Chapter – V

SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHIES OF RAJA RAMMOHAN ROY
5.0. Introduction

This chapter deals with social and educational philosophies of Raja Rammohan Roy. In his mind, Raja Rammohan Roy formed a consistent philosophy guided by “lokasreya” or public good. He translated that philosophy of common good of the public into reality. He, with his multicaudrusted personality, did multifaceted activities and brought reforms in the sphere of society and education. In every activity, he kept his personality integral and intact. “It was his supreme moral and spiritual genius that made Raja Rammohan Roy one of the heroes of humanity, who, more than any other living soul shaped the course of human history at the beginning of the nineteenth century.....” (Das, 1958, pp 1).

Raja Rammohan Roy, a self-sacrificing philanthropist dedicated his life in the service of mankind. He had a deep regard and feelings for women. He realised their miserable conditions in the society and he was fully aware of the causes behind their distress. The sorrows and the miseries of that weaker and deprived sex always touched his heart. He always appealed for their freedom and relief from miseries. He in his reformatory activities emphasised over individual progress and welfare, but he knew very well that without the progress of the society as a whole, that progress of an individual was not possible. Raja Rammohan Roy knew it very well that the mark of social progress was individual progress and the very basis of individual progress was the organization of the social progress.

Raja Rammohan Roy always advocated a new and liberal type of modern education, free from an old and decaying civilization. He was rightly called a modernizer, a modern man and an inaugurator of a new age. He was an Anglicist in a true sense of term and therefore always supported westernisation of education. He showed an enlightened view and illumination to his countrymen. He evaluated the modern age and evolved the major civilizations in human history. He had a larger mind, catholicity of intellectual outlook and unique foresight. He always protested medieval scholasticism and proposed for humanity and humane learning. As an educator his philosophy was very modern, and scientific. He always advocated for modern scientific education through the medium of English. He believed in the natural rights, abilities and
privileges of human being. He had discarded strongly all sorts of superstitions and
darkness. He propagated education for all. He also advocated for girls education. He
knew that proper exercise of their natural capacity through education could only make
them aware of their rights both in terms of property, moral, social and political. In one
word, the total philosophy of Raja Rammohan Roy was based on the framework of
common social good.

5.1. Social philosophy

5.1.1. True Shastric Interpretation

Raja Rammohan Roy was a great religious reformer. So, he truly interpreted the Hindu
Shastra before his countrymen. Important and main Hindu scriptures, like Veda, Upanishad and Gita were truly analysed by Raja Rammohan Roy and he quoted
passages from those texts to establish the superiority of disinterested works to the
works performed with the desire of future reward. He expressed that the knowledge of
God, (Brahmajnan) was dependent on internal purity, not external compliance. Raja
Rammohan Roy further asserted that if men had interpreted his or her Shastric
injunction with reason and rationality, he would be able to judge what was right and
what was wrong. He actually showed his countrymen that popular Hinduism was at par
with those concepts. He quoted passages from Sruti and pointed out that in the Veda
also, it had been prescribed that men should perform the regular and occasional duties
to purify the mind. In that principal scripture of Hindus, according to Raja Rammohan
Roy, it had been mentioned that from a desire for future reward, men should not
destroy their life.

He studied all the three sacred books of Hindus, namely, the Vedas, the Upanishads,
and the Bhagavad Gita, and concluded that disinterested works were preferred in those
sacred books as the superior duty of men to their mechanical adherence to numerous
meaningless rites and ceremonies. He wanted to make it clear to his countrymen that
direction of mind to God, acquisition of the knowledge of God and attainment of
eternal rests were dependent upon works performed without desire for future fruition.
He also showed that in the most sacred authority of Hindu, Bhagavad Gita, there was
repeated rejection of the practice of rites for the desire of future fruition. He believed in the fact that between knowledge and rites, a wise man has always chosen the former, excluding the latter. Raja Rammohan Roy Quoted passages from Isopanishad, to show that if a householder could refrain him from all sorts of worldly attachments and desires, he could attain the realisation of Brahma.

To Raja Rammohan Roy, human service or service to humanity alone could bring the knowledge of God and social, moral, religious upliftment of the people. His life was dedicated to that notion of humanity. He knew that social upliftment was a product of religious modernity. So, he always discarded idol worship as he believed that it would create sectarian bias and separation of man to man. In place of idol worship, he preferred congregational upasana. In the idol worship, Raja Rammohan Roy believed, that men would find racial discrimination, caste distinction and disrespect of one people towards other. Therefore, it was irrational and irrelevant as per the Hindu Shastra and was detrimental to the thought and common intelligence of men. In the preface to the translation of Isopanishad he wrote: - “It is evident that though the Vedas, Puranas and Tantras assert frequently the existence of the plurality of Gods and Goddesses and prescribe the modes of their worship for men of insufficient understanding, yet they have also declared in a hundred other places that the passages are to be taken merely in a figurative senses.” - (Dasgupta, 1980, pp 148).

5.1.2. Importance of Education in his Social Philosophy

However, Raja Rammohan Roy believed that not only religious modernity, but also an educational outlook was necessary to bring social reform. So, he mentioned that man must educate themselves. Education, in that respect should have a twofold objectives of spiritual and moral upliftment of people by means of which they would understand the true notion of God in a comprehensive manner. Further he advocated the fact that service to mankind and duties and responsibilities towards the society and world at large could bring ultimate salvation. For that, he said to follow the path of jnan marg. He was a strong believer in Advaitism. In his philosophy, he had always given due weightage to devotion and human upliftment. “Clean mind, deep devotion and true
understanding of the ultimate aim of life”, (Dasgupta, 1980, pp 150) were the necessity, as Raja Rammohan Roy believed to the attainment of the highest knowledge of God.

As a great educator and enlightener, Raja Rammohan Roy had a profound faith in education by means of which he believed that man could be enlightened and could be made free from numerous insignificant superstitions and ignorance. Social injustice, social oppressions, age old decaying superstitions and narrow mindedness – all, he believed could be eradicated with the light of education. Education, as per his philosophical beliefs could free man’s mind from all evils and ignorance. scientific and western education, modern in outlook had always become a tool for social transformation in his philosophy. Education, which was real, rational and scientific, had always been accepted by Raja Rammohan Roy in building his personal philosophy.

5.1.3. Opposition to Useless Rites and Ceremonies and Sectarian Bias

Raja Rammohan Roy in his philosophical beliefs held the knowledge of God in high esteem. He considered that was the supreme duty of mankind. That knowledge of God, he believed could guide men to the path of salvation and could bring happiness, here and hereafter.

The root of his reformatory activities in all sphere of life was religion. He had profound faith in truth, reason, rationality, justice and humanity. He believed in the Almighty power. He held the view that the universe should be governed by morally. Raja Rammohan Roy did not believe in useless hardships and privations regarding purity and impurity. Those useless rites and rituals, he considered as detrimental to the social life of the individual and would be the source of all sorts of discomforts.

Regarding rites and ceremonies, he advocated that man must express their eagerness to know the meaning and significance of the rites and ceremonies performed by their ancestors with the help of their intellectual power and reasoning abilities and thereby must try to analyse critically what was good for them and what was evil. He believed that truth did not depend on the sayings of the majority of the persons. No matter, he knew what the majority felt or thought, truth was truth. Raja Rammohan Roy wanted to
insist his countrymen to apply the notion of judgement to the rites and ceremonies. Those rites and ceremonies which were useful from the view point of the society and were conducive for their spiritual progress should be accepted by men. Otherwise, there would be a blockage to the spiritual life of the men. Men, he advocated should reject their mechanical adherence to the rites and ceremonies, without caring for Vedic injunctions. The ceremonies should not destroy the texture of the society, should not debase the morality and should be in accordance with the Vedanta and other Hindu scriptures. Rituals, he propagated should not be attached to the dead myths to darken and degrade the society. He wanted to arouse his countrymen from their spiritual error. So he mentioned that to attain salvation or eternal peace, it was not necessary to perform Brahmanical ceremonies.

Since, he, with his knowledge of comparative religion, did historic synthesis, he interpreted the Vedic injunction with Bible as: - “an endeavour on the part of the man to direct the will and senses and the conduct in such a manner as not only to prevent our own or others’ ill but to secure our own and others’ good”- (Sen, 1967, pp 311), as “an exertions to subdue the senses.” (Sen, 1967, pp 311).

Raja Rammohan Roy’s rational view was that: - men in general were suffering from the influence of habit, custom and blindness. They failed to identify the cause effect relationship of each and every occurrence. That was why they would believe that the peculiarities of different religion like the bathing in a river, worshipping a tree or being a monk and purchasing forgiveness from the high priests etc. were necessary for salvation and purification. Out of that ignorance, they attributed miracles to the creation of priests. They did not believe on their own beliefs and whims.

By mentioning that, Raja Rammohan Roy was actually trying to convince his countrymen that the true way of attaining salvation was the adherence of men to rationality, not to ignorance and blindness. He was fully aware of the fact that his countrymen were inherently capable of reasoning. So, he repeatedly emphasised on the exercise of their power of reasoning and rationality, and then only they would be relieved from useless rituals and customs.
Raja Rammohan Roy wanted to convince his countrymen that misinterpreting their scriptures; they used to follow blindly the practice of ceremony and worship. Those practices were in real terms inconsistent with the real doctrines of their scriptures as prescribed in the *Vedanta* and other holy authorities. To enlighten the countrymen with the pure and lofty notions of worship, he translated several of their texts in their genuine meanings and presented before his countrymen to elevate their mind with the enlightened worship of One God and with the purest principles of morality. His intention was not to discard the pure spirit of *Hindu* doctrines but to manifest their pristine glory in a meaningful and genuine language and the language was used to present the fact that many of the ceremonies of the then *Hindu* society were never prescribed by the doctrines of the *Hindu Shastras*. They were inconsistent with the pure system of *Hindu* religion. Hinduism had never given sanction to numerous meaningless absurdities in the name of rites and ceremonies, as those rites were sufficient to make the base of the society weak and debase.

Raja Rammohan Roy was opposed to any kind of sectarian beliefs and bias. Though he was well versed in so many languages and studied all the three basic religious doctrines, but never belonged to any particular sect. He always held the view that it was the erroneous notion of them to belong to any particular sect and to disrespect other. He was sure that sectarianism was “inconsistent with the wisdom and mercy of the generous and disinterested creator.” - (Sen, 1967, pp 17). He always believed in the unity and cordiality with all. With his powerful mind, free from the bands of pride and prejudice, he believed in one theism, one natural tendency of men to turn towards One formless, Eternal Being, who is the preserver and Governor of the universe. He believed that men should purify their hearts and minds under the influence of that true God. That theism, in his philosophy was nothing but the concept of universalism, which Raja Rammohan Roy found in “Hinduism, with its emphasis on *jnan*, Islam with its Monotheistic zeal, and democratic brotherhood and Christianity with its ethical and social guidance to peace and happiness” - (Sen, 1967, pp 288). Raja Rammohan Roy believed in mutual contact and assimilation of different cuts and religions, which he believed was necessary for their historic synthesis. That mutual contact had binded each of the great national and historic religion along continuity and towards a common centre.
Though he was an adherent follower of *Vedanta*, but had expressed his discontent with the theoretical speculation of *Vedanta* and expressed that with those theoretical speculations, youths would get an idea of non-attachment to all visible things. They would get the notion that the visible things such as father, brother etc, would have no real existence. So, no attachment to those visible things was necessary. Consequently they would start thinking that all the members of the society had no actual entity. With that notion, it would be difficult to place them as the useful member of the society. So from a practical aspect, Raja Rammohan Roy rejected the theoretical hypothesis of *Vedanta*. In his dealings of the scriptures, he always had expressed his preference for the discovery of the ‘kernel of truth enshrined in them; by rational enquiries. - (Sen, 1967, pp 297). He, breaking the crust of conservatism, dogmas and superstitions, showed the eternal ideas as held in the sacred books of *Hindu Shastras*, like the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads*. He, with his analysing power realised that social implications of the *Hindu* law should be judged with respect to the social welfare, not with respect to the scriptural authority. By that judgement, he expressed that one should reach to the level of rational understanding of the socio religious thoughts. To the religious beliefs of Raja Rammohan Roy, religion could never be a bundle of useless dogmas and doctrines. Religion, as per his philosophical beliefs could not be just disciplines. Rather he believed that through religion, one would get the notion of purity, rationality and regulating principle of the universe. Such a vast idea Raja Rammohan Roy had for religion. To Raja Rammohan Roy, religion had a strong base of universalism, a doctrine of monotheism.

5.1.4. Belief in Universal Religion

Raja Rammohan Roy had always shown his pride and honour for the internal pristine purity of Hinduism, which he believed was the mild and liberal spirit of toleration. He was proud for own religion, though he discarded superstitious beliefs, rituals, idol worship and polytheism in Hinduism. All those he had done because he strongly believed the eternal truth of his own religion, which was an adherence to one true God, the Supreme Being, whom a wise man should worship. He mainly criticised the perversion of Brahmanism. He did not believe in “pulling anything down.” (Barua, 1988, pp 86). He had a profound faith in the truth. He believed in continuity from traditional to modernity.
The main essence of Raja Rammohan Roy’s religious beliefs was the doctrine of universal religion that meant to worship one true God. He believed that such a feeling would broaden the minds of his countrymen from the narrow sphere of superstitions and irrationality. Those high and lofty ideals of one true God would relieve men from sectarian bias and would guide them to the cardinal principle of service to man. Because, in his religious beliefs, Raja Rammohan Roy always held the propositions that if men could serve another man, he or she could serve the God in a true sense of terms. “The basis of his social philosophy was religious beliefs as for him, “religion always meant better and happier social relations within the community.” (Barua, 1988, pp 87). He had a firm faith in universal religion as it was free from all sorts of sectarian hatred and the dark corner of Hindu society and therefore was conducive to put a stop to casteism, polygamy, child marriage, Sati etc. All those social apathies Raja Rammohan Roy believed would have caused by ignorance, injustice and social oppressions to a particular section of the society, the females.

Raja Rammohan Roy knew very well that various religious communities were suffering from lack of unity. When he made multifarious researches in the major religions of the world, he came to understand that they only differed in external compliances, but the internal base of all those religions was same, that was belief in one true God. He interpreted all those major religious cults rationally and understood that with respect to the performance of rites and ceremonies, the religions differed from each other, as all of them followed the ideals of polytheism badly. But, from internal perspective, the major historical religions were the follower of universalism. That concept of universality and rationality were accepted by Raja Rammohan Roy. By taking the best from various religions and cultures, Raja Rammohan Roy actually shaped his own religion, free from all sorts of superstitions and prejudices.

As a profound reader of comparative religion, Raja Rammohan Roy was deeply influenced by the Vedas and as well as by the ethical education of Christianity. Once Raja Rammohan Roy said “If religion consists of the blessings of self-knowledge and of improved notions of God and his attributes and (if) a system of morality holds subordinate place, I certainly prefer the Vedas. But the moral precepts of Jesus are something extraordinary. The Vedas contain the same lesson of morality but in a
scattered form.” (Barua, 1988, pp 97). That notion of comparative religion helped him, to shape his society, which was deep buried under numerous irrational social customs and prejudices. He had a great affection of Hinduism and therefore felt an urgent need for purifying its perversion. He was a reformer, who criticised Hindu religion for uprooting its decaying character and for redeeming it.

Another crux of his social philosophy was service to mankind. Social service, away from self-centeredness and bounded by inter religious harmony, was always preferred by him for its purification. To him, every individual was being honoured for their dignity, personality and worth. He knew it well that a pure service to mankind was possible if and only if people would have followed universal religion, free from any sort of sectarian bias. He mainly emphasised over the betterment of people. He believed that such betterment would help men to work for the betterment of the humanity at large. Raja Rammohan Roy also believed in the understanding of the culture of men. “Regarding Raja Rammohan Roy’s movement of reforming the human values, a French Ideologist once remarked: - “Just as he (Rammohan) devoted himself with great enthusiasm in acquiring a wider, greater and stronger insight into human civilization, we Europeans have similarly engaged ourselves in the pursuit of Asian civilization, their wisdom and Sciences with a view to acquiring a wider and deeper perception of the human race; because humanity has no division.” (Barua, 1988, pp 98).

The philosophy by means of which Raja Rammohan Roy was guided throughout his life was ‘universal humanism’ (Barua, 1988, pp 98). He made glorious synthesis of nationalism with internationalism by interpreting religion with rationalism. Raja Rammohan Roy had opined that the then condition of Hinduism was perverted and corrupted because of idolatry and because of all the obnoxious superstitions. Those peculiarities of Hinduism, he believed were not at par with modern growth, spiritual depth and philosophical height of the ancient religions of the Rishis.

Raja Rammohan Roy was a great social reformer, and the very basis of his reformation of society was religion. He believed that the root of the society should be the religion. The foundation of the society, that meant the religion, therefore should not be shaken or undetermined to keep the whole superstructure of social well-being integral and intact.
Raja Rammohan Roy believed that India’s unity, freedom and progress were dependent on a liberal, non-sectarian and universal religion. His idea of one universal religion and one eternal God were reflected through his *Brahmo Samaj*. The lofty philosophy of uniting different classes and communities of the Indian people under one roof of common worship of one God was the motive when he founded his *Brahmo Samaj*. The Trust Deed of the *Samaj* also was a document of united worship by members of different *Sampradaya* or church thereby leading to the formulation of a religion of harmony, synthesis, and of universality.

In his religion, Raja Rammohan Roy had made two points clear. First he attached more importance to character than forms and ceremonies, and secondly, Raja Rammohan Roy preferred a life of charity and service towards the society and world at large.

Raja Rammohan Roy derived those main points in religion, because he firmly believed the notion of religious truth. He dedicated his life for the service of man and world. He served his nation by working on the worldly plane. He was a true worker and a religious reformer beyond question. He discovered the unity and harmony among various religious doctrines and developed his firm faith in universal religion. He had a strong faith in truth and reasons, out of that he analysed the religious doctrines and never showed disrespect towards any other religious cult as he knew very well the fundamental crux of each and every religion. His firm faith in comparative religions was responsible for his loftiness, catholicity of his mind, his tolerance and his charity towards the views of others. All those were conducive to the good of the individual and to the society.

As a philosopher, therefore Raja Rammohan Roy took the hard task of eradicating the degraded and superstitious practices, principles, views and ideals of his countrymen and showing them the path of enlightenment conducive to their religious progress. His lofty social and religious ideas showed the way of higher system of morality to his countrymen, which, he believed were responsible for their comfort and happiness in life. He never considered religion as a bundle of numerous rites and rituals. To him religion was a lofty idea of a higher enlightened nature. He realised that those high
ideas of religion, if one could understand, then he or she could take the hard task of serving his countrymen in a better and knowledgeable way.

For religious upliftment of his countrymen, Raja Rammohan Roy founded the Brahmo Samaj on the notion that a worshipper coming from different religions of Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Jain or other, were entitled to participate in the common prayer or worship under one common roof. Another fact which he made clear after founding his Brahmo Samaj that by that worship, that particular worshipper would not be rejected by his own community or church. Those lofty ideals of Raja Rammohan Roy behind his establishment of Brahmo Samaj, he knew would help the common men to get acquainted with the real meaning of the religions which was the unification of various religions, thereby leading to nationalism, free from religious diversity, fanaticism and orthodoxy. He knew that in order to prove the superiority of one religion over other, one religion was trying to oppose other and ignore other, though the real tenets of all the religion was the same. That is why he tried to bring different religions under one common platform through the worship of one common God which was the idea of universalism.

Raja Rammohan Roy’s concept of universal religion was based on the concept of secularity and therefore rejected communal differences, hatred, casteism, sectarian bias and inequalities. That concept of monotheism cultivated a sense of mutual tolerance and mutual respect towards each other in the society. That feeling, Raja Rammohan Roy knew was very much helpful for promoting emotional integration. He wrote a tract opposing the caste system of Indian society, because he strongly believed that casteism had no meaning and significance from the view point of the progress of the society, rather it blocked our common thinking power and pulled men back. He strongly criticised the existence of divisions and subdivisions in the society. He believed strongly that the divisions of so many castes in the society would create only sectarian bias and would be responsible for the subjection to foreign conquerors. The total process would be a bar to attaining national unity. So, Raja Rammohan Roy propagated for national integration also along with emotional integration and unity. He once mentioned that different religions though different from external form and structures should not clash with the interests of others. Otherwise a community feeling, sort of we
feeling would be hampered. He propagated universal religion, which, he believed could abandon many mechanical rites and superstitions thereby improving the condition of the society.

Raja Rammohan Roy’s philosophy of monotheism, notion of one God gave rise to Unitarianism later thereby rejecting polytheism and idolatry. He believed that men must be free from dogmatic slumber of idolatry; otherwise, real progress could not be sought for. By the study of the truth and the principles of higher Hindu Shastras, he had already formed disbelief towards all the follies, absurdities and the erroneous beliefs as created by the man themselves. He was an adherent advocate of truth. Based on truth, he formulated his reformatory activities to establish the unity of Godhead and the universal brotherhood of man. For uplifting the socio religious concepts from material adherence, he established Atmiya Sabha and Brahmo Samaj and in between them, Unitarian committee and association, because of ameliorating the intellectual conditions of the people by raising them to a higher position of material and moral conditions. He also, by those works, wanted to introduce in the society better organisation of things. For all those liberal, open minded associations and their discussions, he had been regarded by his adversaries, as “destroyer of religion, “renegade” etc. (Majumdar, 1983, pp xx). He had never meant to destroy or disrespect the Hindu religion, but always had intended to purify and re-establish it. His philosophy was “a fundamental unity in the midst of diversity.” (Sen, 1967, pp 338). He had always supported the unity and unbiased common sense of the Hindus. He was a nationalist reformer, who always propagated for mutual contact and assimilation of ideas for national integration. He thought that idea of national integration and transformed that idea into reality at a time when most of the people of the country were in frog-in well existence.

5.1.5. Belief in Innate Faculty of Mankind

Raja Rammohan Roy believed in the innate faculty of mankind and in innate reasoning abilities of mankind, which, he believed would help the man to enquire into the nature and principles of religious doctrines with truth and reason. That rationality would help them to judge everything in the light of reason to distinguish truth from untruth. That innate insight would help men to worship one being who the foundation of that
universe is. Since he was a believer of cause and effect conditions, he did not have any faith in supernatural powers, dogmas and middlemen. The innate faculty of man, he believed, was responsible for intellectual faculties also which would help them to discard any blind faith and to distinguish between good and bad. Truth, as per Raja Rammohan Roy did not depend on what the majority of the people were saying. Because he knew that at that time most of the people were sunk under the heaps of medieval scholasticism. So, under such a situation, it was obvious that they would speak wrong. Therefore, Raja Rammohan Roy advocated that truth was truth, no matter what majority used to believe.

In his reformatory activities, Raja Rammohan Roy held the view that inner insight of a man was responsible for his ability, intelligence and capability and by those abilities; they could attain same heights as was reached by any other civilized nation. In a relation with people belonging to other races and cultures, Raja Rammohan Roy maintained the philosophy of personal self-respect in particular and national self-respect in general. For the introduction of “useful mechanical arts”, Raja Rammohan Roy had always shown his gratitude and respect towards the British, but at the same time pointed out the fact that the “world was indebted to our ancestors for the first dawn of knowledge.” (Tagore, 1974, pp 84).

Raja Rammohan Roy had profound faith in his own country’s great height of civilization. He believed in nationalism. He had a patriotic heart by means of which he never misunderstood or disrespected his nations’ philosophy and civilization. He strongly believed in the new and enlightened ideas and ideals from the West to illuminate the perverted forms of the Hindus and thereby making them richer and fuller. He never tried to disrespect or uproots his own religion. The only thing, which secured his attention, was the perversion of his own religion, debasing the texture of the society. He wanted to uproot that debasement to reform his own religion from within.

5.1.6. Harmony of Individual Progress with Social Progress

Raja Rammohan Roy had a profound faith in individual personality free from all crippling ideas and principles. He aimed at a social progress which had been evaluated
with the criterion of progress of individual. He wanted to synthesise social, economic, political, and all sorts of human activities for securing the spiritual or religious salvation, but he did not want that salvation at the cost of socio economic and political freedom. He believed that individual personality should be conducive for social upliftment, and should react upon the social environment. Because, he knew the fact that unless and until social progress was organised, individual progress could not be secured. For that reason, he advocated that his countrymen should be well aware of the real social meaning and significance of rites and rituals. He expressed his belief in the simple code of religion as practiced by the Christians. He believed that the ethical teachings of the Christ could lead a man to a high and liberal notion of God. By understanding those lofty ideals as held in the pure form of Christianity, one could discharge their various duties to themselves as well as to the entire society.

The ultimate zeal of Raja Rammohan Roy for reason and truth made his philosophy as modern and liberal. His rational philosophy paved the way for social progress and social responsibility. Raja Rammohan Roy always believed in the democratic ideals of the society. He advocated for freedom, free expressions and openness of mind. He possessed a modern view of religion, free from oppressions and enlightened with liberty and freedom. He was a man who truly recognised that without those modern aspects of religion, the benefits and welfare of the society could not be sought for. He was a man who realized truly the demand and requirements of the modern age. He was rightly recognised by Rabindranath Tagore as a man who truly realised the notion of deeper unity as a grave challenge of the modern age. His philosophy was based on integrity, optimism, confidence and moral courage. To quote his self-confidence, it can be said: - “A day will arrive”, he said “when my humble endeavours will be viewed with justice, perhaps acknowledged with gratitude.” (Seal, 1924, pp 84).

He believed in mass consciousness and in the needs of the masses, not the needs of the individual. Those need consciousness, as per, Raja Rammohan Roy would result in the community consciousness, further to race consciousness and then to the consciousness of the age.

Raja Rammohan Roy believed that an earnest zeal for the search of knowledge could raise individual to the notion of freshness, modernity, openness, and last but not the
least to universal vision. As he had undergone through the study of different scriptures, and texts, he knew that with the intellectual curiosity and zest for knowledge, the individual could secure the welfare and progress of the society.

5.1.7. Importance of Truth, Reason and Rationality

Raja Rammohan Roy was a strong supporter of intellect, education and integrity which he believed could remove superstitions and darkness from the minds of the natives and would champion them in analysing their social and educational authority. To remove those dogmatic superstitions, Raja Rammohan Roy always held the view that a search for the truth was necessary and for enlightenment of mind, western ideals and liberalism were necessary. But he did not want those at the cost of the honour and dignity of his own nation. In answer to taunts from his “Christian” antagonist, he pointed out that “with respect to Science, Literature and Religion, I do not acknowledge that we are placed under any obligation, for, by a reference to history, it may be proved that the world was indebted to our ancestors for the first dawn of knowledge which sprang up in the East and .........we have still a philosophical and copious language of our own which distinguishes us from other nations who cannot express scientific or abstract ideas without borrowing the language of foreigners.” (Sen, 1967, pp 337).

The importance of truth and reason had always been felt by Raja Rammohan Roy especially in case of justification of religious doctrines to discriminate truth from falsehood. That justification would also help his countrymen, he believed, for separating irrationality from rationality. That help would guide the countrymen to attach themselves to one true God, the “fountain of the harmonious organisation of the universe.” (Tagore, 1974, pp 18). Consequently they would be able to serve their society for social welfare. Afterwards they would be free from communal differences, sectarian bias and racial superiority. That freedom would make them free from all sorts of physical and mental trouble.

Raja Rammohan Roy wrote a tract called Tuhufat Ul Muhhiwiddin, where he strictly maintained his firm belief in monotheism and rejected all sorts of superstitions and supernatural power. Quoting a passage from there he pointed out that the existence of
supernatural things in the world was practically irrelevant. That concept belonged to a
man who was labouring under whims and who could not apply their power of
comprehension in judging the cause of any happening. Only under such circumstance,
they would believe that such happening was due to the miraculous powers of God. Raja
Rammohan Roy showed with his reason that there was a cause effect relationship for
everything. Cause and condition made anything to happen. But when man remained
under ignorance and darkness, they could not judge that cause effect relation. So, out of
the inexperience, when the cause of anything remained hidden to them, the ignorant
mass only ascribed the effect to some supernatural activities, and the persons in the
society who had vested interests in unreason, they used to take the opportunity of that
situation and by spreading myths in the name of religion, they used to attract people in
their direction. Mentioning that, Raja Rammohan Roy stressed over the exercise of the
power of inductive reasoning by the intelligent people which, he knew, would save
them from those blind propositions.

Raja Rammohan Roy always held the view that man should judge the worthiness and
relevance of any idea or view with the help of reason. He studied the scriptural
authority of different religions, and interpreted them with his reasoning ability and then
only presented them before his countrymen for their acceptance. Once he mentioned
that “In order to vindicate my own faith and that of our forefathers, I have been
endeavouring to convince my countrymen of the true meaning of our sacred
books.” (Barua, 1988, pp 79). He used rationalism as a tool for promoting, preserving and for
bringing peace and harmony in a society. He was sure that when men would start
judging everything with rationalism, they would develop tolerance towards others and
that tolerance would help to remove the barriers of narrow national frontier and would
develop a universal look to win the battle of social stagnation with calm and patience.

As Susobhan Sarkar wrote - “the central characteristic in the life and thoughts of
Rammohan Roy, were his keen consciousness of the stagnant, degraded, and corrupt
state into which our society had fallen, his deep love of the people which sought their
all-round regeneration, his critical appreciation of the value of modern western culture
and the ancient wisdom of the East alike, and his many untiring efforts in fighting for
improving conditions around him.” (Barua, 1988, pp79).
Raja Rammohan Roy wanted to show his countrymen that with the help of the reasoning abilities, man must justify their religious beliefs and cultural heritage and by that they would be able to use properly their faculty of truth and reason. Man, he wanted, must form a bond and association between religion and logic. Otherwise they would continue to misinterpret that their religious doctrines were guided by the narrow realm of prejudices and superstitions. If they had interpreted their scriptures in the light of reason and truth and with rationality, they would be free from superstitions, self-centred ness, and narrowness away from idealism. Integration of religion with logic could show a man the noble path. That reconciliation of religion and logic would dissuade them from committing any performance of such ceremonies which would be detrimental from the view point of society and religion.

Therefore, Raja Rammohan Roy advocated a philosophy which was based on promoting freedom to the men from medieval habits of thoughts and enlightening it with new ideas and modernity. In religion and society, he always advocated rational enquiry, reason and intellectuality. Raja Rammohan Roy knew it very well that even “the best of man are not supposed to be free from passion and immoderate desires which very often overcome the dictates of reason or exempted from those errors and vices which belong to the human nature.” (Barua, 1988, pp 114). He was fully aware of the fact that human being possessed “cupidity and aggression.” (Barua, 1988, pp 114) Mental narrowness in the nature of men blocked their mind from the higher realisation. Those sensual desires had made customs and traditions, superior in the eyes of that ignorant man and the opportunity of that very situation had mainly taken by the religious leaders, having “vested interest in unreason.” (Barua, 1988, pp 115).

Again Raja Rammohan Roy believed that there was an interrelation of religion and society. He was of opinion that religion was the way of controlling the aggressive and concupiscent aspects of human being and religion also preserved the society. So, religion was important in maintaining social order and social life and therefore religion had a sociological basis and served a utilitarian social purpose. However, he mentioned the fact that religious rules and regulations need to be examined with the reasoning abilities and faculties of man so that social life ought not to be destroyed. He had no faith in the external compliances of the religions, rather held the view that “truths of
religion should not be contrary to reason.” (Barua, 1988, pp 117). Raja Rammohan Roy believed that reason alone would help a man to discard the external forms of rituals and to enquire into its internal glory and principles. On the basis of reason, a man should judge the basic tenets of religion, which was same for all religious doctrines. Belief in a single creator and disbelief in external rituals and customs of religion were held in all the basic tenets of religions. He believed that each and every religion possessed falsehood. Though one religion generally tried to show its superiority over other, but practically all of them needed reformation. Raja Rammohan Roy reformed not only his own religion, but also critically scrutinised other religions. He presented the common falsehood of every religion which was the external form of the religions. He used religion for reforming social ideals. He believed that the external form of different religions had created bias and separation in the society. So, he mainly tried to reform the external impurity of every different religion by eradicating thousands of irrelevant social customs, rituals and rites, which at that time were held important by various religious communities.

The backdrop of his social and religious philosophy was an enlightened consciousness based on truth, reasons and education. With his educational exertions, Raja Rammohan Roy made multifarious researches in various religious texts and finally came to the light of a “central core of true religion, the existence of creator and moral Governor, and in the existence of spiritual principle in the soul.” (Barua, 1988, pp 10). The realization of that central core of religion, Raja Rammohan Roy believed was possible only when individual applied his own reason in analysing the scriptural authority. By such reconciliation of individual reason with scriptural authority, one could have a true guidance. Out of that true guidance, man would understand that for understanding God’s guidance there was no need to take the help of avatar to reach the salvation. Raja Rammohan Roy held the view that the path of salvation did not depend on the existence of middlemen, but by performing duties towards mankind, with a pure mind, man could easily attend the path of salvation. Raja Rammohan Roy strictly was opposed to miracles or impossible things. He believed that God or the creator could not create the impossible things. Those impossible miraculous things had been created by the man themselves without caring for their scriptural authority. He had a firm faith in reason and rationality. He advised his countrymen to accept each and every doctrine of their
scripture only after making them reconciled with their reason. He knew very well that person devoid of reason and truth ascribed natural happenings to impossible acts of the creatures. He knew that when men remained ignored about the validity of their texts and scriptures, then only they kept their firm faith in miracles. Therefore, he opined that - “Reason was crowned where superstition reigned”. (Tagore, 1974, pp 21).

5.1.8. Synthesis in his Philosophy

Raja Rammohan Roy, a man of wisdom, grace and humility, possessed the vision of a statesman and could be explained as a man of “modesty, delicacy of feeling, and courtesy towards women”. (Krishnayya, 1969, pp 106). As a true philosopher, he synthesised the “ancient caste and modern humanity, superstition and Science, despotism and democracy, immobile custom and conservative progress.......” (Krishnayya, 1969, pp 109).

As a philosopher, Raja Rammohan Roy began his journey from Orientalism of the past and reached ultimately to a civilization which was neither western nor eastern, but something vastly larger and nobler than both. The concept of that civilization obviously had come to his mind through western culture. Raja Rammohan Roy thus presents a most instructive and inspiring study for the new India for which he is the type and pioneer.” (Krishnayya, 1969, pp 111).

In Raja Rammohan Roy’s philosophy of synthesis, two concepts had been reconciled. One was the highest conception of religion of the East and other was the ethical values of the western thought. He had made a historic synthesis of East and West. He had taken the best from East and West. He was always inspired by the new ideals and new visions of the West. He believed that with those new ideals and views, man would be able to apply their rationalism in religion and would possess liberty in social outlook. He, in his philosophical beliefs always had influenced by the objective outlook of scientific thought. Mainly he had synthesised three systems of thoughts, Hindu, Muslim and Christian into an integrated whole. “From a fusion of divergent values and ideals a composite nationality and a synthetic civilization” was mainly his thoughts and philosophies. (Sen, 1967, pp 264). He replaced old value systems which were not
useful from the view point of the progress of the then society by illuminating ideas and ideals beneficial for the modern India. He was rightly called the Father of Modern India. He paved the way of integration and reconciliation and made his countrymen able to find out the solution of the larger problem of the then society. From his family, he was under an influence of divergent culture. From maternal side, Sakta culture was converged on him, by means of which he had studied the Tantra Shastras. From paternal ancestors he belonged to Vaisnava culture. From his early life he made vigorous study of, Plato, Aristotle and Euclidean Geometry, all had a significant role to play in his intellectual endeavour and exertions. All those influences made it possible for him to initiate synthesis in his reformatory activities. Not only those but also he became “fascinated by the poetry and philosophy of the Persian Sufis........... He became a zaberdest Maulavi, wise in the wisdom of Quoran Sarif, learned in Mohammadan law and jurisprudence.....” (Sen, 1967, pp 268). He was deeply moved by the Islam culture. The free thinking and universalism of that culture inspired him. He reshaped his personal religion also based on the free thinking of Mohammadan rationalists and Mohammadan Unitarians. He championed his own culture also. he belonged to a lofty Brahmanic culture and undergone a thorough study of Smriti, including law, Darsanas or systems of philosophy, the Vedas, the Brahmanas, the Upanishads, the Puranas, and the Tantras. “But it was the Upanishads and the Brahma Sutra with Sankara’s commentary and the Gita......that most deeply influenced him and shaped his personal religion and his philosophy of life. (Sen, 1967, pp 269). On the other hand, he was very much influenced by the “philosophy of Locke and Hume, the rationalism of Voltaire and the objective outlook of scientific thought” (Sen, 1967, pp 269). His study of comparative culture and literature not only included Hindu and Islamic culture, but also another cult in history, that was the Christian culture. In a letter to John Digby in 1817, he mentioned that “I have found the doctrine of Christ more conducive to moral principles and more adapted for the use of rational beings than any other which have come to my knowledge.” (Sen, 1967, pp 271.) The ethical teachings of Christ, which was sufficient to bind men with peace and harmony, always attracted him. He knew very well that if his countrymen followed that high and liberal notion of God, as held in Christianity, they would dedicate themselves for the service of mankind. He had taken the highest and best in semantic culture. Hindu, Muslim and Christian culture and later shaped his personal religion with his enriched mind. But as he was a devotee to the
service of man, he wanted to instil those ideas in the minds of his countrymen, so that they could understand the purity and glory of their religious doctrines. He knew that those ideas would help to reshape India accordingly. He made historic synthesis in the religion first, as he was very sure of the fact that such a synthesis would bring harmony one by one in every related sphere of activity. The basis of his synthesis was free thinking of Muslim world, empirical philosophy of the West and the ideals of the new society. With that base, he was able to reconcile faith with reason and gave his best service for the welfare of the society. The best method of synthesis, once he declared as “neither to give ourselves up exclusively to the guidance of the one or the other; but by a proper use of the light furnished by both endeavour to improve our intellectual and moral faculties.” (Sen, 1967, pp 281).

Raja Rammohan Roy always believed in bringing together many conflicting streams under one comprehensive whole, as he fully believed in the inner link of each and every conflicting cults and culture. He harmonised three bodies of conflicting civilizations, mainly the Hindu, the Muslim and the Christian culture. Raja Rammohan Roy was a representative man of “composite nationality and a synthetic civilization (Seal, 1924, pp 3). By doing this, he became a “precursor, an archetype, a prophet of coming humanity.” (Seal, 1924, pp 3).

Not only three bodies of culture, Hindu, Muslim and Christianity, Raja Rammohan Roy also had studied the Jaina scriptures and the Buddhist traditions as a basis for his personal evaluation. At that time when he was working under John Digby, he studied the elements of English with proficiency. Soon, he had undergone a thorough study of the social, political and economic developments of the West. Those studies opened a new vista of life for him and he became interested in the new learning of the West and with their social, cultural and political ideals. His study was enriched by the empirical philosophy and scientific thought from Bacon to Locke and Newton, as well as it was inspired by the free thinking and the philosophy of illumination shown by Hume, Gibbon, Voltaire, Volney, Tom Paine and others. Later in life during his close intimacy and association with the Christian missionaries, he was deeply influenced by the principal tenets of their religion. He discovered the ethical teachings of Christ as free from miraculous fabric tales He also mastered in “Hebrew, Syriac and Greek” (Seal, pp
He learnt so many languages, he came into contact with so many religions and cultures and he discovered the basic tenets of foundations of all the comparative religions. He was a pioneer of semantic culture and advocated with reason the superiority of the synthetic philosophy.

He discovered the universal truth and throughout his life he followed that core truth of religion as held in different theism in different ways. Like Vedanta retained “unity of all souls and of the world in Brahma.” In Islam, he found the “sense of divine government and a militant equality of man with man”, and in Christianity, he got the notion of “ethical and social guidance to peace and happiness in the path of life.” (Seal, 1924, pp 15). His comparative and rational analysis of all different cults and cultures gave him a notion of universal truth, by means of which he proceeded to make historic synthesis. For his liberal open minded views and for his straight way criticism of the old and decaying ideas of religion, he was criticised by his adversaries many a time, but he did not stop. Each time, all those controversies with his opponent, gave him a new direction, a new mode of life to shape his own personal religion. With his personal integrity, he had always defended his own religion of Hinduism against the age old superstitions and erroneous beliefs. He defended his own religion also against the orthodoxy of the other two religions. Raja Rammohan Roy found the original doctrines of all those three religions on the same footing. Like love of man, was held in all those three religions as the true expression of love of God. Secondly he found in all those three religions respect for the soul, as the soul when collaborated and cooperated with tolerance, reason and rationality, became the true essence of religion. He was deeply moved by the universal concept of religion, which was also the centre of convergence, as held in all those three religions as their historic tradition. Mainly that concept later gave him the idea of universal religion, which further developed into the concept of “internationality, super nationality and universal state.” (Seal, 1924, pp 19).

Raja Rammohan Roy further took the notion that several stereotyped orthodox social usages and customs were not there in all those historic religions, those were later created by men for their own comforts and benefits. He, by synthesising the true historic doctrines of those divergent but unified religions, felt that those religions must be freed from that religious “trammels’ (Seal, 1924, pp 20) and must be placed on their
sound basis. That was possible if “the fundamental assumption and Hindu Smriti, Muslim Shariat and Christian Canonical law adapt themselves to the revelations of God’s own truth.” (Seal, 1924, pp 21). He believed that various spheres of activities, cultures, rules, regulations, principles, usages and customs as contained in different religions must be guided by the principle of Lokasreya or public good.

Raja Rammohan Roy was a nationalist reformer who had brought three different standards of religions at the same time. He defended Christianity against Hinduism and Hinduism against Christianity. He also defended Christianity against the miraculous dogmas of missionaries. That could not have been possible, if he had not made a thorough study of comparative religion and if he had no faith in synthesis. In his reformatory synthesis he found the truth that the purest universal religion was actually the main foundation of all those three religions. By keeping his personality integral and intact actually he had done that. He had profound faith in combining the fundamental experiences in Hindu, Islam and Christianity. The various “historic cults and cultures”, with the strenuous efforts of Raja Rammohan Roy had been fused into one discipline of “Universal Humanity.” (Seal, 1924, pp 25). The polycentric aspects of different religions were actually integrated by him into a communion with Brahma, and under mutual contact and assimilation with other religions. He was a pure and simple humanist.

The main principle of Raja Rammohan Roy’s synthesis was to synthesise “individual reason with collective wisdom and scriptural authority”, and “good of the individual with the good of the greatest number”. (Seal, 1924, pp28). Actually in his reformatory activities, his guiding philosophy was reconciling individualism with socialism.

In his historic synthesis of East and West, Raja Rammohan Roy held the belief that with a close and intimate contact with the western values and cultures, India could raise to a standard of social and intellectual progress. To bring that progress in the soil of India, it would be necessary to relief the men from their dogmatic slumber and to illuminate them with new visions, ideas, ideals and knowledge of West. He was deeply impressed by the western culture and wanted to germinate the seeds of same culture into the minds of his countrymen. He truly interpreted the Hindu Shastras to make his
countrymen well acquainted with the popular eternal ideas of the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads*. He knew it very well that to bring a progress to his countrymen; they should be freed from the cobwebs of superstitions. In his controversies with the orthodox *Pandits*, he always illuminated their tradition and orthodox interpretation of the *Hindu Shastras* with the light of western thoughts as was derived from his own study and research. He was an idealist “with a great sweep of vision and yet an intensely practical man.” (Sen, 1967, pp 261). He was deeply moved by the lofty heights of idealism on one hand and on the other hand by practical details. Analysing the *Hindu Shastras*, he showed to his countrymen that they must reconcile their doctrines with their reasoning abilities and then only they should accept those doctrines. He had discarded the concept of blind adherence to the rituals and rites of their ancestors, rather he prescribed to his countrymen that every ritual and custom should be judged with the help of the practical skills of mankind. He synthesised different values and ideals and paved the way for a new type of idealism. For that, he had been rightly called as a representative man, a man who could visualise future developments as well.

**5.1.9. Beleif in Western Ideals of Social Democracy**

Long after he had well versed in *Hindu* and Islamic culture, Raja Rammohan Roy came into contact with western civilization and thought. The touch stone of his reform was rationality, truth and reason. He got those flavour in the social, political and scientific ideas developed in that age of ‘intellectual ferment’ of Europe. (Sen, 1967, pp 270). He was fully convinced of the fact that apart from the composite Christian tradition of modern western civilization, it’s another wing, namely scientific and economic basis was responsible for the advancement of Science. With the help of that basis, he believed that man could apply scientific knowledge to the sector of arts, industries and machinery. That would again enlighten man’s privilege, right and power over nature.

One important characteristic of European culture, which was service to mankind for the sake of humanity, deeply impressed Raja Rammohan Roy’s social philosophy. He wanted to retain the same philosophy of service to man for his countrymen also, as he knew very well that the notion of pure service devoid of useless rites and ceremonies
was lacking among his countrymen. However, Raja Rammohan Roy knew that by that
service was required for the upliftment and progress of the human society.

Raja Rammohan Roy was a firm believer of democratic society, enriched with the ideas
of freedom, equality and fraternity sufficient for bringing changes in the mental outlook
of the people. Western ideals of social democracy greatly influenced him as personally
he believed in mental freedom, personal independence and liberty. He totally changed
the visions of so called orthodox religion by inspiring from the laws and forms of the
Government of Europeans, which he believed were sufficient for amelioration of the
condition of the natives. His Renaissance movement brought an assimilation the new
ideals and liberal institutions from the West. He considered English as “delivers”,
(Sen, 1967, pp 318) not as conquerors. He realised that a pure religion and an
enlightened form of education were necessary for securing the happiness and comforts
for his countrymen. All those, he believed would be possible, if western ideals,
thoughts, liberalism and democracy could be diffused in the minds of the natives.
Without those enlightenment, Raja Rammohan Roy advocated that men could not be
awaken from its “long leathery of death.” (Sen, 1967, pp 322).

Raja Rammohan Roy firmly proposed for new illumination of ideas of the West. He
claimed that those ideas could replace the medievalist and retrogressive ideals of
Hindus. He was always in favour of a close contact of British and the India, in order to
illuminate the latter with the new idealism. By means of which the Britishers could
uplift Indians from their “slough of despond”- (Majumdar, 1983, pp introduction) He
wanted to make his countrymen aware of the great possibilities and opportunities that
were available to them. For that, he knew that men must arouse from darkness. Raja
Rammohan Roy wanted to enlighten the minds of the people with a new awakening.
Therefore, he had been rightly called as a pioneer, an earnest and patriotic philosopher.

“Rammohan, among his countrymen for the first time realised that the new and
enlightened ideas of the awakened West contained the needed potency of making the
life and mind of his countrymen richer and fuller”. (Majumdar, 1953, pp 225). New
and enlightened ideas of the awakened West, would, he believed, help the countrymen
to realise the highest notion of life and would help them to reject their deep and long
slumber. The enlightened mind of the countrymen would help them to secure their rights and privileges and that security would improve their conditions in various fields. The countrymen would find their appropriate place among the developed nations of the world. So, an association with the West, Raja Rammohan Roy believed would secure bright future for his countrymen. Men would be able to understand their duties and responsibilities and would serve the society in best aspirations.

Thus, by propagating the importance of modernisation, Raja Rammohan Roy changed the face of medieval Asia to a modern Asia. In doing so, he had advocated for the rejection of all superstitions of medieval Asia. Arthur Mayhew, who was once in the educational service of India and became the educational advisor to the Colonial Office, London, said regarding Raja Rammohan Roy that “Raja Rammohan Roy, the Hindu reformer, and savant, was even more responsible for the ‘Western’ character of education in India.” (Das, 1958, pp 3). However, his reformatory activities should not be misunderstood. He had not demanded for westernisation at the cost of easternisation. His support for westernisation included new ideals, scientific attitude and democratic outlook.

Raja Rammohan Roy propagated for Sciences and scientific teachings for uprooting all unjust and oppressive measures. He demanded for the knowledge of Arts and Science, as he knew very well that such knowledge would help his countrymen to remove all sorts of prejudices and superstitions. That knowledge would be a source of enthusiasm for starting freedom movement. To move freely and to relieve the soul from bondage and slavery, Raja Rammohan Roy knew that modernisation and westernisation of ideas were required. ‘medieval scholasticism.’(Das, 1958, pp 10) would not work in that case. For that, as a moderniser, Raja Rammohan Roy “rescued Vedanta from oblivion of scholastic debates, for everyday use of his countrymen.” (Das, 1958, pp 11). He along his life in an integrated manner did his reformatory activities, as he knew very well that one sector was inseparable from other. In religion, social and educational field, he made reformatory activities for their rebirth and regeneration based on modernity. He, for the first time realised the importance of Science in the future of coming Asia. He was rightly regarded as “the prophet of coming humanity.” (Das, 1958, pp 13). He created modern India by breaking the chains of medieval classicism.
Raja Rammohan Roy was rightly called an inaugurator of the modern age. He made serious efforts to change the face of medieval India into a modern India by relieving her from ‘a crushing load of unreason’ (Tagore, 1933, pp 1). He did not believe in isolation and separation. He was a firm believer of brotherhood of interdependence of individuals as well as of nations. He was a great humanist and Universalist. He believed that an endeavour which would “establish our people on the full consciousness of their own cultural personality, to make them comprehend the reality of all that was unique and indestructible in their civilization, and simultaneously, to make them approach other civilizations in the spirit of sympathetic cooperation.” (Tagore, 1933, pp 3) was required.

5.1.10. Firm Advocacy for Freedom

Raja Rammohan Roy strongly believed in providing freedom. As William Adam mentioned that “he (Rammohan) would be free or not be at all. That love for freedom, so strikingly characteristics of the man, was the rational conviction springing from his belief in the noble purposes which a well regulated and self-restrained liberty is capable of conferring on the individual and on society.” (Tagore, pp 83).

Raja Rammohan Roy advocated freedom which would be applicable to all people in the society, irrespective of class, caste, creed, sex, etc. He wanted dynamic and multifaceted freedom. The most remarkable social reformation, for which Raja Rammohan Roy would be remembered every time, was the abolition of Sati. In that matter also, Raja Rammohan Roy did not interfere with the concept of freedom. He wanted to uproot that custom slowly and steadily with the help of the intellectual enlightenment of the public. He did not want a legal enforcements in that matter. That also proved his zeal for freedom. He did not want to enforce anything that could attack the religious sentiments of his natives. But at the same time he wanted a removal of such rite. So he made his countrymen conscious to apply their reasoning and judgement regarding the validity of that matter.

Raja Rammohan Roy, a great reformer, who dedicated his life in freeing the society from the loads of unreason and absurdities, wanted spontaneous efforts and a thorough change in the mentality of the people by means of which, he knew, people would be
active to eradicate such evils. Here also he maintained his philosophy of freedom for eradicating social oppressions. He laid emphasis on the free consciousness of the people, not on any legal force or legal enactment.

He never wanted to put any restriction to the freedom of choice of people. He wanted that with the intimate contact with the West, his countrymen should be well aware of the utility of reason, truth, and democracy and freedom. By means of which, they would restrict themselves from entering into evil social practices. Therefore he wanted that his countrymen should be well versed in the knowledge of European Science and literature so that they could understand proper use of their freedom. Raja Rammohan Roy wanted to diffuse the western knowledge and culture for the bigger goal. He had in his mind the progress and benefits of his countrymen, which he believed would not possible without allowing for freedom.

For social upliftment, for raising the condition of the females from a state of distress to a state of illumination, Raja Rammohan Roy knew that freedom was a necessity. Through his tracts and writings he demanded economic independence and economic freedom on the part of the Hindu females. The philosophy, which was working behind his writing of the tract “Modern Encroachment on the Ancient Rights of Females”, was that in order to understand the state of civilization of Hindustan and its subsequent degradation it was necessary to compare in legislative decision of our ancient lawgivers and that of our modern and contemporaries. By such comparison, one could understand to what extent the female part of the society were deprived of all sorts of comforts and freedom.

Raja Rammohan Roy in 1827 published with a Bengali translation the first chapter of a Sanskrit work against caste, named “Vajra Suchi” or “The Needle of Adamant.” by Mrityunjayacharyya. His intention was to bring before public an authoritative, analytical and objective study of the caste system. He knew very well that caste system was an obstacle to the free thinking and intelligence of mankind. It would restrict the free mixing and exchange of views among men of different sects and communities. All those, he believed were sufficient to check the progress and freedom of the people and to their subjection to foreign conquerors.
Raja Rammohan Roy expressed his preference for *Saiva* marriage, as that marriage gave the freedom of choice of the bride, and also at that marriage there was no caste system. So, obviously, Raja Rammohan Roy, for the eradication of the evil effects of the caste system, proposed for *Saiva* marriage.

Raja Rammohan Roy was always vocal for promoting men their natural rights to “freedom of speech, opinion, conscience and association.” (Seal, 1924, pp 28). The guiding principle of conduct, as per Raja Rammohan Roy was the “the rule of individual reciprocity.” (Seal, 1924, pp 28). Raja Rammohan Roy believed that the relationship between man and society was based on reciprocity. If man was given freedom of expression, man would try to secure the same freedom for the society as a whole. By securing rights for a greater number of people in the society, *Lokasreya* or common good could be achieved. So, Raja Rammohan Roy was of opinion that individualistic justice and equality should be promoted. He followed that principle as ideal and therefore was able to correct and complete “the Hindu’s personal law of marriage, inheritance, religious worship and women’s status.” (Seal, 1924, pp 30).

Raja Rammohan Roy’s notion of ideal society was a society of equality and of fraternity of interdependent individuals. He advocated the view that social laws, regulations, principles, customs, and experiences must be constituted and evaluated for the good of the people. He was a great humanist and followed a humanistic approach in his reformatory activities.

### 5.1.11. Views on Human Service

Raja Rammohan Roy knew very well that the very basis of social progress and reformation was religious purity. The then *Hindu* society was under religious burden. Numerous cruel social customs and rites ignoring Shastric injunction were followed in the country. Those were debasing the base and the text of the society. Men used to follow those ceremonies and believed that by performing such rites, they would attain salvation and knowledge of God. So, Raja Rammohan Roy knew that if the countrymen could be dissuaded from performing such absurd religious rites, they could be aroused from their dream of error. For that reason, he, through his writings wanted to reshape
his society by acquainting his countrymen with the true and pure essence of their religion. He held the notion of human service to a highest esteem, because he was a humanist in a true sense of terms. He had deep regard for humanity and out of that regard he fought against all social evils to purify the mind of his countrymen. Actually he wanted to give them the notion of one true God. The real essence of religion, the service to human being, was, he advocated the noblest and only means of knowing the God. Therefore, it could be said rightly that “To the tradition of India, he elevated the quest to the realm of Dharma.”- (Tagore, 1974, pp 63).

In his autobiographical sketch once he mentioned: - “My continued controversies with the Brahmans on the subject of their idolatry and superstitions and my interference with their custom of burning widows and other pernicious practices, revived me.” (Tagore, 1974, pp 63).

Raja Rammohan Roy disbelieved all sorts of supernatural beliefs and miracles. He was of opinion that God could not do the miracles. He held the view that self-seeking leaders, who pretended to be wise, was actually kept the human being under ignorance. They did not reveal the true meaning and essence of religious scriptures before the countrymen, because in the useless rites and ceremonies, which men used to perform because of darkness of mind, they found their benefits and comforts. Those self-seeking leaders having vested interests in rites and ceremonies must be replaced by wise men who really wanted to enlighten the minds of the countrymen with the light of knowledge. Raja Rammohan Roy felt the urgent need for sound mind and keen insight. But, he knew very well that the urgent need could not be fulfilled by the self-seeking leaders, who used to misguide the common masses by false fable of supernatural things and miracles. Raja Rammohan Roy believed that every happening had its cause and effect relation. So, natural happenings could not be ascribed to the presence of supernatural agencies. He advocated that men must understand the causality and thereafter must justify the rationality of everything in that world, by that men would be able to reject the influence of middlemen, avatars or religious leaders. Reason, rationality and truth should be the touchstone of every judgement. That judgement could lead men to social upliftment. Raja Rammohan Roy asserted that few educated
and enlightened leaders, who, by revealing the real doctrines of the scriptures to the knowledge of human being could make social improvements, were really necessary.

Raja Rammohan Roy dedicated his life for the sake of social service and for the benefits of the people of the society. One such service for which he will be remembered all the times was the abolition of Sati. He was a humanist and dedicated philanthropist, who by arousing the sleeping minds of his countrymen, single handed fought against that social oppression. First, through his tracts he made aware of his countrymen regarding the vagueness and non utility of such rite. Then gradually by discussions, controversies and arguments, he mobilised public opinion in that matter. Not only that but also he wrote tracts in both Bengali and English to secure the public attention. His English writings created a stir in the European countries also. The ruling race and the natives gradually with due course of time put a stop to that practice. When he wrote the tract entitled “Modern Encroachments on the Ancient Rights of Females according to the Hindu law of Inheritance,” he had an intention to bring into the notice of his countrymen that the females of the country were unjustifiably deprived of their husband’s property. That tract also he wrote to bring into the attention of the people the reason behind the occurrences of Sati. He also showed that taking the advantage of the poor intellectual condition of the masses, they were shown the falsehood of their religions, but they were never made acquainted with the true spirit of their religion. His style of reformation was different. Many of his reformatory activities, if judged from a narrow corner, could be a subject of controversy, but it they were analysed from a broader spectrum, one could easily understand that all his reformatory activities were guided by his lofty ideals of high philosophy.

5.2. Educational Philosophy

5.2.1. Synthesis of Past and Progressive Future

The educational philosophy of Raja Rammohan Roy and his religious thinking were related to each other. In social philosophy he held the notion of synthesis. The same perspective of synthesis, he carried out in that educational philosophy also. That time he was eager to synthesise eastern spirituality with western modernity. Actually
speaking, Raja Rammohan Roy was the inaugurator of the modern learning which was a new learning. So, basically he was interested in synthesising ancient spiritual resources with the western culture and literature. He synthesised vernacular with the language English. He personally worked tirelessly for the improvement of vernacular and at the same time he was equally interested to make his countrymen well verse in the language English. Not only that, but also, he knew other classical languages, Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Arabic and Persian. Recognising the essence and utility of the language, Bengali, Raja Rammohan Roy personally improved the language, on the other hand understanding the demand of age, he advocated the study of English language. That meant his philosophy was not discarding one’s root, but improving it. The language Sanskrit, he felt was not necessary for the enlightenment and intellectual development of the nation. He mastered the concept of comparative religion and thereby advocated the philosophy of liberty, equalization, internationalism in the field of education. Raja Rammohan Roy strictly followed the main essence of Upanishads, the Old Testament, and the Koran in the original. He, by means of his enriched philosophy became the prophet of humanity. He, as a great philosopher always had a vision of “free, puissant and enlightened India.” (Upadhyaya, 1990, pp 15). In his philosophical belief, he linked the golden values of Far East and the Far West. He was truly called the first of moderns, a modern man, who advocated the necessity of modern western learning and thereby originated the modern age, a modern civilization.

Raja Rammohan Roy believed in the generation of new spirit, which, he knew was not possible without western touch. He proposed that from the ‘compulsory mixture of races and faiths and civilization’ (Collet, 1988, pp 350), new and enlightened ideas could be generated. In education, he sought for ‘freedom of enquiry, thirst for Science, humane sympathy, pure ethics, and reverent but not uncritical regard for the past’. (Collet, 1988, pp 350).

Raja Rammohan Roy changed the medieval India into modern India by his instructive and inspiring studies which he made throughout his life. He was rightly called a man who heralded that modern India. He did not believe in the unprecedented intermingling of East and West. In his educational endeavour, he made historic synthesis of
European and Asiatic streams of human development. He was rightly called the “Universal Theist” (Collet, 1988, pp 349). Regarding his synthesis of past and future in his educational endeavour, it could be said that “Rammohan stands in the history as the living bridge over which India marches from her unmeasured past to her incalculable future.” (Collet, 1988, pp 350). He replaced ancient by modernity and useless superstition by Science. He always held the view that modernity and progress were superior to immobile customs and conservative traditionalism. So, as a modern man, he harmonized the ‘conflicting trends of immemorial tradition and inevitable enlightenment.” (Collet, 1988, pp 350). He did that with the help of his philosophy of modern humanity.

5.2.2. Advocacy for Modern Scientific Education

Raja Rammohan Roy was a man who successfully led the first phase of Bengal Renaissance. He, as a father of Bengal Renaissance, proposed for Science oriented English education. At that time keeping in view the requirement of age and in accordance with the deep dark backdrop of Indian society, the urge for scientific education, was no doubt a wise decision from the view point of India’s rebirth and regeneration. He made synthesis in education by pouring western ideas into eastern thoughts. His recommendations for a modern scientific education, comprising western ideals and ideologies were necessary to hasten that process of synthesis. To raise the natives from the superstitious practices, apathy and ignorance, true education was felt for. That true education should enlighten every corner of human mind and would enable men to realise the pure spirit of their true scripture with wisdom and knowledge. So, to liberate his countrymen from numerous dogmas and slumber, Raja Rammohan Roy advocated for modern, western and scientific education to the exclusion of the external factors which were responsible for debasing the texture of the society. He knew that a complete system of education was necessary to make people aware of their law and rights. That complete true educational system, Raja Rammohan Roy believed would awaken them from the medieval scholasticism and traditional Orientalism. So, at that time when all the forces were in favour of Oriental education, when all the forces were in opposite direction, He, with his enlightened philosophy took the hard task of changing the course of time and suggested for a modern, liberal
new learning. That hard task at the backdrop of religious fanaticism, social stagnancy and intellectual ignorance was really unbelievable. In his philosophy he always had replaced so called dead myths by a creative and critical thinking. However, he had never rejected the rich cultural and ancient rich educational heritage of India. He had always directed his attention towards revivalism and scientism. In his philosophy he held composite culture, relevance of the questioning spirit, scientific temper and modern views as superior to all sorts of ancient age old superstitions. However, he had beautifully explained the meaning of the term modern. To him, modernity did not mean rejecting all that is old, rather it meant rejecting everything that failed to anticipate the needs of the future. Appreciating the demand of the then society and education, Raja Rammohan Roy accepted all that which could lead to the improvements of education and rejected all narrow walls of barriers to education. He actually, in the field of education, wanted to transmit the concept of liberty, equality, method of enquiry and scientific temper of the West.

Actually Raja Rammohan Roy supported the new learning because of enlightening his countrymen with the spirit of intellectual Renaissance of India. He fostered Bengal Renaissance and wanted to cultivate the spirit of modernity by means of his teachings and modern idea. He was deeply inspired by the nature of European Renaissance and wanted to germinate same enlightened and modern thinking in the country. In 1828, when he established the *Brahmo Samaj*, he mainly emphasised over replacing stern monotheism in religion by intellectual rationalism in education. His idea of comparative religion mainly took the hard task of synthesis. He wrote several tracts, made several protests, went through numerous controversies and founded many establishments and associations by means of which mainly he reacted against all sorts of stagnation, superstitions and strived towards the making of modern India. He was rightly called the father of modern India and pioneer of Bengal Renaissance. At that time when it was difficult for majority of the people to think for enlightenment, Raja Rammohan Roy actually diffused it to his countrymen. He was therefore rightly called as the ‘beacon of the modern age’. (Upadhaya, 1990, pp 7).

Raja Rammohan Roy believed in the promotion of modern, liberal English education of the West because he studied the civil, political, economic liberty of the nation and was
very much inspired by their concept of freedom, social happiness and rationalism. Actually he was a strong supporter of English education. For the future benefits of his countrymen, he had never accepted traditional oriental system of education through the medium of Sanskrit. For understanding the values of liberty, freedom and reasoning, he stressed over the association of natives with the British nations. He believed that by such contact, his own nation would be enlightened. However, his support for the British should not be looked upon as his intention for political dependence or slavery of his countrymen. Rather the fact was that he wanted a complete freedom for his countrymen from all sorts of dependency. So, he wanted to follow their scientific spirit for enlightenment and illumination. He was a patriot. He loved his country’s intellectual and educational emancipation. That is why Raja Rammohan Roy advocated for new and modern education

As opposed to Orientalist, Raja Rammohan Roy was an Anglicist. From the view point of an Anglicist, he had never accepted the establishment of Sanskrit colleges and the promotion of the language Sanskrit as he believed that such promotion would be detrimental to the feelings of the natives. Rightly he had inaugurated the modern age in India. He had never disrespected oriental language, but supported always western Science and literature for the progress of the nation. He strictly opposed the Governmental policy of reviving oriental system of education, as he knew that system would encourage a decadent tradition. That tradition would make the people ignorant and would be responsible for injustice and inequality. So, his educational philosophy always cared for combining western scientific civilization with eastern spiritual tradition.

Raja Rammohan Roy did not support oriental system of education, as he believed such system could not solve the larger problem of ‘international culture and civilization’ (Barua, 1988, pp 25) He was opposed to the language Sanskrit and showed his adherence to the language English, so that the natives could study the matter of modern and new learning. Given learning of ancient East through the medium of Sanskrit and learning of modern West through the medium of English, he always had chosen the latter. He discovered his country’s root in a reformed fashion and reshaped his country’s regeneration.
5.2.2.1. Support for the Establishment of Hindu College

Raja Rammohan Roy had never bothered for false honour and status. So, when his countrymen were opposed to his association in the committee of proposed college (Later Hindu College), he, without delay withdrew his name, so that the work should go on. The background of English and liberal system of education owed its origin to Raja Rammohan Roy because the proposal for the establishment of such a seminary for liberal education was also raised in his Atmiya Sabha. But, as he was more concerned with the modern learning of his countrymen, he left the place when there was a strong opposition. Two things were made clear from that bold step of Raja Rammohan Roy. Firstly, he was a man of strong personality, who did not care for empty honour, and secondly, he actually had started the intellectual climate in the field of modern education. His cherished dreams of giving liberal, modern education on western lines to his countrymen, was started since his settlement in Calcutta from 1814-15.

In his endeavour of westernisation of education, Raja Rammohan Roy not only had made remarkable personal contributions and exertions, but also extended his valuable help to others, who seriously had made an effort in that direction. He had always supported their educational schemes. He was passionate for the liberal, modern education. So, Raja Rammohan Roy believed that the scheme for such education would always be appreciated, no matter who had laid that scheme. In social reformation, he had accepted religion as the tool, similarly, in education, Raja Rammohan Roy had accepted society as a tool for educational reformation. He possessed the view that education should benefit the masses of the society, so he mentioned the fact that the light of education should reach to all. Especially to the illiterate masses, generally considered as the lower orders of the society. He once mentioned that “no cooking would be possible unless the cauldron was heated from below.” (Collet, 1988, pp 283).

5.2.2.2. Help to Missionaries for Spreading Useful Western Education

Raja Rammohan Roy actively supported the diffusion of western Science and useful western knowledge among the native for the total improvement of the mass, elite as well as general. In his philosophy he always held the view that for the regeneration of
his countrymen promotion of right kind of education among right kind of people were of utmost importance. So he extended his valuable help to Christian Serampore missionaries in their laudable efforts to spread the useful western knowledge and for latter’s zeal and active effort for spreading education. He, without having narrow ego of who was spreading the knowledge, clearly recognized the fact that the missionaries were a powerful factor in speeding up the process of western education. He was a man of integrity. So, he did not believe in the narrow concept of gaining popularity. He believed in best results with the help western education and thought.

Raja Rammohan Roy felt an urgent need to the cause of English education. So, by means of his personal influence, he secured the children for Alexander Duff’s first pupils from among his enlightened Hindu friends. He did it for the regeneration of his countrymen. He always believed in the efficacy of English education. So, he solved Alexander Duff’s problems quickly as he was earlier well aware of the integration in religion and philosophy. On the opening date of the school which was founded by Alexander Duff with Raja Rammohan Roy’s help and cooperation, Raja Rammohan Roy gave a synthetic philosophical speech to remove the prejudice against reading of Bible. He told to his countrymen that Dr. Horace Hayman, a Christian, had studied the Hindu Shastras, but had never become converted into a Hindu. Then he gave his own example and said that he had also undergone a study of Koran again and again, and a study of the whole Bible, but never intended to become a Mussalman or Christian. Afterwards he advised them that therefore did not get afraid of studying Bible. He added that by that study they would be able to judge for them what was right and what was wrong. Every day, Raja Rammohan Roy used to visit the school for the Bible lesson. In that way Raja Rammohan Roy helped Alexander Duff in latter’s educational endeavour. Raja Rammohan Roy did it because he sincerely endeavoured for western education and knew that Alexander Duff’s project would add to a feather to his endeavour.

5.2.2.3. Personal Endeavour for Western Education

For the cause of education of his.countrymen through English, Raja Rammohan Roy, after the unfortunate event which occurred with him in the case of founding the Hindu
College, founded the Anglo Hindu School. He established that school with his zeal out of his own expense. For ameliorating the intellectual condition of his countrymen, he was engaged in the work of spreading liberal education. That philosophy of Raja Rammohan Roy was just like a pragmatist. As an idealist, he included moral and religious education in the curriculum of the school for making his countrymen conscious about the moral duties, free from any particular sectarian feeling and as a rationalist, he realised the importance of establishing such type of school.

5.2.3. Support for English Language

The language English helped Raja Rammohan Roy to understand the secret of the West which was laid in their system of education. He wanted to make his countrymen aware of such knowledge and knew very well that an improvement of the language English could only help his countrymen to acquire such scientific knowledge to broaden their vision. He had always appreciated western civilization because of their concept of equality of human rights and the freedom of individual. Raja Rammohan Roy wanted to make his countrymen aware of the best aspirations of the East and the West by the study of the natural Sciences for replacing medieval scholasticism. He was very much influenced by the liberal thinking of British and as well as by the radical thinking of France. That is why he wanted the promotion of the language English to acquaint his countrymen with the western system of education and with modern and forward looking civilization. He strongly proposed for English as the medium of instruction until and unless his fellow countrymen were well versed in the knowledge of western Science. He was not in favour of discarding his vernacular. He gave equal importance to that language also. For that reason, though English was there in his Anglo Hindu School and Vedanta College, he gave importance to Bengali and Sanskrit as the medium of instruction there. Also in his Anglo Hindu School, Science was taught in Bengali.

Raja Rammohan Roy, to make his countrymen well aware of the true spirit of their Hinduism, translated the select Upanishads and an abridgement of the Vedanta from Sanskrit to Bengali and Hindustani and English. Another intention behind such activity was his strong opposition to the myths in the name of religion of the Hindus. He was an
admirer of the learning, culture and the heritage of his own country. But when the question of India’s progress had arisen, Raja Rammohan Roy strongly favoured liberal education through the medium of English. Today his philosophy of English education is very significant. Today for a free and open access to universal knowledge and for a free share of thoughts with the rest of the communities of the world, the language required is English. Today India is an English speaking country. Today more Indians speak English. Today with respect to English, the popularity of Sanskrit and Persian and Arabic is in a lower limit. At that time, Raja Rammohan Roy knew very well the demand of the books published in English. He also proved that sale of books published in English was more than the books published in other languages.

5.2.4. Opposition to Sanskrit Learning

Raja Rammohan Roy believed that Sanskrit was not the language of the general mass; rather it was the language of the elite classes. Raja Rammohan Roy was mastered in all the three languages of Sanskrit, Bengali and English. He realised the utility of Bengali and English, but did not consider Sanskrit as an useful language keeping in view the demand of time. To help his countrymen to get acquainted with the current problems in social, educational and other fields, the most obvious useful language could be Bengali. Raja Rammohan Roy opined that, that Bengali would help the countrymen to form their opinion regarding the immediate problems for their valuable suggestions and opinions. The usefulness of the language English, as per the opinion of Raja Rammohan Roy, could never be overlooked, as that language helped to raise his countrymen from all sorts of dogmatic slumber, and superstitions. Similarly, by studying comparative philosophy, he was sure that a reformation to the popular absurdities and philosophical beliefs was necessary for the regeneration of scriptures and for their upliftment. Which, he believed was possible because of new learning by the acquisition of western knowledge. His philosophy was influenced by modernization or westernization. So, he was opposed to Sanskrit learning, though he valued the Upanishads and many other Sanskrit works. He proposed for western learning in the place of medieval Sanskrit learning as he was a modern man. Raja Rammohan Roy preferred English education, though he had a deep regard for the invaluable treasures of
Sanskrit or Arabic education. That preference for English language and English education was because of enriching the quality of his countrymen.

Raja Rammohan Roy realized that the future of India rests on India’s contacts and conflicts with modern European through British rules, and for that he proposed the knowledge of active Sciences, thereby leading to the foundation of modern India. He rejected all that kinds of education, not inspired by modern ideals and therefore were not suited to the modern age. With that motive of diffusing modern liberal education, he joined hands with David Hare and others in founding Hindu College.

However, though he had a profound knowledge in the promotion and improvement of Oriental learning, and had profound admiration for *Veda, Vedantic* doctrine, and Oriental culture, he considered the knowledge of Sanskrit or Arabic literature as inadequate in meeting the requirements of the modern age. He, therefore, had never supported their promotion for enlightening the minds of his countrymen. He realized that the revival of Sanskrit and Arabic learning would be a fact of little foresight, when especially an essential educational policy was sought for. He fully believed in the fact that revival of such learning would emphasise over the metaphysical speculation and spiritual devotion, thereby ignoring the material side. By that Sanskrit method of education, he knew people would adhere blindly to authority without testing their validity. He strongly propagated for freedom, reason and truth. He believed that the Sanskrit system of learning would shutter all doors of reason and opened a way that would lead to blind faith only.

Raja Rammohan Roy had the faith that *Vedanta* would help his countrymen to lift themselves into a simpler and nobler faith from *Hindu* polytheism to *Hindu* theism. So, he defended *Vedanta* doctrines in Brahmanical magazine against the attack of missionaries. But, he could not deny the fact that the doctrines of *Vedanta* were not very useful in placing the pupils in the society properly, because such doctrines taught youths that they should not possess any real affection to father, mother etc. So, by those doctrines, pupils would develop a sense of indifference among them towards all finite existences. That notion against the *Vedantic* doctrine, which he expressed, was supported by his philosophy of consistency. Therefore, he protested the conservative
Hindus against the indiscriminate retention of Vedantic doctrines. As against that, Raja Rammohan Roy favoured western culture and Science for a progressive future. He however believed in the intercourse between European and natives. So, he wanted to keep continuity with the historic past of India and at the same time wanted to connect his countrymen with the modern ideas of the West. He actually wanted to fit better educated classes of India into the new world of European literature.

5.2.5. Respect for Vedanta and Establishment of Vedanta College

Raja Rammohan Roy was not against the study of Sanskrit. He wanted to eliminate mechanical cramming. He was opposed to the Sanskrit method of teaching. Though he was a profound Oriental scholar, and had always defended Hindu Unitarianism, a pure and elevated theism established by the Vedanta, yet propagated European classics and treatises based on Science or scientific methods. He wanted Science instead of scholasticism. He actually synthesised western method of education for more practical view of life and the study of Vedanta to get rid of superstition and idolatry. The objective behind his establishment of Vedanta College was to acquaint the countrymen with their pure theism by rightly divided means of Vedanta. So that everybody could be a useful member of a developing society. To show his countrymen the proper light of simpler and nobler faith, as retained in the Vedantic doctrines, he established his Vedanta College. He had also defended the Vedantic doctrines against the attack of the missionaries. According to Raja Rammohan Roy, Vedanta is a bridge which enabled man to pass from Hindu Polytheism to Hindu Theism. He regarded Vedanta as the highest spiritual philosophy in the world.

Raja Rammohan Roy believed in synthesis, synthesis of European Science and literature with Hindu Shastras or Hindu literature. So he established the Vedanta College where along with the cultivation of Hindu Shastras, Hindu literature and philosophy, teaching of European Science and literature was also promoted. But at the same time cultivation of English education was also there in his mind. So, he wanted to pour ‘new wine’ into the ‘old wine skins’ (Majumdar, 1983, pp iii). He had earnest interest and concern for the development of Oriental language and literature, but at the same time, he had deep regard for the new and enlightened ideals of the West in quickening the native minds. That showed that he wanted to realise the old Hindu
ideals and ideas in their proper and true spirit and light. He wanted to make education modern and suitable for the advanced and progressive thoughts of the time. He believed that with such education, people would move from medieval scholasticism to modernization. In that process of uplifement, he knew modern and enlighten Sciences would help. Therefore, He always believed in Science instead of Sanskrit learning.

5.2.6. Education for Girls

Not only that, but also, in his tract, of ‘Second Conference’ on the subject of burning widows alive, he, as an opponent demanded for proper opportunity for girls to exercise their natural talents and capacities. He advocated for the education of girls. Today the present generation is very conscious about women emancipation, girls’ education, but many years back with the farsighted vision, Raja Rammohan Roy declared that the education of women was equally necessary as for men. So, a true reformer like him felt that promotion of the education of boys would do no good alone. He believed in the education for all. Progressive education for both boys and girls was necessary for a progressive society. He believed in the notion that with the education of boys, actually a single individual is educated, but with the education of girls, a family is educated.

5.2.7. Importance for the Development of Vernacular

Raja Rammohan Roy considered Bengali prose as a tool for understanding serious philosophical thoughts. So, he had never overlooked the importance of the development of the vernacular dialect. He was in favour of a simple, direct styled Bengali prose for the best expression of the best thoughts. So, for conveying meaningful information he had laid special emphasis over the cultivation and promotion of vernacular That was evident as he composed in Bengali, refined and reformed the language and established a particular literary society in his Anglo Hindu School for the improvement of the vernacular. So, at the cost of English education and English language, again he had never overlooked the importance of vernacular.

Raja Rammohan Roy wanted to make Bengali as common people’s language, a simple and understandable language by means of which his countrymen would be conscious and concerned about the current problems and happening in surrounding. So, in the eyes of Raj Rammohan Roy, Bengali would serve the purpose of common good or
good for the people. He knew that an improvement of vernacular was necessary to raise its status and standards in the eyes of the foreign rulers also. Raja Rammohan Roy was eager to find out one’s own root, one’s own culture and one’s own heritage. So, he had an equal zeal for the improvement of vernacular, along with the introduction of the English language. Understanding of one’s own identity, Raja Rammohan Roy believed was necessary to accept an alien culture. So, he, with equal enthusiasm and passion made significant contributions in the field of the improvement of vernacular and wrote a number of tracts in Bengali, Sanskrit and Persian, Hindustani and English. He always held vernacular a language for forming public opinion and for the communication of public. Keeping in view the significant contributions of vernacular, he made effort for cultivation and promotion of vernacular by establishing ‘Sarvattwa Dipika Sabha’ at his Anglo Hindu School.

Raja Rammohan Roy’s Bengali grammar was free from mindless imitation of Sanskrit prose style, because, to him, grammar was not meant to “encase a language in a steel frame but to uncover its structure.” (Tagore, 1974, pp 60). In his philosophy he always stressed the fact that grammar of one language could not force upon another. He wrote Bengali grammar free from heavy complicated Sanskrit language. He did not copy his grammar from Sanskrit. That was his remarkable contribution and gave the proof of his extraordinary talents of producing Bengali grammar of high order.

5.2.8. Respect for Sanskrit Language

Raja Rammohan Roy had profound faith in the ancient language and literature of the Hindus, the Sanskrit, as one of the most pure and regularly formed languages of the world. He had shown his respect, love and regard for the Brahmins of learning as they used to lead a life of simplicity by residing in a small hut, by eating simple foods and vegetables, and by doing charity upon which they live. The opinion of Raja Rammohan Roy regarding the basis of true religion matched with such philosophy of Brahmins. Raja Rammohan Roy supported and respected that philosophy of simplicity of life, as held by the Brahmins. He as per the philosophy of the Brahmins, believed that true religion and true mentality did not belong to wealth, power, high names and lofty palaces but to simple living and high thinking. Another perspective for which he had a deep regard for that ancient language and literature was the indebtedness of the world
to our ancestors because of Science, Literature and Religion. He believed in the fact that the first dawn of knowledge sprang up in the East. He held the view that we possess ‘philosophical and copious language of our own’ (Collet, 1988, pp 208) which makes us distinct from other nations. But when the question of the progress of the country was raised, he had never supported that ancient classical language and had never accepted the proposal of establishing Sanskrit College in Calcutta. He was a man who could visualise the progressive future. So, in shaping his own personal religion, and in the question of benefits of his countrymen, he had never mixed up vague sentiments with rationality. He had never accepted anything which could be detrimental to the benefits of his countrymen. Such a dynamic multicentered personality Raja Rammohan Roy had.

5.2.9. Belief in the Latent Capabilities of the Hindus

Raja Rammohan Roy believed in the fact that his countrymen possessed the same capabilities and improvements as any other civilized people of the world, by virtue of which they could stand in the forefront of the nations of the world. However, for that position, it was necessary to provide them equal opportunity of education as the Europeans received. He had a firm faith in the inherent talents of his countrymen but at the same time knew it very well that they were deprived of proper advantage to exercise their latent capabilities. So, he claimed for same advantages and opportunities by the Indians to make fruitful use of their talents and skills. In his treatise “Brief Remarks regarding Modern Encroachments on the Ancient Rights of Females according to the Hindu Law of Inheritance” (Collet, 1988, pp 246) he also mentioned the same fact of equalization of educational opportunities. He actually had repeatedly advocated for western Science and literature through the medium of English for securing equal rights in education for his countrymen. He was fully confident of the inner power of natives, only he wanted an opportunity. Talent coupled with opportunity would surely bring good results. That was the lofty ideals of Raja Rammohan Roy.

5.2.10. Philosophy of New Learning in Lord Amherst’s Letter

A great sir and controversy between the viewpoints of Orientalists and Anglicists made it an urge for Raja Rammohan Roy to write his letter to Lord Amherst demanding
English education through the medium of English. The view point of Orientalists was in favour of the promotion of Oriental studies as opposed to the introduction and promotion of useful western learning demanded by the Anglicists. The chief among the Anglicists was Raja Rammohan Roy who always believed in desirable western education. His philosophy of western education and its efficacy were mainly reflected in his letter to Lord Amherst. However, His support for the modern western line of education was not at par with the sense of the Parliament.

Raja Rammohan Roy’s letter to Lord Amherst showed his regret for the establishment of Sanskrit College, as it would promote such knowledge as is already known. The letter was a formal statement or document of his philosophy which he put into practice and silently worked for the benefits of his countrymen. In securing the benefits of his fellow countrymen, he pleaded for new and western learning. He believed that nurturing or stimulating the cause of native education did not mean the establishment of more and more Sanskrit Colleges. Rather that decision of the Government, he believed would ruin the best years of the lives of the young natives in studying ‘philological niceties’ (Collet, 1988, pp 188). He expressed that the Government should look into the matter of useful learning, comprising the study of Sciences, not Hindu learning, which was meant for the study of Oriental subjects. He wanted to influence the General Committee of Public Instruction actually by his letter. As he knew that such committee could materialise his urge or appeal. Actually Raja Rammohan Roy was trying to convince the Governor General that a sound system of education was necessary looking at the demand of new age. For that reason, he protested the Governmental policy of establishing a Sanskrit system of education, and instead of that, he proposed for the introduction of liberal and enlightened system of education, having in its curriculum subjects like Mathematics, Natural Science, Philosophy, Chemistry, Anatomy and other useful Sciences. Those reflected his patronizing attitude.

Raja Rammohan Roy did not believe in an union of Hindu and western learning until the minds of his countrymen, which, at that time were deep buried under the heaps of superstition and medieval scholasticism, would be freed from all sorts of bondages and slumbers. Up to then he propagated for English language and English education. He was opposed to Hindu learning and did not believe in the traditional scholastic
education, as he knew that such education would promote a knowledge already known and already current in India. He rejected Oriental education as he believed that such education would block the mentality of the people and would be detrimental to the intellectual progress of the country. As against that Raja Rammohan Roy advocated the advantages of English education very ably to the Governor General. It would be wrong to denote him as a theistic philosopher, a ‘blind and bigoted theologians.’ (Sammaddar, 1911, pp 24). Through that letter, he earnestly made his laudable efforts in the introduction of English education.

The philosophy reflected behind his writing of a letter to Lord Amherst was a synthesis, synthesis of East and West. Synthesis of European Science and literature with eastern spirituality for raising the status of his countrymen. He demanded for a complete system of education for enlightenment. He made a plea to the Governor General for liberal modern education. Like a rationalist, he explained the necessity of such education in his letter to Lord Amherst. For promoting a liberal type of education, Raja Rammohan Roy followed the Lord Baconian philosophy, who worked hard for initiating the Science and scientific teaching, and by that, replaced the dark ages with the light of reason. Raja Rammohan Roy officially recognised the value of western education. Therefore recommended for the contents of education and the required mode of its transmission and ultimately expressed the extended help rendered by such type of education towards the benefits of his countrymen. He believed that westernization could only wake his countrymen from all sorts of superstitions and dogmatic slumber. Not only those, but also, he, with his realistic view when opined that at least two thirds of the population of Bengal were eager to see their children educated in new and western learning, was proved correct by the progress of Hindu College and other institutions which were there for the cause of English education. Such a realistic philosophy was obviously sustained by his sound reasoning power. He welcomed new learning, liberal scientific education and rational reasoning and sound vision. He refuted all irrational supports in favour of Oriental learning as obstacles to liberate education. By all his arguments, finally he was able to influence the decision of the Government and modern learning was introduced consequently. To ‘drag the country out of the stage of coma’. (Collet, 1988, pp 246). Raja Rammohan Roy advocated for long period of contact with the West and a long acquaintance with western Science and
culture. Knowing fully the causes of the decadent conditions of the society, he appreciated western civilization, western science and culture. Although he admired India’s rich past cultural heritage, but believed that a stage of decay to such heritage was due to traditional system of education.

From the point of view of the idea of progress and idea of modernity, actually Raja Rammohan Roy attacked the proposal of the Government for the establishment of Sanskrit College. He knew that such an idea could be materialised by the advancement of learning and by the wakening of enlightenment. His educational philosophy was working in that direction only. Raja Rammohan Roy was opposed to the mechanical teachings of Vedas, Upanishads and in other sacred books of the Hindus by the inefficient teachers and to the uselessness of Sanskrit language from the educational and intellectual ground. He added that if, indeed, it was the desire of the Government to promote Sanskrit for the valuable information it contains, it could be ensured by granting premiums and some allowances to those most eminent professors of Sanskrit Language as well as other branches of Sanskrit culture.

The usefulness of the language Sanskrit was put under doubt in Raja Rammohan Roy’s educational philosophy, especially when he considered the establishment of the place of his countrymen in the modern world, by removing all darkness. However, he believed that such a language teaching would shutter all progress derived from a liberal and enlightened system of education. Such was his philosophy in the field of modern education, which still today is significant from the view point of the shaping of educational policy. He was opposed to the policy of the company to diffuse the knowledge of Sanskrit among them. He knew that such policy would shutter all intellectual progress. The progress of Hindu College and other institutions established for promoting liberal education proved that such type of modern education was more preferred by the younger generation to traditional learning. That idea he actually wanted to transmit through his letter.

Raja Rammohan Roy’s philosophy of western education was for the enlightenment of his countrymen and for the intellectual advancement of Bengal. He was fully convinced of the benefits of western education and therefore showed his courage to oppose the official policy of non-intervention in the field of traditional learning. His foresight and
enlightened philosophy led to the preparation of Lord Macaulay’s Minute, which was in favour of English education. The minute was actually an elaboration of Raja Rammohan Roy’s authentic and rational philosophy which he put into that historic letter to the Lord.

5.2.10.1. Philosophy of Anglicist Influencing Lord Macaulay’s Minute

Raja Rammohan Roy protested for the establishment of ‘Sanskrit College’ in his letter to Lord Amherst from the viewpoint of the progress of the country. Actually his views were similar to that of an Anglicist. Those views of Rammohan Roy gave rise to Orientalists and Anglicists controversy. With due course of time, the controversy became so steep that it made the Government to think over the matter again. Ultimately the views of the Anglicists were materialised through Lord Macaulay’s Minute and subsequent Lord Bentinck’s verdict on English education. Lord Macaulay’s Minute was actually an official recognition of Raja Rammohan Roy’s views on European Science and literature through the medium of English. So, ultimately the Government also supported Raja Rammohan Roy’s rational philosophy. His noble ideas of the introduction of English education, his strong feeling for its efficacy and his strong favour for liberal modern type of education for regenerating his countrymen and for upholding their minds from narrow superstitions, all those lofty ideals of his philosophy were ultimately supported by the official policy.

Raja Rammohan Roy supported the language of English as the liberalizing force, which he believed could exalt western learning. He believed in the western component of new learning. That realization came into his mind as he studied comparative language and literature. He had derived the essence of his reformed theology from many texts written in the language of Sanskrit, so he had never intended to uproot the system of his own religion and philosophy. Rather he advocated a reformation from within. He only advocated for English education through the medium of the language English for providing a complete education.

5.2.11. Philosophy of Liberty, Freedom and Enlightenment of Native Journalism

Raja Rammohan Roy was the father of native journalism. The philosophy which was working behind his journalistic venture was enlightenment. He realised that native
journals should cover social, political, religious and educational topics. That reflected his philosophy of vastness. He, in his real paper *Sambad Kaumudi*’ made the scope of native journal wide. His *Sambad Kaumudi*’ was a weapon for rousing the inner consciousness of the people. He used it as a mouthpiece of prevalent social abuses and evils. *Sambad Kaumudi*’ made regular campaign against *Sati*. That campaign had a realistic philosophy of mobilising and enlightening public mind with practical and useful ideologies. Raja Rammohan Roy, through his paper, *Sambad Kaumudi*’ wanted to arouse public consciousness and wanted to upgrade their mind for the slow and gradual eradication of social absurdities. That philosophy of Raja Rammohan Roy was very real, practical and significant.

5.2.11.1. Newspaper- A Mouthpiece of Common People

The ideal philosophy working behind Raja Rammohan Roy’s move in journalism was freedom. He believed in the freedom of expressions. He had a firm faith in enlightening people’s mind by diffusing intellectual knowledge. He actually wanted to help his countrymen to cultivate their faculty of reason and liberty. He did not believe in the application of restrictions in speech and expressions.

Raja Rammohan Roy’s newspapers also worked with the motive of common public good. He started his newspaper for the benefits of the common public. He wanted to enlighten the common people regarding the happenings in society and education. Not only he made his newspapers as the organs of communicating local social, political and educational news, but also for conveying foreign occurrences. Through his newspapers, as a philanthropist, Raja Rammohan Roy wanted to eradicate many social impurities like prejudices of castes; practice of *Sati* and for many more. All those gave a proof of his educational and social awareness. He wanted to create controversy in those matter, as he knew very well that those social malpractices were detrimental from the view point of the progress of the society. He wanted to ameliorate the condition of the people. So, he supplied and conveyed information to the general and elite classes for their necessity and requirements. The lofty ideals with which Raja Rammohan Roy made his endeavour were the provision for guidance to his countrymen.
5.2.11.2. Freedom of Press

Raja Rammohan Roy was an adherent advocate of freedom. So, he championed the cause of freedom of native press. With his reasoning, rationality and sound arguments, he showed the importance of a free press and along with Dwarkanath Tagore, Prasanna Kumar Tagore and others, he took a leading role in the agitation for right. The philosophical beliefs regarding the restoration of a free press was his well awareness and concern regarding the rights and privileges of his countrymen. He always wanted to secure individual right and had always defended such rights. Therefore, Raja Rammohan Roy protested Governmental decision of curbing the freedom of the press. He, also with his sound reasoning established the fact that curtailing such freedom would hamper the progress and culture of the nation. That, he believed, would put a complete stop to the rational, liberal thinking and would prove the British as conquerors in the eyes of the natives. That feeling, Raja Rammohan Roy believed would be advisory to the impressions of the British rule. He was therefore, in favour of retaining the civil, religious, political and educational rights of the individuals. He disliked any blockage in the restoration of individual rights and securities.

5.2.12. Assessing the Educational Philosophy of Raja Rammohan Roy

Raja Rammohan Roy had truly inaugurated the new and enlightened ideas and ideals of the awakened West to secure the progress, comforts and benefits of his countrymen. To raise its country to a degree of honour and appreciation, Raja Rammohan Roy knew that a modern system of education progressive in outlook was necessary. An enlightened system of education, a liberal new learning, as per the philosophical beliefs of Raja Rammohan Roy was necessary to fight against the prevalent traditional oriental system of education, which he believed would block the progress, enlightenment and the knowledge of the country. The then oriental system of education, Raja Rammohan Roy knew could not rouse the mind of his countrymen against evil customs and rituals and therefore could not meet the requirements of the society.

Raja Rammohan Roy was a great philosopher, who had greatly realized that in view of the requirement of the age, revival of oriental system of education would be
insignificant. In place of such medieval scholastic education, Raja Rammohan Roy believed that a new and liberal type of modern education would be effective and appropriate. Otherwise, because of darkness and ignorance, men would continue observing mechanically all rites and rituals and accordingly would fail to secure their proper place among the modern nations of the world. He strongly criticised the then prevalent Sanskrit system of education as already common and not liberal or modern. Therefore, he believed that such traditional Sanskrit learning should be replaced by the new ideals of the West to remove all darkness and ignorance from the minds of his countrymen. For that reason, Raja Rammohan Roy vehemently opposed the official policy of establishing Sanskrit colleges and advocated for useful knowledge. He believed that such an enlightening system of education was necessary to secure right place for Indian among the modern civilization.

5.3. Conclusion

While discussing the philosophy of Raja Rammohan Roy, one should not forget that he was above all a reformer. He possessed a ‘noble patriotic mind, high moral character, stout and bold heart, as well as requisite knowledge of things and affairs of that time’ (Majumdar, 1983, introduction) with all those qualities Raja Rammohan Roy worked as a reformer and gave his reformatory activities a progressive outlook. In his reformatory activities, he accepted all that were conducive for overall progress of the nations and discarded everything that was old and irrelevant from the view point of the reason and rationality.

In the field of education, Raja Rammohan Roy tackled so many divergent educational problems and programmes with his intellect, sensitivity, farsightedness, perception and compassion. Because of those rare qualities Raja Rammohan Roy replaced ignorance and darkness by truth and reason. He was indeed the “master mind who saw that India’s progress was to be conditioned not by contemplation alone, but by action; not pessimism, but by self-realisation; not by isolation from the life of the West, but by healthy competition or cooperation with ......‖ (Barua, 1988, pp 91).

Raja Rammohan Roy was a man who converted the dismal age, the age full of
superstitions and prejudices, the age with darkness and ignorance into one which was based on true faith and reason.

Raja Rammohan Roy worked as a pioneer who tirelessly worked for raising his countrymen to a standard from which they could secure honour and prestige for them. He knew that the official policy was indifferent and consequently the then prevalent system of education was inadequate and irrelevant for meeting the demand of the age. He personally made tireless exertions in the field of enlightenment and ultimately mobilised the opinions of the Government and directed their attention towards a new and enlighten system of education. Though he was not alive, but ultimately his views regarding liberal education were taken up by Lord Macaulay and supported by Lord Bentinck. So, his educational philosophy, which was the foundations of his educational exertions, is still significant today.
References


- Ibid, Integration, Dynamism and Stagnation in Indian Culture, (pp 66-78).


- Das,Piyus Kanti.(1970).*Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Brahmaism*. Calcutta: Firma K K Mukhopadhyya


Ibid, Rammohan the Father of modern India, (pp 263-340).


“Rammohun Roy was at once a social reformer, the founder of a great religious movement and a great politician. These three activities were combined in him in such a way that they put to shame the performance of the best among us at the present time.”

Mahadev Govind Ranade