SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF RAJA RAMMOHAN ROY: A PATHFINDER

ABSTRACT

Raja Rammohan Roy was recognized as a pioneer in propagating modern India’s knowledge, thought and work resulting in the Renaissance in India. The time when he was born was a critical time of history. It was also an age of superstitions, prejudices, untouchability and oppressions. The existence of different castes and sub castes and the power of Brahmins were the essence of Hindu religion. Absurd superstitious religious practices were mostly prevalent in the society. Raja Rammohan Roy worked against all those prevalent religious aberrations of the society. He fearlessly attacked idolatry. He synthesised the main religious cults and brought them under one pure notion of ‘universality’. For that very purpose, he founded Atmiya Sabha and established Brahma Samaj. He worked against Sati, casteism and polygamy. He spoke for the just rights of women on the property. He reconciled eastern spirituality with western modernity. He had shown his educational zeal in establishing Hindu College, Scottish Mission Secondary School, Vedanta College and Anglo Hindu School. He was the father of refined and refreshed Bengali Prose and an agitator for the freedom of the press. He started Sambad Kaumudi and Mirat Ul Akbar for the general as well as elite classes. He also influenced the then official policy in favour of western education. All those contributions of Raja Rammohan Roy are still significant today. Today’s incidence of female infanticide and female foeticide resembles the same wilful murder of women as used to happen in the 19th century in the name of Sati. With the passage of time there have been legal improvements in women’s property rights and in the issue of removal of untouchability. In our daily life the importance of Science and technology is significant. Today India is English speaking country. All these issues of present day have already been raised, critically analysed and moved by Raja Rammohan Roy many years back. So, it can be said that with the passage of time, the society has improved in many areas, yet there are many more where the flames of humanism lit by Raja Rammohan Roy has to be kept burning.

Key Words: Raja Rammohan Roy, Renaissance, caste, Atmiya Sabha, Brahma Samaj, Sati, Sambad Kaumudi, Mirat Ul Akbar, western education, female infanticide, female foeticide, property rights, untouchability, Science, English, present day.