ROLE OF RAJA RAM MOHAN ROY IN THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL WORK IN INDIA

Subrata Das

Ph.D Research Scholar

"Raja Ram Mohan Roy inaugurated the modern age in India. He was the father of Indian Renaissance and the prophet of Indian nationalism" – Rabindranath Tagore

Abstract

*Raja Ram Mohan Roy was born on 22nd May, 1772 in a village of Radhanagar of Hooghly District of Bengal when Britishers took hold over what they called India with a firm grasp and Bengal **was already in the grip of social and educational stagnation.** He studied multiple religious systems of the past including **Buddhism, Sanskrit literature, English, Persian, Arabic** to mention a few. His greatest glory lay in this, that in the midst of thick, brooding darkness he saw afar the **vision of New India** and bravely laboured against large odds. He was not just a founder of a religion and he wanted his countrymen to accept not only the rational and scientific approach but also principles of **human dignity and social equity** of all men and women. His political, social, educational ideas and activities enriched the field of social work in India. He had done many social work related activities that helped in uplifting Indian society. Social work is a practice based profession that promotes social changes to social development.*

Key words: Social Work, Social Reform, Social Evils and Social Welfare.

Objective of the paper: Based on secondary sources of literature, this paper seeks to highlight the contributions of Raja Ram Mohan Roy that has influenced the historical evolution of professional Social Work in India

Introduction:

History of social work can be traced a long back ago. It was first developed in the western countries following the perspective of social service, charity, social reform and social welfare activities. Though, the social work profession emerged and developed based upon the foundation of Indian history. The social work service was initiated by the local rulers like landlords, queen and kings in the ancient India. From the beginning of the civilisation, welfare activities introduced in the pre-Vedic, Vedic and Gupta period (**Thomas.G, 2010).** Then the social welfare services emerged more and more during colonial periods and post-

independence by the respective government. During 18th and 19th century many social workers, reformer and educationist were born i.e. Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekanada, Vidyasagar and so on. Raja Ram Mohan was one of them who served the country in constructive ways. He brought a lot of changes in the Indian Society his welfare related activities for the society people served the objectives of the social work profession profusely.

As the definition of social work says "Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing..." **(IFSW, 2014).** From the above definition it is proved that he has shed some light to the development of professional social work education system. He fight for the social evils sati and child marriage and focused on women education and widow remarriage.

Review of literature:

The author described Raja Ram Mohan Roy as "Social Reformer". Raja Ram Mohan Roy introduced modern education system in India and had done many social reform work. He also wanted to state western education system in India and introduced English education, women education in India **(Mondal. M and Behera.S, 2015).**

The author depicted Raja Ram Mohan Roy as father of Indian Renaissance. In the 19th Century, in India there was inhuman practice 'Sati system', where a widow were forced to her die in the dead husband's funeral pyre. Later this practice was stopped by the effort of Raja Ram Mohan Roy. His many glorious activities were also discussed in the study i.e. establishment of Brahmo Samaj and abolition of Polygamy and Child marriage in India **(Soham. P, 2017).**

Raja Rammohan Roy was father of the nineteenth century 'Renaissance' in Indian. He fight for many social evils and tried to save the country from extremely situation due to existence of orthodox Hindu society. The India was grabbed of various evils, namely, caste, polygamy, Kulinism, infanticide, burning of Hindu widows – sati, immorality and so on **(Nag. S, 2017)**.

The study showed that Raja Ram Mohan put effort for freedom of the press. Through the field of journalism, awareness was created among people for their rights, social justice, abolition of social evils and for education purpose **(Behera, Arun K.2012).**

Methodology of the Study: This data for the study on "role of Raja Ram Mohan Roy" was purely was collected from major sources from different types books, journals, articles written by great educators, professors and research scholars about Raja Ram Mohan Roy. The investigation also included the social work books and journals to make the relevance of welfare activities of Raja Rama Mohan Roy with the perspectives, aims and objectives of social work practice.

Limitation of the study:-The paper is based on the theoretical perspective of data collected form historical background of secondary literature only.

Findings and discussion:

Raja Ram Mohan Roy had done many social, political, religious and economic reforms in India the pre-independence India. From the investigation of secondary data, it can be said that he felt for the oppressed and disadvantaged people. He always wanted to do better services for the man and as well as the country. He had many welfare related activities and had done social reforms which are discussed below.

Social

Opposed Sati:-in the 18th and 19th century India. There was a bad social evils "Sati Pratha" where after death of husband wife forced to burn in her dead husband's funeral pyre which was brutal and inhuman. He fight for the Sati Prathaand finally stopped it with the help of Lordwilliam Bentick through the regulation of XVII in 18299 **(Soham.P, 2017)**.

Opposed polygamy: Another evil practice was polygamy what created many problems among the women and children Indian society. Polygamy was the custom where a single male person may have more than one wife at the same time. Due to the polygamy marriage, there were a increased number of children and wife. Their sufferings were mainly because of low self-esteem, care and protection and anxiety.

Opposed purdah practice: He also puts his efforts for the eradication of "Purdah system". Purdah means veil used to cover the women face form public place. Fist introduced by Muslim and later it spread to Hindu women in India. This practice

restricted women form playing many social roles which was ageist the uplifement of women in India.

Opposed child marriage: Before 19th century, child marriage practice was prevalent in India and in many other countries. Even the girl child in the age group of 8 to 10 got married with older people. This system gave negative impact to their physical and mental health as well as lesser the social status. And main problem were seen more and more when their old husband died after few years, they become widow again. In that situation, they suffered from lack of care and protection.

Opposed untouchability: Raja Ram Mohan fought against the bad practice of untouchability in Indian society. This practice was done by the higher caste people mainly like Brahamin and Khatria and Baisya used to dominate the lower caste Dalit people, so that they cannot come in the mainstream of the society. He thought that prevention of such practice can only minimize the harassment, violence and ignorance of the low caste people.

Promoted widow remarriage: Growing up Raja Ram Mohan Roy had witnessed the heinous tradition of Sati where widows as young as 12 years of age were forced to jump on their dead husband's pyre. Moreover he also took initiative to stop the bad practice of society such as,

Opposed use of intoxicants: Ram Mohan was also against drinking liquor.

Promoted Inter-caste marriage: He opposed the rigid caste hierarchy and its nonsensical norms.

Educational

Women empowerment through education

Promoted English Language & started schools based on western system of education. Moreover

Raja Ram MohanRoy advocated for Women Education in India. He beliefs that women empowerment can be achieved through providing them education as ancient literature and traditiona revealed that Indian women are highly educated. For that he established Brahma Samaj(1828) which helped in revealing the prejudices against the women education in Hindu Soviet.He set up Anglo-Vedic School in 1822 followed by the Vedanta College in 1826**(Naik, J. P and Nurullah, S, 1974).**

Editor of newspaper as the father of Indian journalism.

During the 18th century, Raja Ram Mohan Roy initiated socio-religious movement through the help of journalism. He launched two news papers i.e. "Sambad Kaumudi" and "Mirat-ulAkhbar" which gave stress on the modern education system in India. He thought that without modern education system progress of the country cannot be achieved. His field of journalism also talks about the women rights and their empowerment and spread awareness against the social evils and prejudices.

Political

Opposed racial superiority: The racial superiority is one of the cause factors for physical and mental inferiority of the general people. It can be reduced when the peoples are equalized in diet and dwelling (**E.A. Ross, 1901**). Raja Ram Mohan fights against racial superiority to make the all peoples leveled up in respect to culture and means of education.

Fought for the civil liberties and freedom of man: Without social justice and liberty of people, inequality cannot be stopped from any societies. Social justice is a way of life with freedom. He also focused on the Social, Economic and political right of the people. That's why Raja Ram Mohan Roy promoted liberation of poor tenants exploited by Zamindars.

Religious

Opposed idol worship: In his book "Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhidin" he championed the cause of Monotheism. He criticized idol-worship by the Hindus. He also opposed the principle of Trinitariasm' (God, Son Jesus and the holy spirit) of the Christianity.

Opposed blind faith: He upheld reason over blind superstitions and opposed ritualism.

Findings and Discussion

The Similarity and the Difference: The social work profession meet all the needs of individual, group and community people those who are in the distress situation. But the oppressed and disadvantaged people are helped to come in the main stream of the society. From the ancient period of time, many social workers, social reformers and the government tried to do social work activities and social services. There are some differences among these services and service provider as discussed below the chat.

Social Service	Social Welfare	Social Reform	Social Work
❑ For all sections of communities ❑ Services mainly provided by Government;	❑ For vulnerable sections of population; ❑ Services provided by Government and Non Government Organizations through trained or untrained professionals; ❑ It includes a more organized & comprehensive system of social services.	❑ It is a social movement led by a reformer that aims to make gradual change in certain aspects of society; ❑ A reform movement is distinguished from more radical social movements such as revolutionary movements.	❑ Practice based profession; ❑ Academic Discipline, ❑ It promotes social change, social development, cohesion, empowerment and liberation of people; ❑ Guided by principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities; ❑ It engages people and structures to address life challenges & enhance wellbeing.

The Ignored History of Social Work Activism:

❑ Today Social Work in India has become a neutral, objective and non political profession that aims to meet individual, group and community needs favoring the status quo by letting it go unchallenged.

❑ However, only a small group of social workers has kept the voice of social change alive.

❑ It has been forgotten that social work was always political and that activism has been its characteristic since its origin in the late 19th century in the West while in case of India, the discipline owes its indebtedness to the social reform movements to a significant extent, especially to Raja Ram Mohan Roy and his Brahmo Samaj.

Conclusion:

The indomitable spirit Raja Ram Mohan Roy in all his efforts for social, religious, intellectual and political regeneration and reawakening of India and his achievements make him immortal as a social reformer and necessary steps should be taken by the profession of contemporary social work to strengthen its commitment to social activism and social reform by having discourses on these issues and his legacy. From the above discussion, it can be found that Raja Ram Mohan Roy had touched all of the concern areas of social work i.e. secular, humanism, protestantism, rationalism, welfarism, liberalism democracy and utilitarianism.On the humanitarian ground, he worked for the mankind and the development. Except all these, he also wanted to glorify Indian culture and promoted unity of religions and rationality. Moreover it is found that Raja Ram Mohan Roy has enriched the field of social work activities through his social reforms work. There is a similarity between his work and the work objectives. So his welfare and reforms activities have more relevance in the contemporary Social work education. He promotes social change and development, of people though abolition of social evils from the society. Social cohesion and liberation of people was one of his main aims. He raised awareness on social justice, human rights, social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge by his field of journalism. He also beliefs that only collective responsibility of people can address all the life challenges for enhancing wellbeing. That's why world poet Rabindra nath Tagor called him father of Indian renaissance and the prophet of Indian nationalism and he was referred as "Raja' by the Mughal emperor.

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