Chapter – II

METHODOLOGY
2.0. Introduction

In the research process, methods of research are of utmost importance. In solving a research problem, various plans are adopted. Research methods actually describe those various steps of plans. Such plans include the manner in which the problems are formulated, the definitions of terms, the choice of subjects, the validation of data gathering tools, collection of data, its analysis and interpretation and the process of drawing inferences. With the help of a pre-planned and well described method of research, a researcher can adopt a scientific, feasible and relevant plan for solving the research problem under investigation.

This chapter deals with the methodology of the present research. It begins with the type of research used in the present research. It also lists the primary and secondary sources of data. The authenticity of the content of collected evidences and the credibility of the author especially in case of secondary sources has also been established.

2.1. Type of Research

The present study follows in general the method of Historical Research. History is a meaningful and organized record of past events. It provides the researcher a method of investigation to discover, describe and interpret what existed in the past. The main purpose of Historical research is to arrive at an accurate account of the past in order to gain a clearer perspective of the present and to predict the future. It applies scientific method to the description and analysis of the past events. This is a non-experimental research, which mainly depends upon the reports of observation. Although hypothesis is not always explicitly stated in historical investigation, they are usually implied. The trustworthiness of collected evidences is carefully evaluated by the historian after he gathers them.

The Historical research demands a great deal of social insight to understand the cause-effect relations of social events. Only when facts and events are understood and seen in the historical perspective, proper conclusion can be drawn. In order to understand Raja Rammohan Roy as a person, and the contributions he made to the society and
education, the researcher had made an in depth study of the political, social, cultural, educational conditions prevalent in Bengal against the background of which Raja Rammohan Roy was born. Through the application of this method, the researcher was able to document scientifically the achievements of the great reformer, Raja Rammohan Roy, which enabled the researcher to describe and analyse his contributions towards the society and education. With the help of this methodology, the researcher interpreted the relevance of the social and educational philosophy of Raja Rammohan Roy to present circumstances.

2.2. Sources: Primary and Secondary

Since Historical research is a non-experimental research, there is no possibility of control or manipulation of variables as it happens in case of experimental research. The sources of historical information are commonly classified as primary and secondary. A primary source is an original and first-hand account of the event or experience. According to Good, Barr and Scates, first witness to any fact or information or event are the primary sources. These are the only solid bases of historical enquiry. On the other hand, secondary source is one in which the person describing the event is not actually present but has obtained description from another person or source. Since in secondary source, the testimony of the person is not that of an actual observer, the source is subject to an inherent danger of inaccuracy and distortion. For this reason, the relevance of the researcher should be on primary sources as much as possible, and the researcher should use the secondary sources to bridge the gaps between the various pieces of primary data.

In the present study the following materials form the primary sources

- Books written by Raja Rammohan Roy.
- Letters written by Raja Rammohan Roy.
- Memorials for the freedom of the press written by Raja Rammohan Roy.
- Small tracts written by Raja Rammohan Roy.
- Translations of Vedanta and Upanishads made by Raja Rammohan Roy and the preface and comments made by him.
- Autobiographical sketch written by Raja Rammohan Roy.
All the major works on Raja Rammohan Roy by eminent writers form the secondary source materials which includes

- Biography written on Raja Rammohan Roy.
- Life and letters of Raja Rammohan Roy written by Sophia Dobson Collet.
- A biographical inquiry into the making of modern India by Iqbal Singh.
- Rammohan Samikha by Dilip Kumar Biswas.
- Books on Raja Rammohan Roy by distinguished authors.

2.3. Interpretation: External and Internal

Getting trustworthiness and authenticity of historian evidence is a great difficulty on the part of the historians as they ordinarily do not use the method of observation. As the repetition of past events is not possible at the will of the investigator, they are to depend on the critical inquiry of the collected data from those who witnessed or participated in these events. The trustworthy and authentic data are called historical evidences. Historical evidence is derived from historical data by the process of criticism, which is of two types- external and internal. All historical evidences under this study have been scrutinized by the process of internal and external criticism.

External criticism refers to determining the authenticity, validity and trustworthiness of the source or historical data. It checks the genuineness and the authenticity of the source materials. It helps to determine whether it is what it appears or claims to be and whether it reads true to be original. It is mainly due to save the researcher from being the victim of a fraud. It is the establishment of historical truth. In the present study, the data used are mostly in the nature of the written materials. So, questions like ‘when was the source written, and produced?’, ‘where was it produced?’, ‘By whom was it produced?’ ‘From what pre-existing materials was it produced?’- are dealt with.

Internal criticism is concerned with the validity, credibility or worth of the content of the document. It not only deals with textual criticism, but also involves such factors as competence, good faith, bias and general reputation of the author. This enables the researcher to discover the literal and real meaning of the text. In the present study the researcher had tried to ascertain whether authors were honest, unbiased and well
acquainted with the facts. The researcher also examined whether the authors were in agreement with other competent authority of that period or not.

2.4. Objectives of the Study

1. To study the political, social, socio-religious, cultural and educational conditions of Bengal at the time of Raja Rammohan Roy.
2. To study the role of Raja Rammohan Roy in Bengal Renaissance.
3. To study the different aspects of Raja Rammohan Roy’s social philosophies.
4. To study the various factors which contributed in making Raja Rammohan Roy as a social reformer.
5. To study the inherent philosophy of Raja Rammohan Roy’s life which made him a great educator.
6. To study the present day relevance of Raja Rammohan Roy’s contributions.

2.5. Title of the Study

Social and Educational Contributions of Raja Rammohan Roy: A Pathfinder.

2.6. Delimitations

The study has been concentrated and delimited to only the social and educational contributions of Raja Rammohan Roy.

2.7. Conclusion

This Historical research aims at evaluating the contributions made by Raja Rammohan Roy to the Bengal Renaissance and also tries to make a proper impartial and unbiased evaluation of Raja Rammohan Roy. Through this research, the researcher has also tried to establish the relevance of Raja Rammohan Roy’s philosophies and activities in the present day educational scenario.
References


“.......whatever future the destinies may have in store for India, that future will be largely shaped by the life and work of Rammohun Roy.”

Sophia Dobson Collet