

# Asian Resonance

## Christianity and Emergence of Revivalistic Movements in the Punjab 1857-1900

### Abstract

From 1849, after the annexation of the Punjab into the British Empire, the Britishers took keen interest in all the spheres of the Punjabis' life. The objects of this paper is to present the impact of Christian Missionaries Punjab particularly. In this paper, Emergence of different Socio- religious Reform movements as the response of the activities of the Christian Missionaries is mainly considered up to the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**Keywords:** Aryavarta, Sanatanis, Shuddhi, Pahul, Gurmat Parchar.

#### **Introduction**

For centuries before the English rule, the Punjab remained a battle-ground on which the invaders of India met with the armies of the Delhi emperors, and it was ravaged side by side by the forces of different potentates whose battle-ground it was. In the beginning of the nineteenth century Ranjit Singh welded it together into one state, and from the hands of his successors it passed in 1849, after some very hard fighting, into those of the English.

#### **Objective of the Study**

1. To evaluate the reaction of the Activities of the Christian missionaries in the Punjab.
2. To Study the Process of emergence of Socio-religious Reforms movements in the Punjab.
3. To Review the efforts of different socio religious movements to reforms the Punjabi society.

#### **Review of the Literature**

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#### **Hypotheses**

In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century different socio religious movements emerged in the Punjab, due to the activities of the Christian missionaries. How these socio religious reform movements' regenerate the Religious Principles, customs and Beliefs among the Punjabis which are associated with their religions respectively. With the birth of these movements Hinduism, Sikhism, Islamism revived in Punjab.

#### **Research Methodology**

To examine the above mentioned Objectives Secondary data have been collected and analyzed. Data for the above mentioned Purpose have been collected from Library of Punjabi University Patiala, Brotherhood Society, New Delhi, and Central Library Patiala, Library of A.S.College Khanna.

#### **Findings**

A strong wave of movements emerged as a result of the activities of the Christian missionaries after 1857 in the Punjab. As a result people of the Punjab awakened about the purity of their religion. Because of the Shuddhi movement many Hindus came back in their Religion. Educational institutions were set up in the different part of the Province. An outlook of the Punjabi's had Changed. Religious institutions played a very important role to give the new concept of the religion



**Prince Pal Mukhija**  
Assistant Professor,  
Deptt. of History  
A.S. College,  
Khanna

## Emergence of Revivalistic Movements in the Punjab 1857-1900

People living in Punjab followed different religions-Hinduism Islam and Sikhism. The three religious communities had many common traditions and practices. British rule brought in its wake a fourth religion-Christianity, which was also a proselytizing religion. Christian missionaries came to Punjab in early nineteenth century. But the closing years of the nineteenth century saw the crystallization of the Western educated Punjabis on religious lines. As a result there was a great deal of reaction to the massive Christian missionaries' activities by the revivalist organizations. From the 1880 on there were in the Punjab such as well organized reformist and revivalist groups as the Arya Samaj, the Chief Khalsa Diwan, and the Ahmadiya, which could provide a resourceful and effective counter, representing Hindu, Sikh and Muslim communities respectively.<sup>1</sup>

Although the Arya Samaj, Chief Khalsa Diwan and Ahmadiyas were basically religious movements, they were also concerned with social political and economic problems. All the three movements tried to modernize religion, socially they showed a way to upward mobility to middle and lower castes, and provided a meeting ground for the likeminded. As regards political ideology, all the three differed. The source of inspiration for all the three movements was their past, "Go back to Vedas" slogan of the Aryas; "We will revive the original teachings of the Quran", Claimed by the Ahmadiyas, and the Sikhs cried that the Chief Khalsa Diwan would "restore Sikhism to its original purity". Thus all these movements were ostensibly revivalistic in nature.

The Christian missionary activity was concentrated in areas like Sialkot, Gurdaspur, Lahore and Gujranwala. It was also in these areas and Amritsar that Aryas carried out mass purification to reclaim the depressed classes. The Sikh activity also began in these areas to strengthen their religion. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad established his headquarters at Qadian in Gurdaspur district. It was Ludhiana, which had become a strong centre of Christian activity.<sup>2</sup> These reformist organisations began reviewing the situation with a view to evolve a method for the restoration of the converts to their original castes and religions. Alarmed by the activities of the Christian missionaries, they unanimously condemned the Christian proselytizing activities particularly the mass conversion of the lower caste people.<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, the conservative and tradition bound Punjabi society sharply reacted to the over-zealous Christian missionaries propaganda as it posed a serious challenge to the age old customs, beliefs and traditions. The confused nature of their reaction is evident from the following comment of the "Singh Sahai" of Amritsar.

.....The Christian missionaries were doing a great deal of harm to the country by converting 'sweepers' and 'chamars.' as after their conversion these people cease to work as sweepers and chamars. If the missionaries think that the

progress of their religion depends on the conversion of sweepers, let them continue to convert them, but they should not try to make them civilized, and induce them to give up their occupation."<sup>4</sup>

The leaders of the Muslim communities passed the sentence of excommunication and interdiction against those among them who would use wells from which Christians drew water. The direct opposition came from the Arya Samaj to the spread of Christianity was due to the fact that it regarded itself to be the representative of Hindus and did not like to see moral, social and numerical declines of the Hindus in the Punjab. Hence Swami Dayanand Saraswati, the founder of the Arya Samaj, made first attempt to establish Arya Samaj at Rajkot where he reached on 31 December 1874 and delivered a series of eight lectures. But it was not successful and came to an end after five months. A second attempt to establish Arya Samaj was made at Ahmedabad on 27 January, 1875 but that also failed. From Ahmedabad Swami Dayanand arrived at Bombay on 29th January 1875. \* A serious attempt was made here to establish the Samaj. Rules and regulations were framed. Pandit Lekh Ram has mentioned 10 April, 1875, as the date of establishment of the Arya Samaj. Afterwards, some people from the Punjab gave Swami Dayanand a pressing invitation to visit their land of five rivers, in a magnificent 'Durbar' held by the Viceroy, Lord Lytton, at Delhi. Swami Dayanand gladly accepted their invitation and shortly after visited Ludhiana and Lahore. It was at Lahore that Swami Dayanand was successful in establishing a Samaj. So great was his success in this later city that the Samaj founded there very speedily eclipsed the society founded in Bombay.

Later on, Swami Dayanand visited many other important towns of Punjab viz Amritsar, Jallundar, Ferozepur, Rawalpindi, Jhelum, Gujarat, Wazirabad, Gujranwala and Multan. The Swami found this land of five rivers a better soil for sowing the seeds of his mission.<sup>5</sup> The Arya Samaj movement was a protest movement. The protest against the domination of orthodox Brahmans, against degenerating Hinduism, proselytizing Islam and Christianity and later against anti-national forces. Its initial aim was to revive the ancient and social order on Vedas.<sup>6</sup>

The Socio-religious movements, which emerged in the late nineteenth century Punjab as a reaction against the activities of Christian missionaries, adopted the same strategy as followed by Christian Missionaries.

The appeal of the Arya Samaj lay in its liberal interpretation of the Vedas and its flexible organization. The acceptance of its ten principles made any person a member of the Arya Samaj. Dayanand not only infused new life into Hinduism but also gave it a militant spirit. He claimed that Hinduism was superior to all contemporary religions and gave to the Hindus solid arguments based on the Vedas to defend this claim. The Arya Samaj was a democratic organisation. After the death of Dayanand no efforts were made to choose a successor. This appealed to

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the educated community that had imbibed Western principles of equality.<sup>7</sup> The Aryas now had an aim to strive for a mission to fulfil. They had to regenerate **Aryavarta**; they had to dispel the darkness of ignorance. Within a week of Swami Dayanand's death the Aryas of Lahore collected and decided to found an Anglo-Vedic school and college to perpetuate the memory of their guru. The decision was welcomed by all. Imparting of education soon became the most prominent feature of the Arya Samaj. The educational movement, begun with the foundation of the D.A.V. School and College, soon gathered momentum and the Arya Samaj came to open and maintain several education institutions. These schools and the Colleges became the temples of the Arya Samaj. Pioneers in the field of female education, the Samaj continued its work and later, there was hardly any Arya Samaj branch to which a girl's school was not attached.<sup>8</sup> The Arya Samajists successfully checked this avenue of Christian conversion also by taking up the programme of orphans' relief.

It was in 1897, when, during a famine in Central Provinces the Christian missionaries were filling their "Poor Houses", that Lajpat Rai organised an orphan relief movement under the auspices of the Anarkali (Lahore) Arya Samaj. With the active help of **Sanatanist** Hindus and Brahmo Samajists, an orphanage was started at Lahore. During first year 250 Children were brought from C.P. to Punjab; 13 orphanages were opened in Punjab, nearly Rs. 4,000 were collected and over 1, 6000 orphans were saved.

The Arya Samaj expanded this work of social service and its workers set an example of self-less devotion to serve the community by helping the victims of earthquake in Kangra in 1904 and victims of famine in 1908.

These philanthropic activities gave useful training to Hindu youth in methods of social service. It helped in bridging the gulf between the educated Hindus and the masses in general, "Creating new bonds of sympathy between them."<sup>9</sup> and it brought together diverse elements in Hindu community. Apart from Christian missionaries, the Arya Samaj was the first private agency which came forward to shoulder this social responsibility.

The Aryas were action-minded. For them spiritual, moral and physical upliftment of others was the motivating rules of life. In this direction, in the last decade of the nineteenth century, Swami Dayanand Saraswati started **Shuddhi** movement which means a ritualized system of conversion of an outsider into the fold of Hinduism, to protect the Hindu society from the influence of the Christian Missionaries. This Shuddhi movement had a dual purpose. In a province where the Hindus were in a minority, the movement could provide them with a means to convert other religionists to their faith and this served to attain a majority; secondly, it could help the men of lower castes that were joining other religions in hope of better social status, to raise their status while remaining within the fold of Hinduism.<sup>10</sup>

In the hands of the Arya Samajists, the Shuddhi, movement acquired a new dimension. It was

widely practised and vigorously performed. Instead of remaining a simple religious ceremony, it became a weapon of defense and offence. Fear of expanding Christian proselytising activity prompted Arya Samajists to make Hinduism a converting religion. By the closing years of the nineteenth century, the Arya Samaj succeeded in purifying the persons between 60, 000 to 70, 000. But their hopes were rudely shocked by the Census Report of 1891, according to which from 1881 to 1891 the Christian missionaries managed to increase the number of Indian Christian convert community from 253 in 1881 to 9,711 in 1891, an increase of over 3,000 percent.<sup>11</sup>

The attack of the missionaries on the social and religious life had also some positive effects. The people were aroused from their long slumber and lethargy, forcing them to think, and helping to end their immobility.<sup>12</sup> It is in this connection that Lala Lajpat Rai, the great freedom fighter, observes:<sup>13</sup>

The over Zealous missionaries, assisted by the British Government and its education (policy) in their attack upon Indian religion and thoughts suggested to Indian mind a closer and deeper study of their own religion and thoughts."

The minority Community of Sikhs was also losing ground to the Christian missionaries. The Sikhs, who had taken "**Pahul**" in order to escape the stigma of low birth, were being denied quality in social status because of the degeneration of Sikhism, and in the hope of bettering their lot, they were succumbing to the attraction of Christianity. The conversion of lowly Sikhs was not given much attention compared to conversion of high caste. Sikhs could not be taken lightly. They were the leaders of society, and in a caste ridden society conversion of high caste members could start a process which could prove ruinous to the community.

Maharaja Daleep Singh's conversion to Christianity in 1853<sup>14</sup> did not arouse so much indignation because Sikhs were still numb due to the shock they had received by loss of political freedom. Another reason for ignoring this blow to the Sikh faith was that Maharaja Daleep Singh belonged to a family that had been discredited at the battle field of Sabroan and Chilianwala, and had no following after the Sikh defeat at the English hands. But granting of permission to open a mission centre at Ludhiana and the conversion of Raja Harnam Singh, the brother of the Raja of Kapurthala, was a different matter. This meant that the enemy was striking at the heart of the Sikh stronghold. The awareness of threat was heightened with the news of the decision of four Sikh Students of a Mission School to renounce Sikhism and embrace Christianity (1873). It appeared that the erosion had begun and in no time the stream of Christianity would engulf the Sikh Community. Some leading Sikhs got together, met these students and successfully winning their confidence, persuaded them to drop their decision of renouncing the Sikh faith. Another out come of the meeting of these Sikhs was the founding of the Singh Sabha movement and the Namdhari movement, founded by Baba Ram

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Singh which was throughly anti-British in nature. Besides condemning social evils and believing firmly in the worship of the name of the Supreme Being, the Namdharis boycotted the government jobs, government educational institutions, government courts and even the government Postal system and also resorted to violent activities against the butchers of cow slaughter.<sup>15</sup>

Unlike the Namdhari movement, in 1873, two years before the establishment of Bombay Arya Samaj, a reformative movement in Sikhism known as Singh Sabha had come up in the Punjab.<sup>16</sup> The first Singh Sabha was established at Amritsar in 1873. The pioneers of Singh Sabha were Baba Khem Bedi, Thakur Singh Sandhawala, Kanwar Bikram Singh of Kapurthala and Giani Gian Singh of Amritsar. All of them belonged to rich aristocratic families, which were the traditional leaders of Sikh society. They struck a middle path between modernism and conservatism. The aim of Singh Sabha was restoring Sikhism to its pristine purity, promoting the cause of Punjabi Language, bringing out historical and religious books and familiarising the British authorities with the educational program of the Sikhs of Punjab and did significant work for the cause of social reforms and spread of education. It made the Sikhs rightly conscious of their identity, impressing upon them the need to protect and promote the Sikh culture. But this could not gain support to the masses and remained a movement of the landed aristocracy.<sup>17</sup> Supporters of the Singh Sabha initially met with opposition especially in the villages. They were scorned and ridiculed for their so-called novel ideas.<sup>18</sup> Meanwhile Professor Gurmukh Singh came to the rescue of Singh Sabha. He founded a separate Singh Sabha at Lahore in 1879.

Hence the Singh Sabha movement played a significant role in the socio-religious regeneration of the Sikh community. The greatest contribution of Singh Sabha in the field of religious reform was to give a fresh interpretation to the Sikh doctrines. We have sufficient evidence in the form of the contemporary newspapers regarding the opposition of idol worship in the Durbar Sahib at Amritsar by the Singh Sabha leaders. Missionaries were sent even within the province to preach the original message of Sikhism among hundreds and thousands of village folk. Along with stress was given on the five religious symbols of the Khalsa by the Singh Sabha reformers.<sup>19</sup>

The Social programme of the Singh Sabha was a comprehensive one, embracing many aspects of Social life. Unlike the Nirankari and the Namdhari movements, Singh Sabha directed their reforming activities against the social evils which were prevalent in the Sikh Society at that time, such as rigors of caste, miserable plight of women, child marriage, female infanticide and untouchability. The movement of social reform started by the Singh Sabha, was also directed against the removal of Brahmanical influence on the social life of the Sikhs.

No socio-religious movement could be successful without the efforts to promote education in

the society. The Sikhs were educationally backward and did not have any system of education. Before the advent of the British in the Punjab, education was mainly confined to the upper classes and almost to the male. A few indigenous schools, which were of a purely religious character<sup>7</sup> were found here and there but education was mostly imparted in Gurudawars and Dharmshalas by Granthis and Mahants.<sup>20</sup> After the annexation, Christian missionaries made the first attempt at modern education. In 1856, the Punjab education department was set for the promotion of education in the Province.<sup>21</sup>

Before the establishment of Singh Sabha, the Nirankari and Namdhari movement did a lot in the field of socio-religious reforms but did not pay much attention to the spread of modern education. The Singh Sabha leaders realised the importance of education as a powerful medium for carrying out social and religious reforms. In the field of education of the Sikhs in Punjab, Baba Khem Singh Bedi, one of the founder members of the Amritsar Singh Sabha, may be regarded as the pioneer. He helped in opening a number of Gurmukhi Schools in the districts of Rawalpindi, Jhelum and Gujarat.<sup>22</sup> He championed the cause of female education and founded many Girls schools which were named after him. The Lahore Singh Sabha established a Subcommittee for the spread of education and invited English officers to become its members. Sir Charles Atchison and Sir Robert Egerton, Governor of the Punjab agreed to become its members.<sup>23</sup>

The Amritsar Singh Sabha opened a Khalsa High School at Amritsar in 1879.<sup>24</sup> The Lahore Singh Sabha also established a Khalsa school at Lahore in 1880, where the teaching of Punjabi was introduced. The leaders of the Lahore Singh Sabha decided to develop a Punjabi school into a Punjabi college. Due to want of funds, this scheme could not mature. Under the consideration of the local Singh Sabha, a Khalsa High School was started in 1889 at Gujranwala. The establishment of the Khalsa college at Amritsar in 1892 is a landmark in the history of Sikhism. The aims of the Khalsa College were : to impart sound and general education, to give instructions in English, to impart religious and moral instructions, physical training, practical arts, culture of Gurmukhi literature and inculcating a feeling of obedience and harmony.<sup>25</sup> From 1892 onwards, the number of Khalsa schools rapidly increased. The Singh Sabhas of Lahore, Lyallpur, Sialkot, Rawalpindi, Peshawar, Quetta, Jullunder, Taran-Taran, Amritsar, Ambala, Moga, Sargodha, Bannu and Anandpur opened High Schools in their respective towns. Middle Schools were also started at Amritsar, Ferozepur, Gurdaspur, Lyallpur, Karachi and in several other towns of the province. To remove the illiteracy in the province, Khalsa High Schools were opened at Sayad, Sukh, Chakwall, Chak, Banawale Hill, Baba Bakala, Mahilpur, Bundala, Kalara, Kharar, Gardiwala, Bahoda, Kherowal, Haripur, Kallar, Gurusar, Sudher, Kairon, Chihar Chak, Chamkaur Sahib, Sarhali, Kurali, Jasapaloan RamDass and many other places.<sup>26</sup>

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Like the Christian missionaries, the leaders of the Singh Sabha also took up the cause of female education in the province, at a time when strong prejudice prevailed against it. The leaders of this movement realized that, "The education of both males and females is a healthy sign in a progressive community."<sup>27</sup> Girls Schools sprang up at Amritsar, Lahore Sialkot, Rawalpindi, Gujranwala, Abotabad Sargodha and Kairon.<sup>28</sup>

Among the leaders of the Ferozepur Singh Sabha, Bhai Takht Singh founded the Kanya Mahavidalya at Ferozepur in 1892. A big Library (Ditt Singh Library) and a boarding house were also attached to the vidyala<sup>29</sup> Except this Guru Nanak Kanya Pathshala Amritsar, Kanya Pathshala Sargodha, Khalsa Girls School Sialkot, Sikh Guru Nanak Pathshala Gujranwala and Lahore were also prominent<sup>30</sup> which played important role for the upliftment of girls of the Punjab. The Singh Sabha Amritsar in 1848 which was a school of its own kind, had aimed to train Sikh girls for **Gurmat Parchar**.

Like Christian missionaries policy of spreading western education, the network of Sikh schools, opened by the Singh Sabha, in the horizontal and vertical position of the province, helped the Sikh Community in competing equally with the other communities in the field of educational advancement. Singh Sabha's efforts to promote education gave a big jolt to the Christian Missionaries.

Muslims conversion to Christianity on large scale awakened the Muslim intellectuals also. The first Muslim Society, the Anjuman-i-Amritsar was founded in 1867 with its organ *Rasala-i- Shashmahi* edited by Sheikh Ghulam Hassan. The main aims were to bring about advancement through education among the muslims and to save them from adopting Christianity.

Except these muslim societies, various associations like Anjuman Islamia, established at Lahore in 1869 and Anjuman Himajat-i- Islam, as a branch, founded in 1882 at Amritsar, expanded the scope of the society to include social religious and educational spheres.<sup>31</sup>

Apart from these Muslim societies and organizations, the most important was The Ahmadiya movement, an Islamic organization, founded in 1889 by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, at Qadian in District of Gurdaspur. As a religious movement it stressed the significance of the words,<sup>32</sup> "Call to the faith of thy Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious. The Ahmadiya movement symbolized a three-cornered protest: against the prevailing evils in Islam, against the Christian proselytizing activity which was posing a serious threat to the Islamic community, and a reaction against the extreme rationalism and westernization of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan.<sup>33</sup>

By and large, the Ahmadiya missionaries concentrated upon the propagation of Islam and avoided all political agitation or anti British activity like Arya Samaj. Singh Sabha and Christian missionaries these Muslim societies also adopted the same method for the upliftment of the Muslims. These

societies knew the importance of educational institutions by which they could remove the social evils and awakened the consciousness among muslims.<sup>34</sup>

Qasur school for handicraft (1874), Amballa, Madrasa Nasur ul-Mominin, Majlis Islamia, Amritsar, (1873) Amritsar Islamia School (1882), Jullundur Madrasah Islamia (1888), Multan Madrasah Islamia (1888), Anjuman Islamia, Lahore ; Shahi Mosque Maktab, Anjuman - Islamia, Abotabad, Madrasah Islamia; 10 Girls School by Anjuman Himayat-i-Islam Amritsar Madrasah, Lahore Madrasah, Ulum, Islamia, Anjuman-Hami-i-Qaum, Jullundur night School (1889) Anjuman city school, Bannu 1884 Gujrat Madrasah Islamia were established by these different Muslim organisations.

In these educational institutions English and Modern knowledge along with Islamic religious principles were taught. As far Muslim societies were concerned, their primary and important aims were to spread useful knowledge through translations into vernacular languages, sponsored lectures, discussions, promoted scholarship in oriental learning, and took an interest in commerce, industry and social reforms. They published journals and proceedings and supported British rule. Among the most effective literary society in the Punjab the Anjuman-i- Punjab of Lahore was note worthy, with its branches in Sialkot and Hoshiarpur.<sup>35</sup>

Among these Muslim organizations, the Ahmadiya ideology provided a new interpretation of the Quran. It attracted those Muslims, who concerned alike at inroads of Christianity (and to small extent) of the Arya Samaj from without and of rationalism and worldliness from within, turned eagerly towards a leader who took his stand firmly upon Islam as a revealed religion.<sup>36</sup>

Ghulam Ahmad warned the Muslims to beware of imitating the methods of Christians. He warned the Muslims not to be caught in the net of Christian missionaries, who attempted to attract converts by promising money, social status and clothes. He announced that the religion preached by Arya Samajists was devoid of spirituality. He claimed that the religion preached by the Arya Samaj was not a true religion because it was not seeking after God and striving after righteousness.<sup>37</sup>

## Conclusion

The Punjab came in contact with the Christians as early as in 13th and 14th Centuries. Church activities again surfaced in the Punjab during 19th century when different churches of Europe sent their missionaries here. The missions engaged in the spread of Christianity used various means and methods for the spread of their religious philosophy and were to a large extent a success in that mission. The methods used by Christian missionaries for spread of their faith were through the medium of the opening of educational institutions, orphanages and hospitals. They set up a number of such institutions with the motive of giving education to young boys and girls about Christianity. Christian missionaries also used orphan houses as good place for the

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propagation of their ideology. They preached their philosophy with all love and affection among them and tried to make them realize that they were not orphans but could think them as their parents. They made the government to pass certain laws by which it was provided that a Christian convert had a right to inherit the property of his parents.

In the beginning, simplicity and characters of the Christian missionaries and their life style attracted simple minded Punjabi. But with the passage of time their weakness also came to light. Methods of conversions used by them shocked the people. Thus, respect and love both got changed into hatred and repulsion. Many social and religious reformers gird-up their loins and they got prepared to face the challenge of the Christian missionaries.

With the foundation of the Arya Samaj, the Chief Khalsa Diwan and the Ahmadiyahs, Hindu, Sikh and Muslim consciousness had become institutionalized. Although these movements were religious movements, yet they were also concerned with social, political and economic problems. All the three movements tried to modernize religion. Socially they showed a way to upward mobility to middle and lower castes, and provided a meeting ground for the likeminded. But the similarity ended there. As regards political ideology, all the three differed. The movements flourished at a time when the province was under alien rule which needed collaborators for its existence. Hence politically the answer provided by these organisations was influenced by each community's interests and through political links, economic advantages were sought to be gained. It was in Sialkot, Gurdaspur, Lahore, Gujranwala and Amritsar that the Aryas carried out mass purification to reclaim the depressed classes. The Sikh activity to strengthen their religion was also begun in these areas. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad established his headquarters at Qadian in Gurdaspur district. And it was Ludhaina, which had become a strong centre of Christian activity.

Members of the three organizations were also contributing towards social upliftment by providing opportunities for education. The religious and social programmes of these movements made for a self-reliant and therefore stronger India. These movements along with others performed the function of consolidation, social mobilization, 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. In social context, these movements consolidated heterogeneous elements of educated elite into homogenous class. But at the same time, these movements divided homogeneous educated elite into heterogeneous religious groups.

Although the Punjabis had accepted political superiority of the British, but they were not prepared to agree that the Christians were culturally superior to them. They always had faith in the superiority of their own culture

In spite of all this Christian missionaries had both good as well as bad effect in Punjab. In an attempt to spread their own religion, these missionaries tried to escape the weakness of other religions. Thus, they very much shook the faith of the people from religion. Another bad effect was that they tried to play with the sentiments of one religious community with the other. In this way, they created many religious tensions resulting in serious consequences.

But the activities of the missionaries had some good effects as well. They opened many educational institutions which helped in the spread of education in Punjab. Opening of the hospitals proved useful for the Punjabi society and contributed in the efforts of government in providing better health facilities. They also brought a focus on social evils of the Punjabi society and in this way the Hindu, the Sikh and the Muslim societies tried to reform their religions.

It is by now clear that the British government in Punjab introduced various social reform measures under the influence of the Christian missionaries. They helped in spread of female education. They also paid attention to the pitiable condition of out castes that were socially neglected by the Hindus and were economically depressed. This resulted in the birth of various socio-religious movements in the Punjab mentioned above. No doubt Christianity in the Punjab during the period under study had a wide official patronage for its evangelical work and did succeed in swelling a large number of people from Punjab to its fold, it along with many indigenous socio-religious movements definitely rendered unparalleled services in the regeneration of the people of this region in more than one way.

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