Chapter- IV

RESPONSE OF SOCIO - RELIGIOUS REFORMERS

The spread of western education and the import of liberal ideas of the west brought about an awakening among the intelligentsia. They were deeply convinced that some social and religious reforms were necessary for the growth of a healthy society. The desire for reforms received a further impetus owing to the onslaughts of the Christian missionaries who were active in the province. They realised that their religions in the existing form could offer no antidote to the Christian influences. They, thus, sought to strengthen the old by purifying it. As a result, many socio-religious organisations of the Hindus, the Muslims, and the Sikhs sprang up the province. All of these movements started as religious revivalist movements, but their protagonists promoted the cause of modern European scientific education in Punjab. They used scientific rationality as a tool for bringing about socio-cultural change in the society.

During the last decade of the nineteenth century the conditions in the Punjab were conducive to the growth of socio-religious organisations. In this region, the life was fast changing from traditional to modern, under the direct impact of new education, introduction of new technologies, import of liberal scientific ideas of the west, which brought about an awakening among the educated people. A section of Punjabis thus began to adopt themselves to the new conditions, leading to the formation of new intelligentsia, which gradually became aware of its role and responsibility, and thus also became critical of British rule.

The introduction of western science and technology had the potential to influence the social structure of Punjab. Contact with western science and technology, brought through the vehicle of English education and British administration, changed the outlook of people who had the opportunity to acquire this. But along with receiving this education, they also imbibed western values. It
affected them in two ways: firstly, they realised that Europeans looked down upon them. Secondly, the prevalent socio-religious system was unacceptable to them, as it clashed with their newly acquired values. These English-educated people felt alien in their own environment, because they had imbibed western values through education but westerners looked down upon them. They were deeply convinced that some social and religious reforms were necessary for the growth of a healthy society. The desire for reforms received a further impetus owing to the onslaughts of the Christian missionaries who were active in the province. The principle aim of Christianity was undoubtedly evangelical. They became pioneers of western education in Punjab. The challenge of Christianity alerted the numerically dominating communities of Punjab i.e. the Hindus, the Muslims, and the Sikhs to set their house in order. They realised that their religion in the existing form could offer no antidote to the Christian influence.

Actually, the western educated Punjabi elite were groping in the dark. On the one hand, this section was a misfit in its own society, on the other hand, the English society didn’t accept them, as its members regarded themselves scientifically and technically much more advanced and had all means to lead an enjoyable life. Such social isolation led to non-existence of any means of expression and created an atmosphere of tension and frustration. The deprived Punjabi intelligentsia began to look for an organisation, which could not only solve their social religious and economic problems but also provide them with a common platform from where they could meet, express, and discuss their problems. Many socio-religious organisations sprang up in the British Punjab among Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. The most important amongst them were the the Arya Samaj (1875), the Singh Sabha (1873), and the Ahmadiya Movement (1868). All these movements were considered to be the expression of renaissance among the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs, respectively. But

they were not willing to adopt western culture in toto. For their cultural survival, they chose the alternative of selective modernisation of their tradition.

In Punjab, British Raj and the Christian missionaries\textsuperscript{2} advanced side-by-side soon after annexation in 1849. The United Presbyterian Mission, the Cambridge Mission, the Baptist Mission and Ludhiana Mission were very active in Punjab\textsuperscript{3}. These missionaries played a very important role in providing training in technological apparatus of appropriate social organisation, linguistic and institutional models to social reform leaders of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims in the Punjab. It had unintended implication for change in their conceptualisation of religion and its linkage with worldly goals including economic and political\textsuperscript{4}.

To propagate the gospel, missionaries opened many missionary schools and introduced print-technology to the people of Punjab. In 1835, Ludhiana Mission set up a printing press\textsuperscript{5}. The founder of Ludhiana Mission, William Jones and Jones Newton, played a major role in the introduction of knowledge of print technology. Instead of importing skilled technicians from Europe, John Newton was the in charge of Ludhiana Mission Press, had trained the young inmates of Christian orphanages and the boys from untouchable and lower castes. These Indian apprentices, who honed their skills while printing Christian propaganda, gradually learnt to operate founts in Punjabi, Urdu Persian without direct missionary supervision\textsuperscript{6}.

The socio-religious reformers became acutely aware of the powerful role of the print technology in the persistent and aggressive missionary offensive on the religious beliefs, knowledge system and social institutions of all the three communities. Their perception of the long-term involvement of the missionaries

\textsuperscript{4} Kamlesh Mohan, 'Technology and Religion', p.264.
\textsuperscript{5} Gazetteer of the Ludhiana District 1888-89, (Calcutta, n.d.), pp. 74-76.
\textsuperscript{6} Kamlesh Mohan, 'Technology and Religion', p.264.
in the imperial project of cultural hegemonisation and multiple subjugation of the Indian people was based on mission literature and official publications\(^7\). After knowing about the organisational skill of printing press, the intelligentsias of Punjab were eager to use printing press for adjusting themselves in a new colonial milieu. Muslims, non-Muslims quickly adopted this new technique to further their interests. Despite the increased job opportunities, created by new education policy, new technology and new patterns of trade, the urban Punjabi realised that the colonial rule was not a straight blessing. They all needed a psychological security, which could bolster their vague identity and self-esteem.

The Punjabi Hindu and Sikh intellectuals, after initial acceptance of Brahma Samaj (established in 1863), found it difficult to identify with its socially radical, syncretistic, rational and theistic ideology as an alternative. They discovered their new faith and identity through Swami Dayanand (1824-1884), the founder of the Arya Samaj, who expounded Arya Samaj ideology in the course of his lectures at Lahore in 1877\(^8\). By giving an integrated view of India’s past, present and future, the wandering ascetic provided intellectual reassurance and pride to first generation of middle-class Hindus and imparted dignity to their identity, being constantly undermined by the colonial regime and the Christen missionaries. Through Arya principles, philosophy and programme which encompassed doctrinal issues, socio-religious reform, uplift of women, regeneration of Hindu nation by education, popularisation of Hindi, \textit{shuddhi} and \textit{Swadeshi}, he had offered a wide option of areas of action to each person according to his preference and class-interest\(^9\).

\footnotesize{Swami Dayanand developed his communication strategy for the propagation of his ideas and beliefs. His lengthened interaction with the anglicised Indians, particularly, Brahmos in Calcutta played an important role in}

\footnotesize{\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{Ibid.}, p. 265.
\item The Arya Samaj was founded in Bombay in 1875, and in Lahore in June 1877. It was avowedly antagonistic to Christianity and was designed not only to withstand the Christian attacks on Hinduism but also to launch a counter attack on it. It adopted the Christi\^8. Kamlesh Mohan, ‘Technology and Religion’, pp. 264-265.
\end{itemize}}
the transformation of his ideology and reform strategies. Earlier, he used traditional forms of public debate or *shashtrath* and education. It may be pointed out that the Calcutta experience had transformed him from an ascetic into an action-oriented socio-religious reformer who discarded Sanskrit in favour of Hindi and privileged printed word over traditional modes. He expressed his ideas in *Satyarth Prakash* - a comprehensive statement of his beliefs. First published in 1875, revised and reprinted in 1884, this book was to become a major influence on the thinking of Hindus in the Punjab and North-Western India.

From 1875 onwards, Swami Dayanand fully concentrated upon propaganda through press and platform. By establishing an apex body called *Propkarini Sabha* on 16 August 1880 at Meerut, he had ensured the protection of his intellectual property rights. Apart from his influential book *Satyarth Prakash*, he had written lucid commentaries on *Vedas, Upanishads* and on other significant religious books, as well as conduct-books such as *Sanskar Vidhi* and many tracts in order to mould the thinking, attitudes and behaviour patterns of men and women for knitting them into a religious community. It was through the use of print technology that Swami Dayanand’s message reached the educated people who carried it to the other literate and the illiterate men and women through lectures and readings.

Later, Swami Dayanand was compared to Martin Luther, who denounced the corruption of priest craft and sought to restore the authority of the Vedas. Although he also had realised the practical value of western science and technology, yet he continued to consider Vedic knowledge superior to western knowledge. On the introduction of new scientific subjects in newly opened government schools and colleges by the British government, provoked Swami

10. Ibid.
11. Ibid. 
12. Ibid., pp.267-268.
Dayanand to respond in a cynical way. He claimed that the Vedas contained all sciences including the science of religion as well as science of matter, and also emphasised the role of Sanskrit as an essential tool for acquiring its proper knowledge. The proper knowledge of Sanskrit was acquired with the aid of linguistic tools provided by the grammars of Panini and Patanjali. But in those days, English language became popular among people as it was considered a key to know western science and technology upon which the prosperity of the world depended. The knowledge of English was also helpful for acquiring government jobs. New technological projects like railways, telephones etc. were attracting people towards western science and technology, who in return, were trying to adjust themselves to the new environment. They had all praise for the British government and its technologies.

Under such circumstances, Swami Dayanand persuaded people by saying ‘Everything worth knowing even the most recent inventions of modern science and technology, were alluded to in the Vedas like steam-engines, railways and steam-boats’. In his introduction to the commentary on the Vedas, Dayanand has discussed at length, the question of airships, and steam-driven cars. Because many educated Hindus show reluctance in studying ancient books. They preferred their children to get western knowledge and education either through the government or the missionary schools. At this juncture, Swami Dayanand tried to reassert the pride of the Hindus by citing the achievements of their ancestors, such as, the fact that the laws of gravitation, cosmology, algebra,

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geometry were contained in the Vedas. He felt pained to see the deplorable condition of his motherland and looked askance at the foreign rule, foreign religion, and foreign culture, foreign influence—indeed everything foreign. He believed that education, moral regeneration and industries developed on indigenous lines were the primary three remedies, which could help India to gain its original glories of Vedic age.

Thus, he strove to prove that Vedic knowledge was superior to western knowledge and whatever inventions were made by the western nations in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, were all based on ancient Vedic knowledge written in India about 5000 years ago.

Swami Dayanand was also a forceful advocate of Swadeshi. He said that though the early national leaders were well intentioned but they had borrowed too heavily from the west. He strongly believed that no nation could build its edifice on a foreign foundation. He made a fervent appeal to his countrymen to take pride in their land and things made by their own brethren in preference to the ones made in other countries. He also favoured undertaking sea voyages for commercial purposes and blamed Brahmins for putting restrictions on them. He held that it was due to this reason that India lost its contact with other countries of the world. According to him, such a practice affected not only India’s economy but also made it unaware of what was happening in other parts of the world on the one hand, and on the other, it passed on the trading rights in the hands of British power which had been detrimental to a India’s commercial interest.

He warned that the western educated people were imitating the British lifestyle as a mark of advancement. He advised them not to copy the west blindly and asked them to think carefully before doing anything, lest they should repent afterwards. Dayanand exclaimed that wearing of boots, jackets, and trousers,

18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
living in hotels and eating out of hands of all were not the causes which led to the advancement of British. Rather he felt their success was attributable to the facts like absence of the custom of child marriage, imparting sound education, deliberate action in place of impulsive acts, their readiness to sacrifice everything including life for their nation. On one occasion, while addressing an audience of Indians educated in the west he stated, 'the British have been in this country for more than 100 years and yet they wear thick clothing, up to this day, as they used to do at home, They have not changed the fashion of their country but many among you have copied their dress. This shows that you are foolish, while they are wise. No wise man will ever imitate others (blindly). They allow boots and shoes made in their country to be taken into courts and offices, but never Indian shoes.'

He was very critical of educated elites of the towns and cities who had by and large, opted for western way of life. He opined that they wore clothes made in England, ate foreign food, and had foreign furniture in their houses. They considered British rule to be a blessing for them. They could not think of anything like Swarajya. He declared that such slavish imitation of the west could not solve India's problem.

Dayanand felt that it was due to ignorance that Indians imitated western culture. He warned westernised Indians that they would end up as being neither Indians nor western and would lose on both sides. The best way to overcome its situation, according to him, was to 'go back to the Vedas' and to revive the glorious past of Aryavarta. Dayanand tried to show the prevalence of same science and technology in Vedas about which British boasted. He was of the view that India could not make any real progress under foreign imported science and technology. His teachings attempted to eradicate the social evils prevalent in the Punjabi society. At the same time he tried to inculcate in them a scientific

outlook and to propagate the concept of Swaraj, which he considered to be the only way to achieve happiness and prosperity 24.

He stressed that education and industry must develop on an indigenous lines 25. He was the first who stressed on the use of swadeshi things on large scale in India. By swadeshi he meant to develop indigenous science and technology, which in turn, would bring prosperity in India and make people able to overthrow the British in India. Dayanand’s ideas were very much liked by the people of Punjab. Besides leading Hindus in defense of their culture and religious ideals, Dayanand preached reformed Hinduism more palatable to western educated Punjabis who were embarrassed by the polytheism and caste practices of popular Hindus. A direct message of monotheism on the authority of the Vedas tended to place the modern Hindu religion on the same plane as Christianity or Islam. Caste reforms and simplified rituals also removed the most offensive aspect of Hinduism. According to Prakash Tondon, Arya Samaj opposition to orthodoxy and idol worship, and its revival of Vedic rituals in modern form, without temples and priests, made a direct appeal to the Punjabi intelligentsia 26. The Arya Samaj was, in short, a fusion of east and west which permitted educated Hindus to accept new patterns of life without denying the validity of their ancient heritage and culture. It is noteworthy that very soon the Arya Samaj came to exert an influence among the commercial and professional class of Punjab. These classes later became the strongest supporter of provincial and nationalist political activity 27.

After the death of Swami Dayanand, the credit for launching organised Swadeshi movement in Punjab, goes to three distinguished Arya Samajists, viz, Lala Mulraj, Lajpat Rai and Lal Chand in the 1890s, they began to open their own modernised commercial establishments. In order to popularize the cause of Swadeshi, Mulraj delivered a series of lectures, promoted the use of Swadeshi and found the Swadeshi Vastu Pracharini Sabha – A Society for the development of indigenous good in 1893. He also founded a journal Swadeshi Vastu Pracharak in Hindi and English to promote the objects of Sabha. He also laid stress on industrial and technical education and undertook the task to lay the foundation of a modern bank on indigenous lines and also founded the Bharat Insurance Company to feed the Indian industrialists.

In response to modern western industries set up by British, in late 1895, the Arya Samajists with the help of their own banks set up a number of Swadeshi societies and small industries. Arya interest in local industry became more pronounced late in 1895, when the Indian government placed an excise tax on Indian cotton goods. Aryas considered the tax an effort to cripple the infant cotton industry and helped establish swadeshi associations which circulated pledges to wear only deshi (Indian made) cloth. They also founded small industries.

Aryas had become so enthusiastic about the cult of Swadeshi that they launched a vigorous campaign against the use of foreign sugar by organising meetings. It was at their instance that Thakur Hari Krishan Singh – Honorary Magistrate and proprietor of village Kishankot, directed all the shopkeepers living in his village to discontinue the sale of foreign sugar. As a result no foreign sugar was procurable in his village but also in the neighbouring villages.

28. For objectives of Swadeshi Vastu Pracharini Sabha, See, the first issue of the Swadeshi Vastu Pracharak, January 11, 1896.
30. Home Political Department, Proceedings 13 August, 1907, No. 135-145.
Lala Lajpat Rai, a prominent Arya Samajist, also advocated the use of Swadeshi and delivered a lecture against the use of foreign sugar\textsuperscript{31}. He stressed that the Indian economy should become self-sufficient. 'Back to the Vedas' was the call of Swami Dayanand, but it was repudiated by Lala Lajpat Rai\textsuperscript{32}. For the progress of country and Swadeshi movement, he preferred the knowledge of foreign languages to Sanskrit. In his words, 'The advanced knowledge and its resultant wisdom are all present in foreign languages. Every year, every month nay everyday in the year, it is making further progress. So much so that a book dealing with sciences becomes almost out of date within a year unless a new edition is produced with up-to-date improvements. Any one who does not want to fall behind others can afford to neglect, the knowledge of these sciences which can only be studied effectively for at least number of years in foreign languages'. He further added that 'if India's trade and commerce are to be carried on by Indians and not by foreigners, and if the Indian people are to profit from them, it is necessary that our traders and commercial men should know as many modern languages as may be possible for them to acquire first in schools and then out of it. The bulk of nation must be engaged in agriculture, in manufacturing or business. For all these purposes, knowledge of the modern languages is almost a necessity'\textsuperscript{33}.

Finally, it may be inferred that different Arya Samajists’ response to new inventions made by British government was heterogeneous. They even went beyond the aspirations of Swami Dayanand in founding many schools and colleges for the propagation of Vedic and Hindi tradition\textsuperscript{34}. Like government schools, they also constructed special buildings for education. They had fully realised the importance of western science and technology to further the


progress of country. The schools and colleges opened by them became important centres of western scientific and technical education and also of old system of Ayurvedic medicine and classical Sanskrit. But for running the Ayurvedic classes, they adopted modern western methods like reserving plots for growing herbs. Their medium of instruction was both English and Sanskrit. But these systems of education were not liked by some Arya Samajists, which resulted in the division of Arya Samaj into College party and Gurukul Party. Arya Samajists exhibited so much interest in modern science and technology that in April 1884, with the help of J.C. Oman, Professor of Government College, Lahore, they opened ‘Arya Samaj Science Institution’. The acceptance of science and its allied technology rested on functionalism. Psychological acceptance of science, in turn, rested on belief in the Arya view of the past, in the Hindu origins of science. A new mythology of antiquity legitimised adaptation of modern technology and scientific knowledge.

Modern scientific and technological projects such as telegraphs, railways etc. became so popular among the Arya Samajists that even leaders of Arya Gurukul Party like Swami Shradranand, the first Indian professor of Government College, Lahore, and founder of Gurukul institution established on the model of ancient Taxila University, could not insulate himself and his institution form the influence of western science and technology. In this school, a separate class for the study of western literature and modern science was organised where English was also taught in order to keep the students in touch with the thoughts and activities of the world. They had installed telephone, and wireless telegraphy in the laboratory. The library was supplied with a large number of books by foreign

36. Regenerator of Aryavarta, April, 14, 1884, p.5.
39. Earlier, he left D.A.V. college due to its instruction through English and spread of western knowledge. To him, all this was not conforming to the ideals of Swami Dayanand. See Shyamla Bhatia, Social Change And Politics in Punjab, p. 130.
authors' like Bacon, Locke, Goethe, Emerson, Martine Malice and Sir Oliver Lodge etc\textsuperscript{41}.

The experiments with the print media were also made by the individual Aryas, who published tracts, periodicals, dailies, and pamphlets on specific issues. With them, effective communication with the potential audience came. The important Samaj periodicals were the \textit{Arya} started and edited by Lala Rattan Chand Barry (Lahore) in 1882 and the \textit{Regenerator of Aryavarta} (1882) English weekly. This journal was devoted to Aryan's philosophy, art, science, literature, religion and embracing the views and opinions of its readers on these topics. The news and periodicals became an important means of communication among the people and Arya Samajists even when they were not face-to-face. They communicated every week with thousands of people whom they had never seen. Through the mail, they could also hear, what their readers thought about their ideas. The various print institutions acted as a social forum bringing people into active contact with each other and the leaders of Arya Samaj. So we can say that print technology played an important role in recasting Hindu consciousness which became visible in the Aryan mobilisation of public opinion regarding the radical reform of life-cycle rituals which would separate their social universe from that of Sanatanists. They made their press campaign for two issues requiring wide acceptance of new death rituals and marriage reform. They were successful in getting recognition of their new rituals from the public. Even the most sensitive issues like widow – remarriage was given full support by the non-Aryan Hindus. For locating widows willing to marry, new publications appeared, namely \textit{the Social Reformer} and \textit{Marriage Advertiser}. The outcome of these two publications were the remarriage of an Aurora couple on 10\textsuperscript{th} September 1885 and of a Brahmin widow on 22\textsuperscript{nd} August 1886. Through newspaper notices, reports and meetings turned into grand public events. It was indicative of attitudinal change among the high castes\textsuperscript{42}.

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{42} Kamlesh Mohan, 'Technology and Religion', p.274.
Obviously, printing technology had enabled the literate Punjabis to engage in a continuous dialogue with the editors and the other readers, belonging to gradually emerging new socio-cultural groups among the Hindu of north India. People began increasingly using the printed words for reforming the Hindu tradition. Their growing awareness of the crucial link between scientific knowledge including technological expertise and socio-cultural change led the English-educated Punjabis to invest in the development of infrastructure. It included moveable typesets founts for vernacular languages, equipment for lithography and iron-printing machines for the publication of newspapers, periodicals, posters, pamphlets and tracts with suitable illustrations. Thus, there was a dramatic increase in the number of newspapers and periodicals.

We can conclude that Arya Samaj was one of the pioneer movements in adopting western techniques and technology as a means for the spread of its indigenous goals. Swami Dayanand and other Aryan leaders used modern scientific and technical tools to propagate their ideas of Swadeshi. Their response seemed to be a judicious mixture of acceptance and rejection of the new scientific and technical education and projects.

The Singh Sabha was the other movement which arose as a result of the Sikh intelligentsia’s contact with the western education and institutions. The transfer of political power to the British in 1849 led to the transformation of the world in which the Sikhs and other Punjabis had lived. The challenge of western science, Christian ethics and humanitarianism had provoked self-examination and reinterpretation of religious belief and praxis, the result was the rise of Singh Sabha movement.

The introduction of science and technology injected changes into Punjabi Society. The British rule and the education of Sikh students in Dayanand Anglo Vedic College and Christian schools led to the formation of Singh Sabha. In 1873...
was established at Amritsar the first Sri Guru Singh Sabha to restore Sikhism to its pristine glory and to propagate current knowledge using Punjabi as a medium. Sikh traditional intellectuals, chiefs, Sardars etc. dominated the Amritsar Singh Sabha. They were very much affected by the transitions in social norms and cultural ideals under colonial rule. Indeed, it may be argued that the impact of British rule on their lives was far more complex and long lasting. They began to settle for a gradual caution and reflexive cultural dialogue with new order. They organised debates, established voluntary bodies and mastered the techniques of a print culture by publishing a steady stream journals, tracts, newspapers and books. They hoped to learn the ways and techniques of the west and then to use them to maintain and reproduce customary culture. The printing technology was utilised by them as the major instrument for inspiring faith and commitment among Sikh population to Sikh Guru’s ideals and for an effective implementations of its programme of socio-religious reform and for fixing identity and position of the Sikhs in India and in relation to other communities.

But Amritsar Singh Sabha less than five years after its formation, exhibited signs of fatigue it did not succeeded in bringing reforms among Sikhs. The other communities like Hindus and Muslims were making much progress they were doing a lot of work to get their community members highly educated and raised their standard by opening science institutes and scientific societies. The Singh Sabha Amritsar, on the other hand, was engaged only in sending petitions to the government to get their demands accepted. For young Sikhs from the new elites, largely born in post-annexation Punjab and brought up under the shadow of the British, the Amritsar Sabha appeared dormant. As Amritsar Singh Sabha was no match for the spectacular success of the Arya Samaj founded in 1877 by Dayanand at Lahore. The Samaj proved so popular that within a month, its

46. Ibid., p. 218.
47. Report Sri Guru Singh Sabha Lahore, 10 April, 1880, p. 6.
membership shot up by 300 percent. The setting up of a library and a Sanskrit School followed this success. By the time the Swami was ready to leave Punjab in July 1878, he had founded eleven Samajs in Punjab. The Lahore Samaj became a model for the subsequent Samajs. As the ideology of the Samaj based on western scientific thought, it attracted large western educated people who were eager to make their place in the new atmosphere and society set-up by British. The reformatory zeal of the Arya Samaj initially attracted many Sikhs like Ditt Singh, Jawahir Singh and Maya Singh. What the Arya Samaj managed to achieve in barely fifteen months, the Amritsar Sabha failed to attain in six years. The Samaj leadership was mostly made up of men who had no background in Anglo-Vernacular education and the intricacies of print culture coming from the established social classes; they were incapable of voicing the aspirations of an embryonic class.

Within a year and three months of Swami Dayanand's departure from Punjab, the Sikhs set up a Singh Sabha at Lahore. The impetus for the new Sabha came from two teachers: Gurmukh Singh and Bhai Harsa Singh both working at the Lahore Oriental College. As discussed earlier, Lahore Oriental College was established for the revival of Oriental learning and spread of modern western science in vernacular languages i.e. Urdu and Persian only. Punjabi language had no place in Oriental College. Lahore Sabha concluded that the absence of Punjabi as a medium of instructions is the main reason for backwardness of Sikhs, who mostly spoke Punjabi. There was no translation of any European literary scientific works in Punjabi. Western science now began to be considered a tool for prosperous and healthy life. Arya Smajists had already set up Arya Science Institute, and Muslims under Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan set up Scientific Societies at Gazipur in 1864. On the other hand the Amritsar Singh Sabha did not take any initiative to establish such type of societies. As a result,


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the Sikhs lagged behind Hindus and Muslims in every walk of life. Therefore, the new Sikh activist (Professor Gurmukh Singh and Harsa Singh) fully grasped the relevance of western science and technology in the context of colonial rule and sought the help of colonial officials. The latter, having their vested interests, quickly responded. G.W. Leitner, the architect of Anjuman-i-Punjab and Oriental College, Lahore, inspired Gurmukh Singh to give practical shape to the education programme of the Singh Sabha. Singh Sabha Lahore acted unitedly with the Anjuman-i-Punjab in the defense of the educational policy of the Punjab Government for revival of Oriental science, literature and the spread of European science to vernacular languages.

Print Technology played an important role for recasting Sikh consciousness. Through newspapers, periodicals and pamphlets, a wide publicity made to the exemplary conduct of the Sikhs by Lahore Singh Sabha which created lasted impact on public mind. Leaders of Lahore Singh Sabha successfully through print technology constructed religious boundaries between the Sikhs and other religious communities. Easy availability of printed material and its wider, circulation had facilitated the movement of news, ideas and the demonstration effect of a radical social action beyond narrow territorial boundaries. Through the publication of numerous editions and extensive distribution of copies of Khalsa Samachar, Khalsa Akhbar, Singh Sabha Gazette, Lyall Khalsa Gazette, Punjab Durpan etc., daily lives of a sizeable number of urban-educated as well as semi-literate Sikhs were disciplined.

Sikh commentators had generally been loyal to the British. Newspapers sometimes criticised specific official actions, but always in subdued tone. Constitutional reform and the specter of separate electorates based on sectarian affiliation raised question of how to organise and gain political influence. Immediate issues such as control of Sikh institutions and the internal operation of the Khalsa College brought them into conflict with a government hitherto considered benevolent. The natural consequence was political commentary and a crescendo of hostile writings on British administration. Leaving aside the shrill
call to revolution of Ghadar writers in America, the shift in emphasis and tone of Sikh journalism did not occur suddenly. The time-tested network of tract societies and newspapers stood ready, and when the dual explosion of Jallianwala Bagh and Guru Ka Bagh thrust Sikhs into a new era of political experience, Sikh journalism came to the forefront, making a decisive shift from self-critical and socio-religious discussion to active political participation.  

For Singh Sabha leaders of Lahore, print technology became a powerful channel to encounter the anti-Sikh propaganda of apostates and co-religionists, Qadini Mirzais, Christian missionaries and Arya samajists contentions and maintained that theologically and historically the Sikhs had separate socio-religious identity. It supported all issues which perpetuated this connection; a reference may be made to its role in getting the identity in Anand Marriage Bill passed. It published memoranda addresses and speeches of some of the prominent Sikhs leaders and intellectuals and displayed the support of various sections of Sikhs, especially of mahants, pujaris and sarbhras of Sikh temples and Takhats. Through its editorials and other articles, it tried to remove some of the doubts and misunderstanding created by the opponents of the bill among the Sikhs and justified the necessity of such a bill providing historical and theological rationality.  

The second problem which engrossed the newspapers seriously was an impending danger of proselytisation carried on by the counterparts of the Sikhs. In its eyes, Arya Samajists were arch enemies. No less dangerous were Qadyani Mirzians and Christian missionaries. The newspapers condemned conversions and gave statistics of converted Sikhs or proposed to be converted. Besides, through Singh Sabha Lahore drew the attentions of Sikh leaders and local organisations to the areas where the common Sikhs became victims of

52. The Khalsa Samachar, 11 November,1908.
53. Ibid.,January 6,1909.
54. Ibid.,June 10,1905.
To stem their tide, they appealed the Panth to raise Khalsa institutions and accelerate their own efforts. Above all, it made strong appeal to sardars, zaildars, nambardars, and safedposh to adopt a liberal and sympathetic attitude towards raihias and ramdasias. Otherwise they would continue to be the victims of coreligionists. Similar, appeals also came from the Sikh Sangats^[55].

Press also took some of other issues from time to time. For instance, it asked the government to permit the Sikh students to wear turban, instead of putting on a cap while appearing in medical examination competition, removing restrictions on the possession of kirpan of a long size and raising wall of Rakabganj Gurdwara at its original place^[56]. However, in their mode of advocating the problems or issues, Singh Sabha Lahore was moderate. The demand for the due representation on the different bodies or ameliorative measures, it asked for the reward of the service rendered by the Sikhs to the British. It did not claim them as a matter of right. On the hand, it preached loyalty to government, without bothering about the good or bad and reasonable or unreasonable attitude of the government. Having full faith in the just rule of parental government; it published speeches and addresses of those prominent leaders which made Sikhism synonymous with loyalty^[57]. Moreover, Diwans were held to propagate the Angreji Raj dian barkatan and Akhandpaths were solemnised for the long age of the Viceroy and the British Raj. No efforts were spared to support the British during the World War^[58]. The other instance of their loyalty to the British government published in Khalsa Akhbar that^[59]:

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[^55]: Ibid., June 17, 1909.
[^56]: Ibid., November 11, 1908, p. 6.
[^57]: Khalsa Samachar, April 29, 1909.
[^58]: Ibid., November 20, 1913.
One leading member of Singh Sabha, Bhagat Lakshman Singh admitted that ‘India owes a deep debt of gratitude to Christian missionaries and British officials for the light of religion and education that they brought to many parts of their country and for the social and political awakening in the masses that came in their wake. The Indian social reformers should be thankful to the Christian missionaries for providing them with an incentive in the field of education and social reform to ameliorate the condition of less privileged brethren. It was the foreign Christian missionaries who first lit the torch of renaissance in India by the ntroduction of western scientific knowledge through printed press and printed books imported from beyond the sea’.  

Other technological project undertaken by Singh Sabha was the electrification of Golden temple. Whether or not electricity be inducted into the Golden Temple premises was a raging polemic in the closing years of the nineteenth century. There were views pro and con, and the debate was joined by both sides vehemently-and unyieldingly. As was then the style of making controversies, religious and social, no holds were barred and no acrimonious word spared to settle the argument. If tradition and usage were drawn upon by opponents, need to move with the times was urged by the supporters, pejoratively called biji bhaktas, devotees of electricity.

The initiative came from the Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Amritsar. At its 23rd annual session, on 26 January 1896, it made a formal resolution recommending the installation of electricity in the Golden Temple. Sardar Sundar Singh Majithia told the audience that Sri Harmandar which was in beauty the very image of

“baikunth”, i.e. paradise, by day was shrouded in darkness by night. Many holy and old people who came to pay homage late in the evening or in the small hours of the morning suffered injury owing to lack of lighting. Electric light would, pleaded Sardar Sundar Singh, enhance the glory of the Golden Temple and prove a boon to the visiting devotees.

Col. Sardar Javala Singh, the officially appointed manager of the Golden Temple, and Master Narain Singh of Khalsa High School, Gujranwala, endorsed Sardar Sundar Singh’s proposal. An 11-member committee, with Sardar Bahadur Sardar Arjan Singh as president was set up to carry through the plan. The committee secured the support of influential men in the Sikh community such as Baba Sir Khem Singh Bedi, Rai Bahadur Sardar Sujan Singh of Rawalpindi and Sardar Balwant Singh of Attari. Subscription lists were opened and fund raising started in towns and villages.

The lighting committee sent a deputation to meet Raja Bikram Singh of Faridkot who was the patron of the Khalsa Diwan of Amritsar and helped religious and public causes. Col. Javala Singh and Sardar Sundar Singh Majithia, who led the group to Faridkot, returned with an assurance from the Maharaja for financial support. At a meeting held at Akal Takht on 25th April 1897, three of the courtiers sent by the Maharaja of Faridkot announced on his behalf that, in commemoration of the uninterrupted 60-years rule of Queen Victoria, he would have electricity installed in the Golden Temple premises at a cost of Rs. twenty thousand. After this the opposition raised its head and in May 1897, three granthis of golden Temple served a registered notice on Sardar Sundar Singh Majithia, secretary of the lighting committee, censuring the scheme.

On 22nd June 1897, the Diamond Jubilee was observed by Sikhs in Amritsar, Kanvar Gajendra Singh, son of the Maharaja of Faridkot, participated in the celebrations. On this occasion, electricity was displayed in the Golden

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Temple by importing temporarily into the precincts the private generator belonging to Rai Dhola Das.

The Maharaja of Faridkot visited Amritsar on 14th August 1897, and, at a public meeting of the Sikhs, announced a donation of Rs. 1 lac for electricity as well as for a new building for Guru Ka Langar. Part of the money was invested in a generating set and accessories.

The opponents had not been idle. On 29th July 1897, the executive committee of the Lahore Singh Sabha placed on record its disapproval of the proposal. The three Golden Temple granthis, Bhai Harnam Singh, Bhai Bhagat Singh and Bhai Partap Singh, published a letter in the Khalsa Akhbar of Lahore, 27 August 1897, openly attacking the proposal. Argument upon argument was marshaled to show the utter inappropriateness of inducting electricity into the sacred premises. The article was repeated in a tract entitled Bijli Bidaran ('Demolition of Electricity').

Electricity was dangerous. To substantiate the point, allusion was made to the title of Government enactment of 1887 which ran as follows: An act to provide for the protection of person and property from the risks incident to the supply and use of electricity for lighting and other purposes. Another extract quoted was from the Civil and Military Gazette of Lahore, 27th October 1897: ‘Several persons in America have lost their lives in various cities through coming in contact with electric light and power wires’.

Instances were mentioned of the damage caused by electricity to a factory in Dharival and the disorder created at the inaugural ceremonies for the opening of Sirhind canal. The granthis argued that there was no precedent of electricity having been installed either in Bethlehem or in Kaaba. Of more than 1500 churches in London, not one had been electrified – not even Westminster Abbey. Thirdly, it was urged, custom and tradition sanctioned only illumination of ghee. Electricity was sheer extravagance. Its dazzle would hinder concentration and
meditation. As a coup de grace, the point was pressed that electric light was western and the building of Harmandar eastern. The two were contradictory.

The granthis were backed by pujaris of Takht Sri Abchal Nagar at Nanded, who rejected all other lighting except that by ghee which alone had the necessary sanctity. Babu Teja Singh of Bhasaur, a leading figure in the Singh Sabha renovation, contributed a letter to the Khalsa Akhbar, 3 September 1897 to make the point that the real light the Sikhs needed was for the elimination of distinctions of caste in the community. For Harmandar, lighting by ghee, permitted by their eastern custom, was the most appropriate. Another correspondent in a letter in the Khalsa Akhbar 27 August 1897 had stated that he had enquired from the Archbishop of Punjab and learnt that there was no electric light in St. Peter’s or in St. Paul’s. He also recalled the criticism made by Englishmen themselves who termed the Gothic-style clock-tower beside the Golden Temple a monstrosity. Western light inside the Temple would be similarly offensive, he concluded. Sant Khalsa Dyal Singh of Hoti Mardan joined the fray with an angrily written pamphlet. He said that splitting the roof or walls of the temple to fix electric wiring would be a sacrilege.

In its editorial on 6 August 1897, the Khalsa Akhbar commented that the Golden Temple was not a museum to which people had to be allured by such meretricious display. On 20 August 1897, it praised the Maharaja of Faridkot for his munificence in providing funds for electricity, but satirised his friends who had counselled him this kind of extravagance.

In the Khalsa Akhbar of 6th August 1897, Sri Guru Singh Sabha of Jalandhar published a note in support of the granthis. One of the questions raised was: ‘What will happen if the engine went out of order’? In its editorial the same day, the Khalsa Akhbar wrote: ‘what the Sikhs needed were the light of the Guru’s word rather than that of electricity’.
Electricity, when it came, did appear a novelty. Visiting the Golden Temple after an interval of 16 years, Dr. John Campbell Oman Who had been a Professor at Government College at Lahore (1877-97) and Principal of the Khalsa College at Amritsar (1898-99), referred to it in these terms: ‘the garish electric light, installed on the temple itself amidst the old-world cheraghs, looking like an ill-mannered, obtrusive upstart completely out of its proper element’.

The advocates of bijli had won. But the controversy left behind a trail of bitterness. Essentially, it was a conflict between the Lahore and Amritsar wings of the Singh Sabha who were mutually hostile. But, surprisingly, the Lahore group which styled itself more progressive and decried the Amritsar group for its ‘conservatism’ was foremost in opposing electricity. Yet it was not able to obstruct the march of events. Electricity would have, in any case, come62.

In response to new western science, like Swami Dayanand, who claimed the existence of science in Vedas, some educated members of Singh Sabha despite knowing about the role of modern science and technology in changing the outlook of people and in bringing development stressed for existence of science in Guru Granth Sahib, one of the Singh Sabha members Bhai Mohan Singh Vaid, through his essays ‘Saur Jagat’ (1920) explained the Nebular theory and gave details of the principles of Kant and Laplace. He said that our Guru already talked about lacs of skies 300 years ago. In Japuji, Guru Nanak Dev ji already explained that there are lacs of skies in this universe in the following words:

Patala Patal, Lakh Aagasa Agas.

In the same way as Darwin theory, our ancestors also knew the evolution theory63. To him, there is nothing new in modern science, he further added that, in the beginning, scientific knowledge travelled to western nations from Eastern countries, there it was modified and again came back to Eastern nations, thus we

62. Ibid., pp.1-4.
should accept and practice it instead of boasting of our old knowledge. So he appealed to the people to broaden their outlook and accept whatever good is available in western science. With the help of Mohan Singh Vaid, Singh Sabha brought a flood of medical books in Punjabi for the first time in Punjab e.g. Tara Vigyan, Bharat da itihas, Bhuchal te Junglan to Labh, Rang di Karamat, Anek Gyan Darpan, Gyan Sahit etc.

Later, the Sikh activists fully grasped the relevance of the western science and technology, they sought the help of colonial officials in realising their dream of establishing a college of their own for imparting instructions in English and western sciences to which the British responded favourably keeping in view their vested interest that educational institutions could also produce intelligentsia committed to social reforms as well as allegiance to the British. Similarly, the top colonial officials including the Viceroy and Lt Governor of Punjab also took interest in the educational activities of the Sikhs. Consequently, they gave active assistance to the Sikhs in the work of founding the Khalsa College Amritsar in 1892. The ulterior motive of these officials was to promote the centres of 'denominational culture'. By now, Aligarh had emerged as the centre of educational and cultural activities of the Muslim elites. Similarly, the Arya Samaj and the protagonists of the Anglo-Vedic educational institutions had already initiated their activities from Lahore firstly by establishing a Dayanand Anglo Vedic, and then college. The official thinking was that Amritsar must remain the grooming centre of socio-religious, educational and cultural activities of the Sikhs. According to the racial beliefs of the colonial officials, the physical segregation was as essential as the cultural.

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68. Ibid., p. 67.
So strong was this feeling and so strong was the enthusiasm for setting up modern Sikh institutions that a Hukumnama was issued from the Golden Temple asking Sikhs to give one-tenth of their income (daswand) towards the construction of building of the Khalsa College\textsuperscript{69}. In response to this appeal, Sikhs contributed liberally. On March 5, 1892, Sir James Lyall, the Lt Governor of Punjab, laid its foundation stone\textsuperscript{70}. Besides English and Punjabi literature, all branches of science like Botany, Chemistry, biology, Physics etc were introduced in Khalsa College\textsuperscript{71}.

Western scientific and technical projects left so much impact on them that they established Sikh Educational Conference in 1908 which aimed to enlighten the people of Punjab make the synthesis of the best of western education and best of Indian education with religious flavours in it \textsuperscript{72}. Every year Educational Conference was held to give new shape to their education according to the new line adopted by British in Punjab. Various issues like agriculture, commerce industry, professional scientific and technical education were discussed. Sunder Singh Majithia, (President) of Sikh Education Conference in 25\textsuperscript{th} session at Gujranwala on April 1935 appealed to the Sikh youth, 'not to go for government jobs after getting training in agriculture. They must do the experiments on their own lands\textsuperscript{73} so that benefits remained within Punjab. In the 26\textsuperscript{th} session, Singh Sabha leaders demanded the conversion of Khalsa College into University\textsuperscript{74}. In 27\textsuperscript{th} and 28\textsuperscript{th} session, an appeal was made to the government to open industrial, commercial, technical and professional institutions in Punjab. The most peculiar thing about the conference was that it exhibited some specimens of new science

\textsuperscript{74} Ibid.,p. 1011.
and technology in the exhibitions and usages of science and technology were demonstrated through chart and project model.

In the conferences, new implements, methods of agriculture were shown to the people with the hope that it would in turn increase production. It remained the main attraction for the people of Punjab\textsuperscript{75}. In all these conferences, stress was given for using Punjabi as its official language. Because according to Singh Sabha leaders, only with their mother tongue, men would be more innovative and more thoughtful. The languages other than mother tongue were stumbling blocks in the way of the progress of state or community. The impact of propagation of Sikh Education Conference was so immense that the sister communities envied the Sikhs. In 1917, Nawab Zulfiqar Ali, who led the Muslim deputation to the 10\textsuperscript{th} Sikh Educational Conference at Lahore, marvelled at the ‘car-speed’ of the Sikhs as against their own ‘cart-dragging and asked the Sikhs to carry their Muslims brethren along with them\textsuperscript{76}.

There is no denying the fact that the Sikhs worked hard to develop their educational institutions with ultra modern facilities and tried hard to get recognition from the government to introduce scientific, industrial and technical education in their institutions. But like Arya Samaj, they failed to take the support of Professor J.C. Oman, with whose help Arya Samajist had set up the Arya Samaj Science Institute. Singh Sabha did not try to establish such science institute though they were close to Punjab government officials and could have done so, rather they made J.C.Oman to resign the post of Principal of Khalsa College, they considered only the protection of Punjabi language and tenets of their religion were utmost in their minds.

The activities of Singh Sabha under the leadership of Sardar Sunder Singh Majithia extended to commerce and industry as well. Under him and his

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., p. 976.

Son Kirpal Singh Majitha, Sugar industries developed in different parts of country. In order to carry the work of their sugar industries, they even themselves constructed forty miles of Railway line. Sardar Sunder Singh was also one of the founders of Punjab National Bank, established at Amritsar in 1908. Patriotism and not lust for money inspired the founders of the Punjab National Bank, which survived the Banking crises of 1913. Punjab National Bank was a Swadeshi Bank, which was established to finance various industrial concerns, machineries and educational institutions. The Bank crisis of 1913 was willfully posed by Lt Governor of Punjab Micheal O’Dawyer against all indigenous banks and industries. British actually aimed at, throttling of Swadeshi industry. They intended tightening of Political and economic dominations over India. Various banks like Amritsar Bank, Hindustan Bank, People’s bank went into liquidations; Lala Harkrishan Lal ran most of the banking establishments of Punjab, because Singh Sabha member was connected with Punjab National Bank that bank survived. It did not mean that British had a soft corner for the Sikhs but they actually wanted to keep one community away from the other. It was the strategy of the British government to give benefit to one sect at the cost of the other, so that they could divide and easily rule them.

Another work of public utility in response to western medicine was the opening of Central Khalsa Hospital, Taran-Taran, which was equipped with modern x-ray plant, clinical laboratories and other medical technologies. Special arrangements for tuberculosis patients were made there. Dr. Sohan Singh, Dr. Harnam Singh, Dr. Atma Singh, and Dr. Kuldeep Singh performed useful service in the hospitals. Due to the hard work of Dr. Sohan Singh this hospital turned into famous eye centre. He introduced spectacles here and operated

77. Jagjit Singh Guleria, Chief Khalsa Dewan, p 117.
81. Ibid., p. 1137.
82. Ibid., p. 1650.
successfully all diseases related to eyes. People of Punjab took full advantage of this hospital especially the rural people. Another Hospital opened by them was Homeopathic Hospital at Amritsar to help the poor people, where medicines were provided free of cost to them.

These Singh Sabha leaders wanted the progress of Sikh community in every field. On seeing fewer numbers of Sikh doctors in Indian Medical service, they requested Director General of Hospitals to increase the number of Sikh doctors in hospitals and also keep their reservation in hospitals. All India Radio Service was also asked to employ Sikhs and to relay Sikh-related programmes through radios. The Singh Sabha leaders demanded 20% reservation for the Sikhs in Railway service because North Western Railway passed through the area where Sikhs were densely populated, hence they argued that Sikhs had the right to reservation.

This shows that the Singh Sabha touched the very base, the mainstream of the Sikh life and resuscitated the true content of the Sikh belief and its exercise. It opened for them the doors of modern progress and endowed them with the strength and adaptability to match the pressures created by new social and scientific thought. Singh Sabha laboured hard to achieve success in every aspect of education. The Sikhs would have lagged behind their sister communities in the hectic race for educational development and competition, Owing to the efforts of the Singh Sabha Sikhs not only compared favourably with other communities but also in certain respects marched much ahead of them, thus Singh Sabha turned out to be a powerful movement for modernisation of Sikh outlook.

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83. Once Dr. Sohan Singh visited Europe, there he was surprised to see the spectacles, worn by people on their weak eyes and the treatment of various diseases. Ibid., p. 1650.
84. Ibid., p. 1651.
87. Ibid., p. 578.
88. Ibid., pp. 579-580.
Other movement which responded positively to the introduction of science and technology was Ahmadiya movement. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1839-1908), founder of Ahmadiya movement emerged prominent in Punjab. Ahmadiya movement arose towards the end of nineteenth century, amidst the turmoil of the downfall of the old Islamic society and the infiltration of the new culture, with its new attitudes, Christian missionary onslaught and the new Aligarh Islam. It arose as a protest against Christianity and the success of Christian proselytisation, and a protest against Sir Sayyid Ahmad’s rationalism and westernization, and at the same time, as a protest against the decadence of the prevailing Islam. In the views of Hazart Ameer, this was a time when Muslims were caught in a great turmoil. The political condition of the Muslims had hit an all-time low. All Muslims States were falling like dominoes to foreign occupation force. The religious position of the Muslims was even weaker than their political one owing to their illiteracy and inability to cope with the new atmosphere of scientific world where superstition and blind faith had no place. As they were not able to defend their religion logically, the scholars and preacher of other religion found them an easy target. They raised false accusations about Islam. Many Muslims embraced other religion in sheer frustration.

The ‘Ulema’ of the time were unacquainted with the English language, sciences, and western philosophy, so that they were unable to respond to the allegations charged on their religion by Christian missionaries and western educated Hindus.

At this critical time, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad attempted the task of presenting the Quranic teachings in a modern form, which would be more acceptable to the men who were finding themselves adrift in the changing world.

His interpretation of Islam was rational and designed to make the Muslims more fit to face successfully new situations and opportunities created by

introduction of science and technology. He rejected Sir Sayyid Ahmad’s interpretation not because of its naturalism but particularly because of its apologetic attitude as if there was anything in Islam that could not hold its own in the face of modern knowledge and science.\footnote{Lavan Spencer, \textit{The Ahmadiya Movement}, (Delhi : Manohar Book Service, 1974 ), p.31.}

However, he was not averse to western methods for propagating his ideas. The newspapers and journals that helped in spreading the Ahmadiya message were: \textit{Review of Religion}, a monthly journal of the movement, \textit{Tafzir-ul Quran}, a quarterly journal ‘\textit{Al-Fazal}, ‘\textit{Al- Faruq}, ‘\textit{Al-Hakeem,}’ and ‘\textit{Nur}’ all weeklies .Like Arya Samaj and Singh Sabha, Ahmadiay’s followers also used print technology for the propagation of Mirza’s ideas. Through these journals and tracts, he successfully challenged co-religionists and others to religious disputes.

Through print technology he tried to remove malpractices of his religion like the \textit{purdah} system which was an evil infesting the Islamic community. It hindered not only the plague preventive measure started by British government in Punjab but also limited women’s sphere of action. The contact with the British forcefully brought this limitation of Muslim society to the attention of reformers like Mirza. He was quick to realise the importance of the role of women in modern society.\footnote{Shyamala Bhatia, \textit{Social Change and Politics in Punjab}, p. 183.} He called upon the Muslim women to come out of their seclusion and help their men in earning their daily bread and play a constructive role in building a healthy society.\footnote{Ibid., p. 184.} His teachings are judicious mixture of the old and the new.\footnote{Ibid., p. 185.}

Like Arya Samaj and Singh, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad also talked about the presence of science in Quran. The Lunar and Solar eclipses had already been mentioned in the Holy Quran, which modern sciences boasted of.
In order to take Muslims on the right track and on the way of progress, he also attacked polygamy. Quoting from Quran, he says in his teachings, ‘Marry two, three or four wives, provided you can act justly towards them in all respects, but if you cannot, then, marry only one though you may need more’ 94. In his views, the right granted by the ‘Quran’ was conditional. Mirza Ghulam Ahmed gave Quranic sanction to several modern ideas. Mirza’s movement appealed to those who liked him and had taken advantage of the opportunity offered by English rule to acquire educational qualifications. These men were the victims of system that had produced them. As compared to educated Hindus, they were in minority. Their education was also not sufficient to ensure them a job, which could reduce their frustration and bring them into the mainstream of the British system. In the period of transition, Mirza’s movement appeared as a ray of hope. The western educated Mohammedans hoped to gain social, political and economic advantage as well as spiritual upliftment through his organisation.

Like Arya Samajist and Singh Sabha’s, Mirza had bequeathed to his followers, a number of thriving educational institutions. The key-stone of this educational movement was the establishment of a High School at Quadian. A College was opened at Lahore where men were trained to become missionary of Islam95. The subjects taught in schools and colleges, also included English. The followers of Mirza liberally supported these educational institutions96. Western science also occupied an important place in their school and college curricula. A Madrasa for the study of Arabic and Quranic teachings had also been started, where men and women both got education and Ahmadiya’s claimed 100% male and 75% female literacy among them97. To him, true Islamic purdah in no way interfered with getting education.

94. Gulam Ahmad, Teachings of Islam, p.34.
96. Punjab Education Report, 1905-06.
The Ahmadiya’s gave whole-hearted and unshakable support to the alien rulers. The Mirza strongly pleaded with his followers that they should be ‘grateful to their benefactors’ and warned them stating ‘if any disaster befalls the government, that disaster will bring you to naught’⁹⁸. He preached loyalty to the British government with almost religious zeal. The Muslims, he felt, should support, love, and sympathise with British rule, because the latter had given a new lease of life to their religion. Under the Sikh rule, he said Muslims were trampled and from this fate the English rescued them. The good that the British rulers had done to the Islamic community should be rewarded by explicit loyalty on the latter’s part for the beneficial rule. A rule under which ‘no one is wronged’ and a kingdom under which there is justice not tyranny⁹⁹.

In order to secure the support of the British government for Ahmadiya movement Ghulam Ahmad renounced the concept of Jihad. Ghulam Ahmad was a political realist. He had grown up watching the consolidation and strengthening of the English rule, and had realised the futility of opposing it. He preached loyalty to the government with almost religious zeal. He felt that the British government was a government under which no one was wronged and his or her kingdom was a land of justice not tyranny¹⁰⁰. The expression of loyal sentiments was sometimes accompanied by concrete support of government policies and measures. In an inoculation process of government, he extended full support. His support for plague prevention measures is an instance to the point. Plague was playing havoc with the lives of Punjabis. The government was trying to prevent the frequent visitation of the epidemic by modern scientific measures of inoculation. But lack of education and prevalence of superstition had made the people look upon the preventive steps with mistrust. Ghulam Ahmad called a special meeting at Quadian and tried to convince people that the measures were necessary and the official motive in the prevention of disease

was purely humanitarian. He refuted the prevailing rumours that the rulers were trying to poison all the people. Mirza made it a duty of all the loyal subjects to ‘relieve the government of great anxiety it had for their lives by acting in accordance with desires and get themselves inoculated so long as there is no obstacle’. Women were told that putting aside the purdah they should come out of the house into the open for inoculation purposes with their face properly covered. There was no violation of the Islamic principles. Thus modernism along with preservation of useful traditional values was his idea of adaptation to the new world.

On the whole, Punjabi society was undergoing a series of changes under the impact of British rule and its newly introduced scientific and technical projects. The Ahmadiya movement successfully responded to the new forces in Punjab, which were bringing about the changes. Mirza’s teachings along with occasional reference to the Quran provided a measure of authenticity to the new ideas put forward by him. This helped the Muslims to adjust themselves to new conditions, modernise their society and strive for their political rights. Like the Arya Samaj, slogan of ‘Go back to the Vedas’, it appeared that the Ahmadiyas were also saying, ‘Go back to the Quran’, which shows that the Ahmadiyas were opposed to indiscriminate westernisation. They proclaimed superiority of Islam over all religions. This was a ‘God-sent’ answer to the problem, which the educated Muslims were facing. Hence, like the educated Hindus, who had found anchor in Arya Samaj, the educated Muslims veered towards the Ahmadiya movement which had shown them a middle path between traditionalism and modernism. At the same time, it showed them a way of securing political privileges and power for themselves against the Hindus and the Sikhs during the British rule.

Ahmadiya was a modern movement in that it believes that Muslim must accept all the good that the modern science and technology has to offer and adjust to the new preaches most emphatically that the modern world cannot survive unless it accepts for its moral and spiritual developments. Islamic principles

In retrospect, we can say that these three social movements i. e. the Arya Samaj, the Ahmadiya and the Singh Sabha did useful work and were successful in bringing about changes in the society and in removing various social evils with the help of modern science and technology. The members of these organisations were also contributing towards social upliftment by providing opportunities for education. In the religious field also these educated men of all three communities did away with manifold rites-and-rituals and advocated simplicity. They also had successfully demonstrated the political utility of printing press. They employed all modern technologies employed by British for spreading their faith and for the various reforms they wanted. Together they made a dent into the traditional social structure. They were all anxious to belong to some new groups, which were neither wholly orthodox nor western.

The similarity ended here. As regards to the political ideology, all the three differed. The movements flourished at a time when the province was under the alien rule, which needed collaborators for building its infrastructure and ensuring the prolongation of their rule and its stability. Hence, politically each community’s interests influenced the answer provided by these organisations. Through political links, economic advantages were sought to be gained. Clash of economic interests and competition for jobs created a gulf between the three communities. The three socio-religious movements, which were responses of Punjabi communities to the same set of modernising forces also catered to the needs of similar type of men to be found in all three religions. But instead of uniting them they led them in different channels making unity among them impossible, rather their followings were leading to communalism as a natural corollary. The source of inspiration of all these three movements was the past,
but they used western modern technologies to achieve their aims. Thus all these
three movements were ostensibly revivalist in nature.

Indian life began to change under the impact of modern religious reform
movements, which were themselves, the outcome of direct impact of Christianity
and the changes largely brought about by the introduction of western science
and technology in Punjab. Although Swami Dayanand and Mohan Singh Vaid
had made assertion for the existence of science in Vedas and Guru Granth
Sahib, yet they themselves accepted the great need of western science and
technology in order to bring reform and for making life easy and comfortable. The
reform movements worked as an agent of western science and technology and
were successful in educating the people regarding new changes brought in the
society. Due to the involvement of reformers in politics, people were attracted
towards them and began to take active parts in the programmes started by them.
For example, all Bramos, and Arya Samajists together in Lahore, Gujrawala
Amritsar and Rawalpindi opposed the decision of closure of Delhi College\textsuperscript{104}.

The Brahmos, the Aryas, the neo-Sikhs, and the Ahmadiyan were talking
of reviving the past glory; they were, in fact, making an attempt to establish a
new society unknown to all history. These movements were the movements in
which educated members of the newly emergent middle class found an anchor.
They did useful work and were successful in bringing about changes in society
and in removing various social evils. All these movements seemed to be critical
about Indian culture and were trying to improve it. On the whole, Punjab
experienced ‘Counter-Reformation’ marked by an intense ‘religious nationalism.

But in this attempt of social reconstruction in which the help of print-
technology, modern hospitals, dispensaries, railways, telegraphs, motor vehicles
etc. was taken, it planted the seeds of political regeneration. These reformers
might have been saying that they were re-establishing the past, but in fact they
were building a new society, in which people dreamt of freeing themselves from

the clutches of British government. These movements were only ostensibly revivalist, and in the time they were started they could not be otherwise. Surrounded by difficulties on all sides, facing strong challenges from more developed western culture and more organised Christian religion, the Indians had to give strong irrefutable argument to make their own religions acceptable to their own men. These movements were product of the time, catering to needs of a particular section of the Punjabi society, and helped them find their identity in a turbulent world.

But, once having achieved their aims through new projects (science and technology) of modernisation, these alienated men, who were no longer, disorganised mass, and who had found strong ideological basis, made strong attempts to defend their organisations. This involved them in polemics. Heightened awareness of their own identity also generated a feeling of distinctiveness from other communities, which led to growth of strong communalistic trends, which, ultimately, were responsible for the partition of the country.

On the other hand, these organisations in form of institutions made these fields like science, technology and arts, proud of their socio-religious heritage. The next logical step in this was the rise of nationalism. There was a direct connection between religious reforms on one hand and social political regeneration of the country on the other. These movements made Indians and Punjabis in particular, self-reliant and stronger with their programmes based on modern scientific and technological lines. They performed the function of consolidation, social mobilisation, political representation and differentiation, and thus laid the basis for the mass political movements of later years. These movements, along with others, consolidated the scattered educated middle-class into distinct religious groups. Thus, in social context, they consolidated heterogeneous elements of educated elite into a homogenous class. It later turned into intellectual class which responded well to British sponsored science and technology. To see the limitations of British projects, they themselves took
the responsibility of creating awareness among the masses of their community about the modern discoveries and inventions. Some of them struggled hard to save their traditional professions based on ancient science. No doubt, the aims of all these movements were to restore the past glory of their respective religion, but their protagonist used science and technology as a tool for raising the status of their community and to meet their requirements. Their followers enjoyed the luxuries and comforts provided by science and technology and praised British rule for making their life affluent. The important consequence of their perception of science and technology was that they were able to turn those people into their own faith who developed English taste due to the new education system, now turned back to their own culture and tradition. Due to the efforts of their leaders, they did not feel alienated in their own society. They became ideals for the people due to their modern outlook and deep religious faith in their respective religion. These movements prepared the ground for other educated people like scientists, professors, writers and poets to accept the merit of science and technology without losing their faith in their respective religions.

In the next chapter, the response of intellectual class towards modern science and technology will be taken up.