

# A Historical Study of Developing in Arya Samaj

Paper Submission: 10/12/2021, Date of Acceptance: 21/12/2021, Date of Publication: 23/12/2021

## Abstract

Arya Samaj was basically a socio-religious revivalist movement started by Swami Dayanand in 1875, which not only played a significant role in social and religious reformation of Indian society but also in the national freedom struggle movement. The present paper is an insight into the historical development of Arya Samaj since its initialization. It discusses the major points of Arya Samaj philosophy along with its present status in India and throughout the world.

**Keywords:** Arya Samaj, Social Religious Reformation, Rights, Education, Nationalism

### Introduction

India in the earlier half of the nineteenth century witnessed numerous social and religious reform movements. Arya Samaj is one of the most significant movements which immensely influenced Indian society. Arya Samaj brought about a restructuring of social and cultural scenarios and practices. Arya Samaj was a Hindu reform movement which was deeply associated with the values and practices based on the belief in the infallible authority of the Vedas. Arya Samaj was founded by Swami Dayanand Saraswati in 1875. It was the first Hindu organization to present evangelization in Hinduism. The organization brought about significant reforms in the religious acuties of the people of India. Arya Samaj believed in the basic thought that all the activities should be performed with the ultimate objective of benefiting mankind. Arya Samaj strongly condemned assertive formalities such as worshipping idols and symbols. Swami Dayanand promoted the Hindus to go back to the origin of their religion i.e. the Vedas. He was of the opinion that this will help them to recover from the depressive religious, social, political and economic situations dominating the country during that period. He propagated "Universalism" instead of favoring any particular caste (Upadhyaya 107; Rai, 120; Vidhyalankar and Vedalankar, 78).

The present research paper studies the history of the development of Arya Samaj in Indian society.

### Aim and Objectives

The present research paper was structured with the below mentioned aims and objectives-

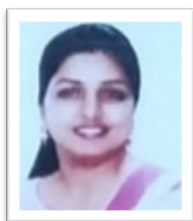
1. To study the origin and ideology of Arya Samaj in India.
2. To highlight major historical developments in the Arya Samaj movement in various regions of India.
3. To discuss its role in India's freedom struggle and socio-religious reformation along with present status.

### Methodology

Present research study is of descriptive and analytical type. It discusses the development of Arya Samaj in various regions of India since its establishment in 1875. In this study research papers, books, articles and conference proceedings were thoroughly studied for discussing the history of the development trends of Arya Samaj.

### Initialization of Arya Samaj

Although the foundation of Arya Samaj was laid in 1875, the work of reforming the Hindu society and Hinduism was started by Swami Dayanand in 1869 with the established of the first vedic school or Gurukul in Farrukhabad. It was an effort by Swami Dayanand to avoid the British system of education which was being popularized by the British officials for their own benefits during those times. These Gurukuls nurtured Vedic values, cultures and principles among both boys and girls who were given separate education in these Vedic schools. They also promoted "Satya" and "Sanatan Dharma." Swami Dayanand travelled throughout India to promote Vedic culture and was quite successful in his objective with the Indian public supporting his cause. He established Vedic schools in Mirzapur, Kasganj, Chalesar in 1870 and Varanasi in 1873. These vedic schools followed the ancient "gurukul" system of education who provided food, lodging, clothes and books to their students



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without charging any fees. They avoided idol worship and performed rituals such as “Sandhyavandanam” and “Agnihotra.”

After his visits to Calcutta and Varanasi his views on various issues were published in his book entitled “Satyarth Prakash” i.e. “the light of truth.” His views and a list of 28 rules were accepted by the members of the Prarthana Samaj in Rajkot in 1874. However, it was in 1875 in Bombay that Arya Samaj came into existence. Arya Samaj was considered as the society of the nobles. Arya Patrika mentioned that Swami Dayanand had established Arya Samaj so that people could attain knowledge irrespective of caste and gender, which would ultimately lead to salvation. The base of Arya Samaj were the “Vedas.” He was of the opinion that Vedas were eternal truth and dependable guides to human conduct. He favored precise explanation of the Vedas and propagated their conventional description. Swami Dayanand did not consider the Upanishads, Aryankas, Brahmanas or Vedanta Sutras as fragment of the Vedas. He distinguished Aryas from Sanatani Hinduism which he considered was based on the Puranas. He was a believer of modern science and technology (Vidhyalankar and Vedalankar 246).

**Lahore Arya Samaj**

After the establishment of Arya Samaj in Bombay, it was in 1877 that a branch of Arya Samaj was started in Lahore. With its establishment Arya Samaj exhibited tremendous growth in Northern India. Rai Mul Raj was appointed as President and Lala Sain Das, Lala Jiwan Das and Babu Sarda Prasad Bhattacharya were nominated as Secretaries with 22 members. 28 principles put forth by Bombay Arya Samaj were replaced by 10 niyams or principles (Chamupati 15)

**Punjab Arya Samaj**

Within a short period of time, Swami Dayanand with his simple teachings and niyams, travelling and impressive speeches earned him huge followings and 131 branches of Arya Samaj were established. In a short duration of 18 months in 1877-78, nine branches of Arya Samaj were setup in Punjab. However, Arya Samaj in Punjab had to face some serious opposition from leaders of Muslim Ahmadiya Movement and Sikh Singh Sabha (Jones 30).

Even after the assassination of Swami Dayanand in 1883 continued to grow in Punjab under the leadership of prominent leaders of Pandit Lekh Ram and Swami Shraddhanand till 1926. Various movements which aimed at reviving Hinduism although led to conflicts with other religions, for instance, Shuddhi movement headed by Swami Shraddhanand was aimed at bringing the converted hindus back to Hinduism. During this period Arya Samaj witnessed numerous changes. Samaj was divided into a Gurukul group of the Arya Samaj (Conservatives) and College group of Arya Samaj (radicals). The conservative group was headed by Swami Shraddhanand and the radical group was headed by Lala Hansraj. This division was based on the type of education and the kind of food. The conservatives supported gurukul education and vegetarian food and the radicals supported college education and non-vegetarian food. Swami Shraddhanand founded the Gurukul at Haridwar which became the headquarters of conservative group and Lala Hansraj established DAV college at Lahore which promoted Vedic education with English education (Boivin, 84).

**Haryana Arya Samaj**

In 1880, the Arya Samaj was established in Rohtak by Rai Sahib Sansar Chand, who was successful in establishing Arya Samaj in the villages of Sanghi, Maham, Jhajar, Mahra and Kilo in Rohtak. The cultural associations with adjoining Rajasthan and the relocation of the Jats from the Bikaner region was also responsible for promoting Arya Samaj in the Hisar-Rohtak regions in the 1890s. Arya Samaj made significant socio-religious changes in the region. People of the region started following principles mentioned in Satyarth Prakash, observe Sandhya, performed Havan, upadesh, bhajans and also made efforts for cow protection. ChajjuRam started cow homes or gaushalas in Bhiwani and Nawal Singh of Rohtak made such efforts in Haridwar. Thus a cow protection movement was initiated in Haryana. The practise of karewa (widow re-marriage) was also started by Arya Samaj movement in Haryana.

**Gujarat Arya Samaj**

Although Swami Dayanand was from Gujarat, was not as popular in Gujarat than Punjab. The initial work of Arya Samaj in Gujarat was also done by Arya Samaj members who came from Punjab on motivation of Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad of Baroda to carry out educational work amongst untouchables. The Arya Samaj became a prominent movement in Gujarat and did significant work in saving the orphans from Christian missionaries by establishing orphanages. The movement then made considerable headway in Gujarat. Its increasing members included people from urban middle classes, higher farming castes, and individuals from the Koli caste. Each had their own reasons for accepting the Arya Samaj, ranging from a aspiration for higher social status, to religious reform, to building caste unity, and as a means, in the case of the Koli gentry, to 'reconvert' Kolis who had been converted to Muslims in medieval times. The movement lost its thrust after the emergence of Mahatma Gandhi, and many followers of Arya Samaj started following the Gandhian ideology. After 1922, Gujarat witnessed a period of communal antagonism which is evident from riots in Godhra in 1928.

**Hyderabad Arya Samaj**

The Arya Samaj is considered to have established itself in the city of Hyderabad in 1892. Sultan Bazar was the main centre of activity of the Arya Samaj. Pandit Keshav Rao Koratkar was elected as the president of Hyderabad state Arya Samaj in 1905. Arya Samaj played a significant political role by developing political awareness among the people of Hyderabad state against the oppressive rule of the Nizam. By 1938 Arya Samaj had 250 branches in the State, twenty of which were located in Hyderabad and Secunderabad. Prominent political leaders such as Swami Ramanand Tirth, Kamble Wale of Udgir, M. Channa Reddy, Ramachandra Veerappa of Bidar, K.V. Narasing Rao, Vidyadhar Guruji of Gulbarga, Pandit Taranath of Raichur and many more nationalists in Osmanabad, Warangal, Zahirabad, Adilabad, Basavakalyan, Aurangabad and Beed joined the Arya Samaj Movement fought for the rights of the non-muslim community.

The Nizam Government in order to form an Islamic State did not favored basic rights for common people. They encouraged the 'Ittehad' to start Tableegh, and issued farman (order) and passed the acts called Mafusa and GayarMafusa. Arya Samaj supported the non-muslims in fight against these acts of the government. They circulated the message of Arya-Samaj i.e. Equality of all human beings, Condemnation of caste system, Equal opportunities of education and refinement and the message of 'Satyarth Prakash' i.e., "Back to Vedas". Arya Samaj was followed by prominent Pandit Dattatreya and Bhimanna Khandre of Balki, Narendraji of Bidar, Bansilal and Shyamlal of Hallikhed, Rama Chandra Veerappa, Sivachandraji, Lakshman Veerappa of Humanabad, Hakeekat Rai of Chitguppa, Dattatraya Rao Avaradi, Vyajanath Irivi, Amarasimha Rathod and Chandrasekhar Patil of Gulbarga, Manik Raoji of Raichur, Lakshmana Gudi of Koppal, Vakil Ganapati Sastri, Udayabhanu, Mohan Singh. R. Arya, Sri Gopaldev Shastri of Basavakalyan, Ananta Sharma of Chincholi, Vedaprakashji Gunjotti, R. V. Bidap and others. All of them dedicated their lives to educate the people in Arya- Samaj Mandirs. They started schools at Bidar, Udgir, Chitguppa, Gulbarga and Raichur. Shamlal started an hospital for untouchables at Udgir. The made significant contributions to the poor Hindus in their struggle for civil and religious rights. They fought for the establishment of casteless and classless society.

In Spite of the efforts of Nizam to curb Arya Samaj Movement, the Arya Samaj Its continued their fight for the civil and religious rights of the people. The Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha in the region decided to offer Satyagraha movement under the leadership of Mahatma Narayana Swamy. Arya Samaj celebrated the 'Hyderabad Day' in 1936-37, to battle with the conversion policy of the Government and to spread the principles of Arya Samaj. Arya Samaj Lists from Hyderabad Karnataka, participated in Satyagraha under the leadership of Mahatma Narayan Swami and Kunwar Chandrakaranji at Gulbarga on 4 February and 2 March, 1939. Hakeekat Rai Chitgupkar also played a significant role in the movement. In the movement against the dictatorship of the Nizam government, the Arya Samaj organized various meetings and also tried to gain support from various parts of country by inviting them to Hyderabad. Arya Samaj Lists from various parts of the country entered the State to support the movement against Nizam through Sholapur, Vijayawada, Barsi, Ahmadnagar, Manmad, Poona and Chand. This nationalism was also shown in 1942 "Do or Die" movement, "Join Union" movement of 1946-47 and "Border" movement

of 1947-48. Thus Arya Samaj was an inspiring movement in the national movement of freedom struggle (Saxena 80).

### **Arya Samaj in Post Independent India**

The Arya Samaj is engaged in socio-religious activities, especially in the areas of education, and has started many schools and colleges all over India based on its universal values. Arya Samaj has played a significant role in post independent India especially in the Northern India. Arya Samaj played a pivotal role in reviving the the social and education system which suffered a major setback after partition of India. A large number of schools, colleges and temples were established in this regard. Presently numerous schools, colleges and temples are found in almost all major cities and as well as in rural areas (especially in the North region) of India. Arya Samaj mandirs have been authorized to conduct weddings in accordance with the principles of Arya Samaj. The Arya Samaj runs many Dayanand Anglo Vedic (DAV) schools. Presently there are more than eight hundred schools in various areas. More than eight million followers of the Arya Samaj are present in India. The number of followers and branches is still increasing.

Arya Samaj is also functional in various parts throughout the world. The Arya Samaj branches and followers are present in many countries around the world including Australia, Bali, Canada, Fiji, Guyana, Indonesia, Mauritius, Myanmar, Kenya, Singapore, South Africa, Surinam, Thailand, Trinidad & Tobago, UK, and the United States. The Arya samaj in Kenya operates numerous schools in Nairobi and other cities of the country. Immigrants to Canada and the United States from South Asia, Eastern Africa, South Africa, and the Caribbean countries have established Arya Samaj temples for their respective communities (Naidoo 59). Most major metropolitan areas of the United States have chapters of Arya Samaj. Thus Arya Samaj is not only contributing to India but is also helping the people throughout the world.

### **Conclusion**

Thus, Arya Samaj can be regarded not only as a socio-religious reformation movement but also a nationalist movement which has played a pivotal role in India's freedom struggle. It has greatly helped in awakening the political consciousness of the people and has worked significantly in protecting the social and religious rights of the people. With the traditional ideology of "Back to the Vedas" the members of Arya Samaj have promoted the modern philosophies of widow remarriage, education, prohibition of child marriages etc and thereby helping the society and the nation

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