj noted below:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Sabha</th>
<th>Number of Samaj</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Punjab Pratinidhi Sabha, Lahore</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Provinces Pratinidhi Sabha of Agra</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajputana Pratinidhi Sabha, Bharatpur</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bengal and Bihar Pratinidhi Sabha</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Provinces and Berar Pratinidhi Sabha of Moranipour</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bombay Pratinidhi Sabha, Bombay</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burma Pratinidhi Sabha, Mandelay</td>
<td>[NOT RECORDED]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus Arya Samaj came to be very well organised body. It was with this organisation that "From a handful of Samajes, dominated almost totally by Aryas of Lahore, the movement grew into a sprawling rather anarchical set of organisations led by men in search of ideological answers which could be applied to the real world surrounding them."  

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To control and guide the working of Pratinidhi Sabhas, the necessity of a central body on country-wide basis was keenly felt. But it was not until 1906 that the idea was translated into practice. It took up not only the task of organisation and resolving disputes, arising within the Pratinidhi Sabhas, but it also took up some constructive programme in hand. It decided to establish a Mahavidyalaya to prepare Upadesheka to disseminate Vedic knowledge in India and abroad. To promote Vedic knowledge it aimed at establishing a library which is now a reality. When the Sarvadeshik Sabha came into being, about seven Arya Pratinidhi Sabhas with over 600 Samaj were affiliated to it but now there are more than 4,000 Arya Samaj in India and abroad with 200 provincial and district councils.

**SPLIT IN THE SABAJ**

"Various levels of commitment, differing perceptions of needs and a variety of interpretations of both Rayanand

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36. The Library is established at the office headquarters of the International Aryan League, Maharishi Rayanand Bhavan, Asif Ali Road, New Delhi.


and his message led to internal struggles for meaning and power. With rapid growth and increased internal complexity Aryas would come to disagree, to struggle and to divide.41

When Swami Dayanand died in 1883, the Arya Samajists wanted to commemorate the death of their leader by establishing an educational institution in his name. Consequently D.A.V. High School, which later became a college, was started at Lahore in 1886. Since the establishment of this institution there were two opinions among the Arya Samajists regarding the courses to be taught there. Of the two patrons of the college, Pandit Guru Dutt was an advocate of Vedic education in spite of his own education in English, and Lala Lai Chand was in favour of placing a special emphasis on English education despite his ardent faith in Vedas and Swami Dayanand. This did not remain a difference of opinion between these two personalities, but was carried right through the rank and file of the Arya Samaj. Similarly Lala Runali Ram and Lala Baija Ram pressed that both in school and in college Sanskrit be made the first language and that Swami Dayanand's scheme of studies be adopted; Lala Lal Chand and Lala Hansraj did not want English to be made

41Jones, K.W., op. cit., p. 160.
secondary and optional. Gradually this difference became a source of bitter friction, and the Arya Samajists split over this question also. Lawfulness or otherwise of animal food became yet another cause of conflict among the Arya Samajists. This "since Dayanand’s death," says Valentine Chirol, "the Arya Samaj has split up into two sections - 'the vegetarian,' who with regard to religious doctrine may be described as the orthodox, and the 'meat-eaters' as the Latitudinarians."43

The future of the Samaj in the Punjab was in many ways index of the future of the province. As such many fair minded persons tried to bring a concord between the two groups by asking them to shed their differences. Letters appeared in papers44 in this regard, but all these efforts were of no avail. In November 1893, the two parties arranged their anniversary functions separately. The party led by Lala Laj Chand, Hans Raj, Lajpat Rai came to be known as 'College party,' whereas the other led by Munihi Ram came to be known as 'Mahatma party.'


44 The Tribune, 15 November, 1893; Harishan Lal’s letter to the Editor.
Yet another effort was made for reunion after the assassination of Pandit Leek Ram. The two Samajes had a joint congregation in the Nashhowal Samaj. Later on preliminary steps were settled at Lala Lajpat Rai's house. But this reunion resulted only in an impulsive unity and did not last long. This reunion lacked mutual trust and confidence. Once again there were two Samajes.

The Mahatma party became busy in its Ved Parchar Fund which was started with the following objects:

1. To facilitate the spread of the Vedic religion in India.
2. To train preachers for the accomplishment of the above objects.
3. To open an Aryan Book Depot.
4. To establish an Ashram (Boarding house) for Aryan students in Lahore.

The activities and achievements of Ved Parchar Fund especially their work towards purification were well recognised by the people all over the country. Later on when Gurukul Kangri was established with the yeomen's service of Munshi Ram, 'Mahatma Party' also came to be known as 'Gurukul party.'

\[\text{Seth Shim Pracharak (Jullundur), 12 November, 1897, (S.N.N.P.E., 1897).}\]
In fact both the parties were out to surpass each other in their activities of social, religious and educational uplift of the masses. Lala Hans Raj and Lala Hanumti Ram both discharged their responsibilities with great courage and forbearance; they practically wiped out their individual existence for the sake of the parties they led. The late Lala Lal Chand took a large share in the service of the college and the late Dal Puela Ram in serving the Mahatma Samaj.46

ACHIEVEMENTS

The educational work

Swami Dayanand died on 30 October, 1863. Pandit Guru Dutt Vidyarthi suggested in the memorial meeting held at Lahore on 6 November, 1863, that the best method of commemorating the death of Dayanand was to establish a school or a college in the name of Dayanand. This proposal was carried unanimously. A sum of rupees 7000 was assured by the people there and then. A committee was constituted to collect funds with Lala Lal Chand, Lala Madan Singh, Lala Jiwan Das and Pandit Guru Dutt Vidyarthi as members. Large donations followed. Malik Jeevan Prasad, contractor of Myani, contributed rupees 6000. Babu Narain Singh donated rupees 10,000 in cash. Several

46 Joshi, V.C., op. cit., p. 72.
Arya Samajists pledged to donate monthly contributions. In 1945, Sadhu Ramrao Ram opened the Atta Fund — collecting flour instead of money which achieved great success.

An Anglo-Vedic College Committee was formed which took up to lay down aims and objects of the pioneer institution. This was done in its meeting held on 20 March 1986. The following were its objects:

1. To establish in the Punjab an Anglo-Vedic College institution which shall include a school, a college and boarding house as memorial in honour of Swami Dayanand Saraswati with the following joint purposes viz.:

   a) To encourage, improve and enforce the study of Hindi literature.
   b) To encourage and enforce the study of classical Sanskrit and of Vedas.
   c) To encourage and enforce the study of English literature and Science, both theoretical and applied.

2. To provide means for giving technical education in connection with Anglo-Vedic College Institution as
far as it is not inconsistent with the proper accomplishment of the first object. 47

Lala Lal Choud was unanimously elected its president.

The movement which was thus very enthusiastically inaugurated at Lahore, soon spread itself throughout the country, and identical resolutions were immediately adopted by other jammias. The suspicious connection and the national character of the movement which supported it at critical moments encouraged its promoters to tide over all difficulties.

Timely offer by a young man, Lala Hans Raj, who had just graduated, to give his time free made the things all the more easier for the organisers. His elder brother agreed to share his scanty salary of rupees 80 per month with him. D.A.V. School became a reality in 1906. It became a college in 1909. For the first two years Lala Hans Raj served as an honorary Headmaster and then for twenty-four years as honorary principal. Lala Hans Raj became the guiding star and the mainstay of this institution. The only other, equally dedicated to the mission was, Lala Munshi Ram, the founder of the Gurukul

at Kangri. "It is impossible to think of the Arya Samaj without these two names next to that of the great founder, Dayanand himself. It is equally impossible to think of the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College without Lala Hans Raj," remarked Lala Lajpat Rai. Once on visiting the D.A.V. College, Lahore, Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan, founder of the Islamia College, Aligarh, said, "The building, science block and library of my college is better than yours. But I have no Hans Raj." In fact his spirit of self-sacrifice was catching and his example influenced a number of young men who undertook to serve as life members of the D.A.V. College. Lala Sain Dass, Lala Dewan Chand, Dr Gokal Chand, Lala Ram Chand belonged to the first band of young men drawn to the cause.

The feeble seedling planted in 1886 by even more feeble hands, in the course of time grew into a stately tree and was in 1914 the biggest institution of Northern India, and probably second in the whole of India, in point of numbers.

As far as its principles it was provided in the rules that the management should be in the hands of elected

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representatives of such Arya Samaj as contributed to its funds, with the addition of a few Hindus representing the professions and the classes, and that rule has been acted upon without exception. No non-Hindu has been associated with the management of the college.\footnote{Lajpat Rai, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 140.} The second principle, generally accepted was that "the teaching should be done by Indians and there has been no exception on this point. The third principle imposes on the manager the moral obligation not to seek monetary assistance from the government. This principle has been adhered to unless a petty grant of a few thousand rupees made by the university be considered an exception.\footnote{Suraj Bhan, \textit{late President, D.A.V. Managing Committee}, also brought this fact to light in the general body meeting of the management 1976. He said, "D.A.V. did not accept any grant from the government till independence of India."} The fourth principle was to aim at giving free education, but the paucity of funds, and government and university regulations have prevented us from giving effect to this but still our fees have generally been less than government schools and colleges.\footnote{Lala Lajpat Rai, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 141.} The following index indicates the position in 1977-78.\footnote{Webster, C.B., \textit{The Christian Community and Change in the Nineteenth Century North-India} (Merrill, 1976), p. 157.}
Table of Comparative Fee Charges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Hindu</th>
<th>Muslim</th>
<th>Sikh</th>
<th>Christian</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Fee</th>
<th>Per student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government College</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19342</td>
<td>81.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forman College</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12970</td>
<td>62.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. A. V. College</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13650</td>
<td>32.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamia College</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1219</td>
<td>21.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The principles mentioned above indicate how the Arya Samaj tried an experiment in purely indigenous enterprise, to develop a spirit of self-help and self-reliance in the community. Of course on that account they had always been under the shadow of official mistrust.

Of all the schemes of national education promulgated till then, theirs was probably the first which took cognizance of the economic problem. They were probably the first to include in their educational programme the idea of Swadeshi. The original prospectus of the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College was remarkable for these things.

a) The emphasis it laid in bridging the gulf between the educated classes and the uneducated masses.

55 Lajpat Rai, op. cit., p. 141.
b) In emphasizing the necessity of technical education in arts and industries, which would make the future leaders of the country, independent of state service, and

e) In resisting that their scheme of national education should be absolutely independent of government patronage and government help. 56

Thus the Arya Samaj set a different standard and so they were disliked. "Yet on the whole, the attitude of the department and the university towards us has not been unfair," said Lala Lajpat Rai. He further says that:

They have generally given us credit for our work and praised our public spirit, but they have never been at ease with us. Once or twice when we sought their help to acquire land for a building site and playgrounds, they would not oblige. Lately they have compulsorily requisitioned a piece of land, which we had assured with great trouble and after protracted litigation and refuse to give us in lieu one of the government plots lying under our own walls. 57

The D.A.V. School and College made great strides. When the College section was opened in 1909, it had only less than a dozen students. But soon it became very popular. In 1913, the school had on its rolls as many as 1737 students and the college 903 students besides a


sizable numbers studying in the purely Vedic department in the faculty of Hindu Medicine and in the Engineering and Tailoring Classes. In D.A.V. College there were a large number of resident students - 697 in the college department and an equally considerable number in the school department.

The college had various departments viz. Sanskrit, Hindi, English, Persian, Philosophy, both Eastern and Modern, History, Political Economy, Logic, Elementary Physics, Chemistry, Elementary Botany, Elementary Biology and Higher Mathematics. The results used to be excellent. "Our students have often headed the lists of ordinary passes as well as honours passes in Sanskrit and Mathematics. They have several times headed the list in English, Political Economy, History, Philosophy, Chemistry, Persian and other subjects. A considerable number of government and university scholarships granted on the results of university examination, have every year been won by our students and also medals and prizes. In the M.A. classes we coach only in Sanskrit. All this has been achieved by the labours of Indian teachers, unaided by any foreign agency," claimed Lala Lajpat Rai.

\(^{58}\text{Ibid.}, p. 142.\)
Besides the D.A.V. College and School at Lahore, there grew soon a net work of *Arby Samaj* institutions all over India. By 1925, there were about "505 institutions directly or indirectly under the management of the Arya Samaj in the whole of India." 54,860 scholars were on rolls in these institutions. Total number of teachers being 2,570. Average number of students taught by each teacher was twenty-one. In fact Arya Samaj managed not only arts colleges and schools but institutions of many other disciplines. Following type of schools and colleges were managed by the *Arby Samaj* all over India:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Type of School or College</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Arts Colleges for Boys</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Arts Colleges for Girls</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Training College</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>College of Divinity</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Ayurveda Colleges</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>High Schools for Boys</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>High School for Girls</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Middle Schools for Boys</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Middle Schools for Girls</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Sanskrit Schools</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Primary Schools for Boys</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Primary Schools for Girls</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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No other religious society except the Christian
held so many institutions in its charge. Today R.A.V.
College Trust and Management Society, New Delhi, alone
has 179 educational institutions of various types under
its charge. In fact "Where a local body does not see
its way to raising the status of a school or to the
introduction of English in the curriculum of studies,
the leaders of the Arya Samaj come to the help of the
people."

This large number of institutions was despite the
fact that the Arya Samaj believed in "The improvement not
multiplication of the colleges." They wanted that their
"colleges should be liked by the alumni as the best
institutions in India and should draw students from
distant parts of the country." 62

From the list of institutions given above we find
that the Arya programme of education laid special stress
on industrial training, divinity and medical education.
Opening of depressed classes schools, orphanages, widow
houses and night schools were their special contribution
to the task of lifting the downtrodden. "The Arya Samaj
is convinced of the efficacy of religious instructions in
schools provided the subject is in the hands of a teacher,
who teaches religion more by practice than by precept."
Of course, Mr Devi Chand, Headmaster, in his report says:

The main object of the Arya Samaj in
starting these institutions is the spread
of the Vedic Dharma, hence an institution
that does not conform to this aim fails to
justify its existence. 63

62 Devi Chand. 62. Ibid. p. 4.

63 Ibid. p. 5.
### Table of Statistics of Arya Samaj Educational Institutions, Province-wise, 1929

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name of the province</th>
<th>Number of institutions</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Annual expenditure</th>
<th>Cost of building</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>38554</td>
<td>1567</td>
<td>1033142-5-6</td>
<td>4434063-7-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>United Provinces</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>7691</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>36547-12-8</td>
<td>1264065-4-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>N.W.F. Provinces</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3310</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>84515-3-4</td>
<td>427000-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2037</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>148925-12-6</td>
<td>331500-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Bombay</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1429</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>95111-4-9</td>
<td>445000-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Baluchistan</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>813</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>22471-7-9</td>
<td>70000-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Mahrashtra</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>549</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2795-15-4</td>
<td>3100-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Bengal</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14923-0-0</td>
<td>12000-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Burma</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12336-2-5</td>
<td>16800-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Bihar and Orissa</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5757-0-0</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Central Provinces</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Native States</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2230</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>98639-0-6</td>
<td>558500-0-0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total**: 505 institutions, 54666 students, 2570 teachers, 180442-11-11, 7539236-11-11

In the Punjab Education Report for 1929-30, the

Lt. Governor observed:

The Lt. Governor would be glad to see the spirit of interest in educational progress further encouraged in the case of various

classes of the community and individuals. What can be done in this way is shown by the Arya Samaj by the establishment of the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic School and College at Lahore.

Even Valentine Chisolm, who was otherwise very hostile to the Arya Samaj, also could not but praise the educational efforts of the Arya Samaj. He wrote:

Schools and especially industrial classes have been established in various districts which cannot fail to raise the status of the younger generation and gradually to emancipate the lower castes from the bondage in which they have been hitherto held.

The R.A.V. movement had dual impact on contemporary India. Now that it was proved that a knowledge of English and western sciences could be safely imparted to Indians without their converting to Christianity or making them hypocrites against the hopes and wishes of Massaley. It further implied that the task of spreading English education was to be shouldered mainly by non-official organisation.

Moreover, it infused in the minds of the young scholars a spirit of nationalism. It laid emphasis on

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self-reliance, vigour, pride in the past which were not relished by the government. Hence the government began to look upon the D.A.V. movement as a dangerous and audacious movement for the survival of the 'Raj.'

Gurukulas

Within a few years of the working of the D.A.V. College, a few leading members of the Samaj including Dhag Preet Singh, Atma Ram, Ram Bhaj Chaudhary and Munshi Ram strongly felt that the system adopted at the D.A.V. College deviated from the ideals of Vedic Education. Their idea was to give a trial to the system of education propounded by Dayarand in Satvarth Prakash - high proficiency in Vedic Sanskrit and character building on Vedic lines were the objects of the scheme. In the words of Munshi Ram, "Our model is the great universities of ancient India, such that of Tamil." 68

The first resolution to establish a Gurukula was adopted by the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, Punjab in 1896. But for want of money, the matter continued to hang for some time. To overcome this difficulty, Munshi Ram took a vow not to step in his house until the collection of 30,000 rupees had been made. He achieved this target putting in eight months' hard labour.

68 Indra, Vidyavashapati, Arya Samai ke Itihas. Part II (Hindi), (Delhi, 1987), p. 4.
Curukul came to be built on the site of village Kangri, on the banks of the Ganges near Hardwar. In the beginning it was started with a Pathshala, an Ashram, a store room and an office. These were ready and on 4 March, 1902, twenty Brahmanas, including Kunahi Ram’s two sons who were studying at Guiramala, were brought here. Thus the Curukul Kangri came into existence with Pandit Ganga Dutt as its first Ashram.

As for the aims and objects of the Curukula, Kunahi Ram told Mr. Byron Phelps, an American visitor as under:

Our object was a school where strong religious character could be built up on the basis of pure Vedic instruction. We recognised two great wants of the people—men of character and religious unity and we set out to do what we could to supply these wants. Our aim is simply to give our boys the best moral and ethical training, it is possible to give - to make of them good citizens and religious men...  

About the scheme of studies, Mr. Phelps writes:

with all the attention the Curukula gives to the Vedas and other sacred books, It is the aim of the management to make it a first class institution for the study of western literature and modern science.

Curukula was also under the constant suspicion of the government officials. Men, high in authority, spoke

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70. Ibid., p. 145.
of the institution as a "breeder of anarchy and a source of danger to the state." It was believed that the misrepresentations of the institution have been made to the government both by Mohammeden and by Christian missionaries. The later partially having ready access to those in authority, are credited with a good deal of responsibility for the false impression." "I have myself known," said Munshi Ram, "Of Christian Missionary statements being quoted as authority by a government official against both the Gurukula and the Arya Samaj, which statements, I am satisfied, were outrageous slanders." 71

But to know the reality about Gurukul, Sir James Meaton, Lt. Governor of the United Provinces, personally visited it on 6 March, 1913 and remarked, "The Gurukula is one of the most original and interesting experiments carried on in those provinces, in fact in the whole of India." - "He wanted to meet a community which had been described in official papers as a source of infinite, terrible, and unknown danger." 72 At Mathura, Meaton paid a high tribute to Munshi Ram, and affirmed that "the Arya Samaj was not a political body." 73

71 Ibid., pp. 149-50.
72 Ibid., p. 150.
73 The Tribune. 17 August, 1913.
Impressed by the system of education at Gurukul, G.F. Andrews remarked, "If there was to be a renaissance in India, a true rebirth, it was from sources such as these it would spring."74

Motivated by the success of the Gurukula Movement, Gurukulas on similar lines sprang up all over north India.

**Female education.**

The supreme importance of women for the well-being of a country can hardly be over-rated, as all efforts concentrated merely upon male education can but lead to poor results in the case of intellectual, moral and social uplift of its people as long as the female remains steeped in ignorance. Old Sanskrit Pandits followed the following Sanskrit saying:

\[ \text{स्त्री-लोकोन्निर्णय स्त्री-योगे श्रुतिः} \]

This means - teach not women and Sudras. But Swami Dyanand called the above verse, a fabrication. He said "It is a proof of your ignorance, selfishness and stupidity that you prohibit women from studying."75

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75 Dyanand, Light of Truth, English translation of Satyarth Prakash by Durga Prasad (New Delhi, 1972), p. 73.
In fact the apathy of the parents towards female education amounting to antipathy in some backward and orthodox areas, their extreme reluctance to pay for the education of their girls, the want of efficient mistresses, lack of public munificence and patronage and early marriage of the girls were the chief obstacles in way of widespread of this education. The Lt. Governor of the Punjab admitted in 1893:

"In the matter of female education we are deplorably backward. Not one girl in a hundred receive any education ... parents often consider that they are conferring a favour on the authorities by sending their children to school."

But the Lt. Governor could not but praise the Arya Samaj work in this regard and expressed "The Arya Samaj has been displaying commendable zeal in this direction and under their auspices there are many well-connected schools in the province." 76

There is no denying the fact that Arya Samaj did wonders even in this direction. During the life time of Swami Dayanand a Kanya Mahavidyalaya was established at Meerut. Another Kanya Mahavidyalaya was attached to Ferozepur Orphanage. With the efforts of Lala Hushri Ram and Dev Raj, Kanya Pathshala was established in Jullundur.

76 The Tribune, 20 December, 1893.
in 1891 which grew up to be a great, sound institution in Punjab for women education. In 1915, Michael Day, the then Lt. Governor of the Punjab, visited this college and remarked: "Jullundur was not a historical place but the vidyalaya had made it known throughout the length and breadth of the country." 77

Though the above words speak of the ignorance of the Lt. Governor about the historical background of the famous town of Jullundur but the other part of his words definitely speak high of the contribution of the vidyalaya to the cause of female education.

Inspired by the success of Kanya Mahavidyalaya, Jullundur, similar institutions were established for the education of the women at Dehradun, Saharanpur, Roorkee, Bijnor, Nathour, Mainpuri, Shahjahanpur, Pilibhit, Etawah, Paryag, Jhansi, Banaras, Lucknow and Delhi. Such institutions were also established in many smaller towns even in villages. "The college party and Brahama party began to work wholeheartedly for the opening of schools and Kanya Pathshalas respectively." 78

It was as a result of these efforts that by the end of the first quarter of the twentieth century, there were

77 The Tribune. 15 August, 1915.
about 161 schools for the girls run by the various Arya Samajas all over India. They had 12,402 students on their rolls. In this context, Annie Besant has also recognised the Arya efforts. She writes

With regard to girls' education - I know only of one body which is energetic in this field, and that is the Arya Samaj - outside I do not see any other bodies who are working so hard.

**Social work**

The sixth of the ten principles of the Arya Samaj declares that "the primary object of the Samaj is to do good to the world by improving the physical, intellectual, spiritual, moral and social condition of mankind." Arya Samaj does not believe in isolated spirituality. Its duty to God includes its duty to mankind - nay to all living beings. Social service makes Arya Samaj a unique movement. "They can even forego their Sandhya if they feel that by avoiding Sandhya, they are going to do something for the better of a human being."

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It may have been Holy uprising of Malabar or famine of Rajasthan and Bengal, the Arya Samajists travelled thousands of miles to reach these places to serve. This work was especially conspicuous in the earthquakes of Kanpur, Quetta and Bihar.

\textbf{Orphanage}

Outside the Christian circles, Arya Samaj was the first purely Indian association to organise orphanages and widow homes. The first Hindu Orphanage was established at Ferozepur in the Punjab in 1877 by Rai Bahadur Nathuram Dass. There were forty-four boys and girls in the institution at the close of the year 1893.\textsuperscript{53}

The management of the orphanage used to make earnest appeals for seeking children who had no one to look after them. There was no distinction of caste, creed and sex. Muslim children accounted for approximately one-third of its orphans.\textsuperscript{54} A girls' school was also attached to the orphanage.

During the famine of 1896, the Ferozepur Orphanage did yeoman's service in saving children from falling into

\textsuperscript{53} The Tribune. 16 February, 1893.

\textsuperscript{54} Arya Patrika, 23 January, 1896 (quoted by Jones, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 236).
the hands of the Christians. The committee of the
orphanage "were prepared to take charge of any orphan
child, male or female, sent to them from any part of
the country." Thus a large number of orphan boys and
girls, rescued from starvation and death were sheltered,
fed, clothed and looked after by an earnest group of
workers depending almost entirely on the generosity of
the public. Moreover, on their part, "There was an
element of parental care for the well-being of the
children displayed by the workers of the orphanage who
were all devoted members of the Arya Samaj at Ferozepur." 66

By the end of the first quarter of the twentieth
century there were about ten orphanages managed by the
Arya Samaj. 67

Famine Relief

About the famine-stricken India, Annie Besant
wrote: "Peace is not a blessing if it kills more people
than war, and that is what the peace of England is doing
in India and it is killing them after terrible sufferings
instead of by sword and by fire." 68

65 The Tribune, 3 February, 1897 (quoted by Jones,
22, 312, p. 236).
66 Seechari, V., "The Spirit of Service," Article
appeared in Davanand Commemoration Volume (Ajmer, 1933),
p. 46.
67 Dev Chand, 22, 312, p. 1.
68 Besant, Annie, England and India (Adyar, Madras,
Between 1877 and 1910 there were about ten famines, of which no fewer than five were both intense and widespread. Where government failed, Arya Samaj came out to help their famine-stricken brethren. In 1895-96, the crops failed resulting in a widespread famine in 1897.

Lala Lajpat Rai was in the forefront of organizing famine-relief. In the first two famines of 1897-98 and 1899-1900, the work was confined to orphan relief. About two hundred fifty Hindu children were rescued by the members of the Arya Samaj and were sent to the Punjab where four new orphanages were founded to accommodate them, in addition to the one already existing at Ferrugopur. The Arya Samaj volunteers did excellent job at Har Singh Pur, Hoohangbad, Sagar, Nagpur, Jabalpur and Parmagarh. 89

People had hardly recovered from the effects of the scarcity of 1897, when the failure of rain generated another famine in 1899. This famine engulfed Rajputana, the central provinces, Bombay, Kathiawar, and parts of the Punjab. Arya Samaj lost no time in sending its volunteers to the affected areas. Valuable work was done by Hasar Arya Samaj and the Bhimani Hindu Orphanage. Under the leadership of the late Lala Chandu Lal, the

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89 Khushal Chand, Jati Rakshak, Urdu (Lahore, n.d.), p. 5.
President and Lala Chura Seni, their Secretary, they relieved hundreds of children and fought a noble battle against death and misery.

A similar campaign was launched by Arya Samaj in Kathiawar, the central provinces and parts of Bombay and it succeeded in rescuing about 1,700 children. All the girls rescued in 1897-98 and 1899-1900 were suitably wedded. In the famine stricken area of Bikaner and rest of Rajputana, the students of D.A.V. College worked tirelessly in the scorching heat of Rajputana. 90

**Famine of 1906**

Famine relief was also organised in Eastern Bengal in 1906. Arya missionaries went to Bakarganj area which was the scene of worst possible distress in East Bengal. Here Arya missionaries were hailed everywhere with love and enthusiasm. In this area too the Punjab Arya Samaj headed the list of donations. 91

**Famine of 1907-08**

Ouch came in the grip of famine in 1907-08. Arya Samajists worked day in and day out there, and rescued

90 Ibid., p. 133.

91 *The Pantjing*. 8 August, 1906.
about 15,000 men and women from misery. In 1908, when
Assa (Much Kunda) river was flooded and thousands of
people died, Arya Samaj came to their rescue.92

Famine in Garhwal 1918

Garhwal was the next to suffer a severe famine in
March 1918. Mahatma Hans Raj appealed to the people for
help. Arya Samajists reached the spot in no time. Since
the famine stricken area was very large, it was divided
in three parts — Kotchaw to Kedar Nath; Ram Nagar to
Badrinath; Ram Nagar to Thpali. About fifty volunteers
worked on each line. On the appeal made to the people for
help, Arya Samaj was able to collect 64,186 rupees. Three
thousand maunds of grains were distributed among the
people. The volunteers faced a lot of difficulties resulting
in the death of Beni Prasad.

Famine of 1920

Orissa became a victim of famine in 1920. Arya
Samajists reached there to give all help to the sufferers.
About seven thousand women and children of about two
hundred villages were saved from the clutches of death.
Arya Samaj also sent its volunteers towards Cuttack. About
17,000 women, 12,000 children and a half thousand men of

92 Narinder, P. Hyderabad Mein Arya Samaj ka
Sangharsh (Hindi), (Delhi, 2015 Ed.), p. 3.
of 314 villages were helped. An Arya Langar (Free kitchen), one orphanage and a widow home was established there. One hundred and nine children and sixty-eight widows were sent to the Punjab for shelter.

When the famine spread towards Chatisgarh area of Orissa, Arya volunteers made their way to that side. About 7,000 men and women were helped and saved from falling into the hands of the Christians. About two hundred orphans were sent to Lahore, Bhiwani and Multan. About 49,000 rupees were collected for the help of the victims.

Thus a remarkable service was rendered by the Arya Samajists in the famine-stricken areas all over India. By serving in the far-flung areas, away from their homes and hearths, they were unmindful of those whom they had left behind. Only men with dedication and spirit of service could work amidst starvation and misery. But the British suspected even this philanthropic work of the Arya Samaj. The British thought 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." As a result of government's suspicion, the president of the Arya Samaj, 

93 Hardinge Papers, J.L. Jenkins, Member, Viceroy's Council's Letter to Hardinge (Confidential), 12 July, 1911 (Microfilm) (PML),
Sima was prosecuted for giving shelter to a Hindu girl from Rajputana who had fled from a Christian boarding house. Similarly "Lala Lajpat Rai was prosecuted for abducting a young girl from the famine-stricken Rajputana to the shelter of an orphanage at Ferozepur and acquitted only on appeal to the Chief Court." 95

In fact service and sacrifice which had so far been the monopoly of the Christian missionaries became a badge of this new tribe. The work of community service through voluntary efforts without much help from the state was thus renders by the Arya Samaj. Unmindful of the allegations levelled on them by the government officials, they went on working unsurpassed by any other Indian organisation. It rather showed the way that other such organisations could also work and serve the masses in the grief-stricken areas.

Pestilence

In times of pestilence also Arya Samaj did not lag behind. It organised medical relief, nursing the sick and helping in the disposal of the dead. Raja Harinder Nath, the Deputy Commissioner, asked Lala Hans Raj to


extend their whole-hearted help at that time of misery. Arya Samajists led by Pandit Rulla Ram went to Multan.
Pandit Rulla Ram served with so much zeal and enthusiasm that Bishop Stocks, who was also there in those days, was very much impressed. He remarked, "We are not required in the presence of these old men." When plague reached Rawalpindi and then Delhi, Rulla Ram and his team of volunteers was also there to serve. Wherever plague spread Rulla Ram was there.

Kangra earthquake

Kangra was engulfed in a massive earthquake in April, 1905. The swift response of the Arya Samaj marked the opening of a new campaign of social service. It organised relief on a large scale for its victims and earned the goodwill of the people and even the government. This earthquake had specially affected the area of Kangra, Palampur and Kulu. Almost all the houses tumbled beneath the debris of which thousands of men died. Lakhs of them were wounded. In this calamity too the Arya Samajists were the first to reach the affected area. The work was

started under the leadership and guidance of Bakshi Sohan Lal. Lala Lajpat Rai and his men worked behind and motivated the people for help with men and money. By 1906, the Kangra relief fund held rupees 1,351,740 almost all of which was spent on direct assistance in the disaster area. 98

A band of D.A.V. students from Lahore also reached the site and worked wonders in removing the dead bodies under the debris with their shovels and baskets. The doctors and the other Arya social workers were also sent to the site. The victims were supplied with medicines, clothes and eatables.

The Samaj Relief party also helped the victims in rebuilding their houses. For this twenty carpenters were engaged in Lahore and sent to Kangra, 99 Lala Harwant Dass, B.A., President Dharamshala Arya Samaj, who was himself dug out alive took charge of the camp. Later on Arya Samaj also opened a school for the children to save them from the effects of the calamity. Many more schools and inns were also opened.

98 The Panjab, 24 April, 1907.

99 Ibid., 1 May, 1905.
On the other hand, the government did not take this task with the quickness and speed it deserved. It was just making estimates without doing anything for the victims who were literally dying for want of timely relief. Even the Civil and Military Gazette pointed out the inaction of the government at this time of calamity. It expressed:

... in the face of a calamity so fearful in its effects, the relief should be generous and to the point of prodigality, secondly that in the view of theuteness of the distance, relief should be prompt though at the cost of some strain.

A gentleman who arrived in Lahore from the distressed valley also wrote about government relief measures in the valley. He says, "The Government relief measures are anything but satisfactory." On the other hand, the gentleman remarked, "Of all the private organisations engaged in taking relief to the suffering, the work of Anarkali Arya Samaj is simply beyond praise."

**Fighting the social evils**

A large number of social evils were prevalent in the Hindu society of the nineteenth century. Raja Ram

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100 Ibid., 22 May, 1903.
101 The Civil and Military Gazette (quoted by The Panjabee, 22 May, 1903).
102 The Panjabee, 11 May, 1903.
Mohan Roy had endeavoured to eradicate many of them. But it fell to the lot of Swami Dayanand and his followers to fight them tooth and nail. These evils included inferior position of women, ban on widow marriage, Sati, dowry, prostitution, caste and untouchability etc.

Depressed condition of the Indian women was alarming. The social code differed with the sexes in favour of men. But Dayanand did not lay down any rule for women which he did not apply to men also. According to Swami Dayanand under many conditions the wife could also re-marry. In the lifetime of her husband, for example if he be impotent or deserts his wife or falls into dissolute habits, or disappears without trace for a number of years and so forth. This was contrary to the old practices prevailing in Indian society against the interests of women. Similarly study was equally enjoined for girls as well as for boys by Swami Dayanand. Swami Dayanand wrote, "Blessed are the men and women whose mind is engaged in the pursuit of education." He even advocates the study of Vedas by women. He writes:


Imam montrou petri pathot.

(which means that the wife should recite this verse of the Vedas at a sacrifice)

However, Swami Dayanand is against co-education. According to him, "When boys and girls are eight years of age, they should be sent to their respective schools." 105

The Arya Samaj has tried to work in conformity to the wishes of Swami Dayanand.

**Early Marriage**

The early marriage had become almost universally prevalent in Hindu society. The Census Report of 1911 of the United provinces shows for every 10,000 females, the number of married girls was as under: 105

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Hindu</th>
<th>Muslim</th>
<th>Jain</th>
<th>Arya</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-10</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-15</td>
<td>602</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>419</td>
<td>442</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Census Report of 1921 has recorded 612 child brides of below one year, 2024 less than five years, 97057 brides

105 *Ibid.,* p. 35.

under ten years and 3,32,024 under fifteen years." The result was that thousands of young girls became widows before they had ever seen their husbands arrive at physical maturity. These widows were not allowed to remarry, and thus their lot was miserable. Arya Samaj strongly opposed child marriage. It conducted a fiery crusade against this evil. Swami Dayanand has given that the best time for girls' marriage was between sixteen and twenty-four years. 107

Lala Lajpat Rai wrote:

We have denounced early marriage from thousands of platforms, and even though we got practically no help from the legislatures, we have made substantial progress in the marriageable age of boys and girls... personally I consider it a social crime to marry a girl under the age of sixteen, even though Indian girls reach puberty at about the age of twelve. 108

Some of the Arya Samajists like Lala Lajpat Rai, Bhai Parmanand, Haribalee Sarde and Choudhry Mukhtiar Singh were the members of the Central Assembly of those days. They supported government's measures against some of the social evils. The last two among them got two laws enacted relating to the ban of child marriage and for encouraging

107 Dayanand, op. cit., p. 79.
108 Lajpat Rai, Unhappy India (Calcutta, 1928), pp. LVII-LVIII.
inter-caste and inter-religion marriages. These laws are known as Sardas Act. 109

**Widow re-marriage**

Widows had to face a very trying time throughout their life. They may be of any age at the time of the death of their husbands, they were not allowed to remarry. The Arya Samaj took up to fight out this evil too. The Census of India, 1901 relates about the efforts put in by the Arya Samajists to bring an end to this evil as under:

The legality of the remarriage of widows is insisted on and during the year 1901 accounts of two such re-marriages in their provinces were published, one being in a Brahmni and other in an Agarwal family. 110

109. Cheethi Prakash Vir, *Arya Samaj ka Sabhwa* (Hindi) (New Delhi, n.d.), p. 14. Although Sardas Act was passed on 23 September, 1929, yet child marriage is very common in certain parts of rural India particularly Rajasthan, U.P. and M.P. *The Hindustan Times* (29 May, 1961) has reported that:

Child marriages are more of a rule than exception in Madhya Pradesh and even Chief Minister Arjun Singh is reported to have attended a mass wedding in Marathwada village in Baled tehsil of Durg district where the age of forty couples was less than 12-15 years of age.

There was another mass marriage in Vindesh village of Vidisha district involving 111 couples.

At least fifty-five of the 111 brides were less than ten years of age, forty-eight were aged between ten and twelve and the age of eight child-brides was between thirteen and fourteen.

Similarly Shanker Dut, a Kshatriya of Bijnor, after the death of his wife, married a widow under the influence of Arya Samaj. Many more widow remarriages followed in the Punjab and U.P.

To encourage such marriages, Widow Re-Marriage Association also came up in those days in Lahore. Most of its members belonged to the Arya Samaj, Brahma Samaj, Siri Guru Singh Sabha, the orthodox Hindu Samaj and most sections of the community. The Arya Samajists also preached this in their weekly meetings. J.C. Oman, an Englishman, who attended in 1879 such a meeting of the Arya Samajists, points out at the end, "The sermon delivered at this meeting stressed many of Ramanand's favourite themes, the evils of child marriage and the traditional ban on widow remarriage."12

Census Report of 1891 also records that:

The Arya Samaj has done a good deal towards encouraging widow remarriage and discouraging child marriages. It is due to the influence of Arya Samaj and other similar reform societies that the ideas above mentioned have penetrated the Hindu society at large with the exception of the more orthodox. 13

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111. The Tribune, 9 February, 1881.
To encourage widow remarriage, Vidya Vignah Sahakar Sabha was organised by Ganga Ram of Lahore. It had many branches throughout the country. The Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, U.P., established "Widow Ashrams" and marriage Prashrami Sabhas, which saved so many widows from being converted to Islam and they got them married. Pandit Ganga Prasad Upadhyaya wrote, Vidya Vignah Praman in which he, by quoting the authority from scriptures, condemned the anti-widow remarriage views.  

Although the reformers favoured Hindu widow remarriage, yet the success they achieved was marginal. Widow remarriages never became "common" in India.

Purdah

Purdah system came into vogue in India with the coming of Muslims. No doubt, the spread of education gave a big set back to this evil, but Arya Samajists also condemned the evil at their weekly meetings and other platforms. The women were asked to attend Arya meetings; rather their attendance was considered a must. For sometimes there used to be Purdah between men and women at a gathering. But Arya Samajists stopped this practice. Even women did not like it. Now Arya women came out in

open and began to do work of social uplift shoulder to shoulder with men. The names of Sarla Devi and Puran Devi became well-known. Women began to form their own associations to fight social evils. They also formed a league by which a number of occupations like tailoring, embroidery, weaving was taught to women at leisure hours.

In fact, in the Ram Krishna mission and in the Arya Samaj movement, there are devoted women workers carrying on institutions for the care of orphans, the nursing of the sick and the teaching of the young.

Dowry

Dowry system was another social evil. It was specially very difficult for the poor to marry their daughters. Arya Samaj vehemently condemned this evil and advocated simple marriages. In this field, the work of Arya Kumar Sabha is worth recognition. "The Kumar Sabha was instrumental in persuading the Kashmiri pandits to spend moderate amount of expenditure on the marriage ceremonies." Impressed by this the Deputy Commissioner of Jalandhar wrote: "One great result of this (spread of Arya Samaj) has been the diminution in expenditure on

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marriage and other occasions which is a wave in the right direction.**117

Other social evils

Arya Samaj also condemned the social evils of drinking and gambling etc.**118 Lectures were delivered against these evils in their weekly meetings.**119 Similarly they also carried their voice against prostitution. The girls of Navak Jati of Kurnool had indulged in prostitution. In 1913 the provincial government wanted cooperation from the Arya Sabha to bring an end to this. The Sabha gladly extended its support. Navak Jati Sadhar Sabha was formed and preachers appointed. Their girls were given education in Arya institutions. The young girls were brought out from the prostitution centres to the girls' Ashram. Meant where they were provided with shelter and education.**120

Caste

Casteism had been eating into the vitals of the Hindu society. Birth decided one's status which could not be altered by any talent he might show or wealth he might

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118 Shiv Dayalu, Itihasp Arya Pratinichi Sabha Uttar Pradesh (1907-1952), Hindi (Lucknow, 1963), pp. 93-94.
119 The Tribune, 16 August, 1864 and 29 November, 1864.
120 Shiv Dayalu, op. cit., p. 4.
accumulate. The worst part of the caste system was the separation of lower castes as untouchables and denying them such elementary rights as entry to public temples and the use of wells and tanks and in some cases even public roads. It was also believed that the physical touch of a member of the untouchable with a high caste Hindu would contaminate the latter. Christians and Muslims were benefitting from this weakness of the Hindus. "Even the British Government had once decided to divide them among themselves like a property owned by none."(21)

Swami Dayanand tried to reintegrate the Hindus by taking away from the caste system the rigidity that it had acquired during the dark ages. He did not wish caste to be determined by the accident of birth as had become the custom but according to one's worth.

The advocates of caste system generally quoted the following couplet from Yajur Veda to uphold their point of view:

Dr̥manyo aya mukham taid bāhū rajyenaḥ kṛtah,
Urū tad aya yad vaisyah padbhyaṁ śākhra ajīyata.

(Eleventh verse of the thirty-first chapter of Yajur Veda)

Shastri, Prakash Vir, op. cit., p. 4.
It means that the \textit{Brahmin} is born from the mouth of God, the \textit{Kshatriya} from his arm, the \textit{Vaishya} from his thighs and the \textit{Shudra} from his feet. Just as the mouth cannot become the arm and the others likewise or vice versa so the \textit{Brahmin} cannot change into the Kshatriyas and other classes, nor do the latter into the former.

But Swami Dayanand interpreted the above couplet in another way that he who like the mouth in the body of a man is the best and most prominent of all in the creation of all-pervading God, is a \textit{Brahmin}; he who has more strength than others is a Kshatriya for, the Shatpath says the word \textit{Brahmin} means vigour and energy; he who travels as if in virtue of the strength of his thighs, which form the part of the body below the loins and above the knees, in his country or goes to foreign countries and trades there in all commodities, is a \textit{Vaishya}; and he who is ignorant and possesses qualities allied to ignorance which is like the feet or low parts of the body is a \textit{Shudra}. To support the above interpretation, Dayanand quoted \textit{Manusmriti}:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Shudro brahmanamaheti, brahmanashahiti shudratan,}
\textit{Kṣatriyāj-jñānevaṃtv vidyāt vaishyāt tathāiva cha.}
\end{quote}

\textit{(Manusmriti, x, 65)}

"If a person born of a Shudra or low caste family possesses the virtues, habits and tendencies of the
Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas, he should be classed with them according to his merits. In like manner, if a person born of a Brahmin, Kshatriya or Vaishya's family possesses the merits, habits and nature like those of Shudra, he should sink to the level of the Shudra. Also a person coming from the family of the Kshatriyas and Vaishyas and possessing the qualifications of the Brahmins and Shudras, is classed with them respectively according to his virtues. In fact, the men and women of the four orders should be classed with those orders whose qualifications they possess. 122

Thus the Arya Samaj repudiated caste by birth. It admits the right of every one to choose his or her environment, fight it out and rise as high as possible in the scale of humanity. 123

Arya Samaj condemned caste by birth in their meetings. No doubt, in the beginning some of the Arya Samajists could not reconcile to the idea but later on, they began to shed their reservations and began to mix up with the down-trodden classes. The Census Report of 1911 gives a remarkable contrast from the Arya position towards caste in 1891. It observes:


Considerable changes have however taken place since 1891. Mr. Heiligen said (in the Census Report of 1891) that the creed retained the sacred thread for the three superior castes and by implication debarred the Shudras from some of the privileges of twice-born. The sacred thread is still worn by the Aryas, but the Shudra Sabhas now use it as a symbol of conversion from the other religion or the renunciation of low castes and in token of such purification they merely bend the purified person without any ceremony, a sacred thread to be borne by him. In 1891, no Arya would marry or eat with another caste. Intermarriage without restriction of caste is now becoming a rule among them and the restrictions of eating and drinking are dying out completely.

There seems to be no denying the fact that in the early years of the establishment of the Arya Samaj, it retained its classes as such and would not mind calling themselves by their castes. A letter appeared in the Arya Patrika in 1887 which reads:

They would not hesitate to call themselves Brahmins, Kshatriyas or Vaishyas in the same emphatic terms as if they were still the members of that degraded society.

To this the editor of the Arya Patrika wrote:

There appears a strong tendency in the Arya Samaj to restore the caste system to its pristine purity. People of real and sterling worth are treated by the Samaj with marked

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125. Arya Patrika. 19 July, 1887.
distinction and respect, irrespective of their high or low extraction according to the present system of caste and we have every hope that true principle of caste will sooner or later get the ascendancy over the caste system in vogue.

Ganga Prasad Upadhyaya claims that "the Arya Samaj has all along been trying to abolish these distinctions. All Arya Samajists dine together. They engage any cook that is fit to cook." He, however, admits that, "in the beginning there were some difficulties as superstitions die very hard. Even now some weaknesses are lingering. But there is marked difference between the conditions of today and those of 1875." When separate hostels were being maintained for Christian converts from these classes at least in some of the missionary colleges in the South; students of the D.A.V. College, Lahore, went on strike when the Brahmin cooks refused to serve a student from the untouchable classes in the mess. Among the 700 students residing in the D.A.V. College, boarding house, not even a single objected in taking his meals with an untouchable.\(^{128}\)

\(^{126}\text{Ibid.}\)

\(^{127}\text{Upadhyaya, Ganga Prasad, } op. cit., p. 94.\)

\(^{128}\text{Bisheshwar Prasad, } op. cit., p. 126.\)
Similarly in U.P. the newly married girls of "untouchables" were not allowed to go in a Palki. The Aryan came to their rescue. Thousands of these people were seated on an yana and participated in the same and they were called Aryas. Now nobody could obstruct their daughters sitting in the Palki to go to the house of her in-laws. Similar was the position of untouchables in the Punjab and Frontier Province. They were also given the name of Vaheshas with all social rights. 129

Graham points out that the difficulty faced by the Samajists in their work in connection with caste, "was that some members of the Arya Samaj themselves were not ready to welcome the purified ones." 130 The missionaries also concluded through a study that "The Arya Samaj had renounced caste but not the Arya Samajists." 131 In fact "Members of the Samaj are afraid the Hindu Bradari will expel them." 132

Their fears were true. "In the closing years of the last century the Arya Samajists of the Eastern Punjab

132 The Arya Patrika, 17 April, 1917 (Quoted by Graham, op. cit., p. 405).
(i.e. Rahtak, Karnal and Hissar) had to face horrible persecution and boycott in the villages, Mohallas and localities, simply because they took within their fold jaitims, Odas and other low communities.\textsuperscript{133} The Singh Sahai (Amritsar, dated 15 July, 1933, condemned the remarks of Lala Hans Raj during the course of a lecture delivered before the \textit{Aya Samaj}, Amritsar that "the Hindus should marry women belonging to other sects i.e. whether they are sweepers, Mohammedans or Christians.\textsuperscript{134}

Some people complain that in this respect Arya Samaj had been too slow. In fact Arya Samaj did not want to go all alone with this movement. Their aim had been to carry the orthodox Hindus with it. It is "as a result of these efforts of the Samaj to carry with them the orthodox Hindus, the big leaders of Sanatan Dharma now declare from the tops that the untouchables are not only Hindus but a necessary part of Hindus. Punjab Sanatan Dharma Pantinichi Sabha opened a department for the uplift of the depressed classes. Later on we find Shraddha Hand of the Arya Samaj and Dayanand of the

\textsuperscript{133} \textit{Upadhyaya, Gange Prasad, \textit{op. cit.}}, p. 64.

\textsuperscript{134} \textit{The Singh Sahai, (Amritsar), 15 July, 1933 (SWP-Punjab, 1933)).
Sanatan Dharma working together for the uplift of the depressed classes and performing Shuddhi. 135

Thus Arya Samaj worked for the betterment of the untouchables who numbered about six crores at that time. It admitted them within its fold after a purification ceremony. This done, they rose to the status of the Dalits, the twice-born. Perhaps this gesture of the Arya Samaj was not exclusively out of their sympathy for them but they were also “forced by circumstances to face that if they take no steps to recover their lost brethren, they one day, one by one, will be engulfed wholly by other religions.” 136

Graham observes:

Deyanand did not want to overthrow the caste type of society. He did not propose the abolition of the caste system, but rather the introduction of a new caste system the classes of which would be founded on merit. . . . 137

But a careful study of the Satyarth Prakash makes the intentions of Deyanand towards caste crystal clear. The way he has condemned the segregation of society in wattle compartments gives no clue to Graham’s conclusion

135 The Tribune, 9 August, 1913 refers to Swami Deyanand Saraswati, Professor, Hindu Philosophy, Sri Bharat Dharma Mahamandali, Benares. Also Modern Review, Vol. XXXIII, January to June, 1923 (A picture is also given at p. 764 showing Shraddha Maha of the Arya Samaj and Deyanand of Sanatan Dharma performing Shuddhi at one platform).

136 Graham, op. cit., p. 461.

137 Ibid., p. 366.
that "Dayanand did not propose the abolition of the caste system." Gompa's second contention that Dayanand wanted to introduce "a new system of caste based on merit," also has no basis. In fact Dayanand in expressing about caste, has only stressed about Manu's contention of Varna System; there is nothing new of his own in it. Farghur outrightly remarks that "Dayanand Saraswatī denounced both caste and idolatry." 138

In the reclamation work Aryas performed valuable service in the territory of Jammu and Kashmir where "about ten thousand men were admitted into the Arya Samaj. In another district (Sialkot) over thirty six thousand." Similarly thousands were reclaimed in district of Gujarspur and Hoshierpur and there was a regular organisation looking after their education and other needs. In fact most active organisation at that time in this field was the Dayanand Dalitwādhar Mandal, an all India organisation with its headquarters at Hoshierpur. 139

In 1911, pāndita of the Vashishtas was carried. About 15,000 Vashishtas were purified. Similarly about


139 Khushal Chand, op. cit., p. 26.
20,000 **Kabir Panthis** were purified in Hoshiarpur district. 140

Thus in the field of the uplift of the depressed classes, Aryan Samaj did commendable work. Its work in this field also checked the aspirations of Christian missionaries. C.F. Andrews, watched the activities of the Samaj as also of the Christian missionaries too closely and was a friend of both alike, has given his view thus:

It (Aryan Samaj) has shown extreme hostility to the Christian missionaries especially in the village districts. It is also beginning to admit untouchables into its fold and this has tended to check in a certain measure the mass movement towards the Christian religion. 141

No doubt Aryan Samaj stood to do away with caste from the Indian scene, but even there were some Aryan Samajists who had not been able to reconcile to the idea. In one of the Aryan Samaj meetings held at Dharamshala, Dr Murari Lal remarked that "it was a pity that sweepers who have been converted to Christianity were allowed to sit in chairs in the presence of Brahmans." 142


Dr. Murari Lal’s remarks show that the Arya Samajists were still unable to dissociate themselves from caste prejudices. But such were only a few exceptions. By the end of 1920 Arya Samaj had not been able to shed caste feeling altogether, but it had definitely done a lot for bringing the so-called “untouchables” and the “the depressed wings” of the society to their fold.

Thus Arya Samaj rendered great service in the field of education, social service - famine relief, setting up orphanages, widow homes and widow remarriage etc. They fought the casteism tooth and nail and tried to elevate the untouchables to a position they deserved since ages. It is a magnificent work, of which any single Indian organisation may well be proud of. Their work went a long way to bring a social catalyse on the Indian scene. Many new organisations came up and worked more or less on similar lines. No wonder Arya Samaj proved to be a great social and religious movement. Through its socio-religious programme it insinuated vigorous and bold ideas among their country-men. It emphasised principles of self-reliance, vigour and pride in the past. Hence the Government began to look upon it with suspicion; called it “dangerous” and “seditious” in the garb of socio-religious programme.