

**SOCIAL CHANGES IN PUNJAB DURING BRITISH RULE
(1849-1900)**

**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY
IN
HISTORY**

BY

NISHA RANI

ROLL NO. 166191013

SUPERVISOR

Dr. Daljit Kaur Gill

(HOD Deptt. of History)



University College of Basic Sciences and Humanities
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CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work which is being presented in the dissertation entitled "Social Changes in Punjab During British Rule (1849-1900)" in fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy in Faculty of Arts, is an authentic record of my own work. Carried out during the period from 2016 to 2018 under the supervision of Dr. Daljit Kaur Gill.

The matter embodied in this dissertation has not been submitted by me for the award of any other degree of this or any other University.

Nisha Rani
Nisha Rani 9/11/2020
Uni. Roll No. 166191013

This is to certify that the above statement made by the candidate is correct to the best of my knowledge.

Daljit Kaur Gill
Dr. Daljit Kaur Gill
(Supervisor)

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External Examiner

9/11/2020
Dean (UCBS&H)
GURU KASHI UNIVERSITY
(Dean of the College)
Talwandi Sabo (Bathinda)

CHAPTER - I

VARIOUS REFORMS IN CASTE SYSTEM

The caste-system in India is a very complex institution. There is no definite answer to what situations contributed to the origin and development of this institution. It has been studied in India at various periods from different perspectives. Beginning with the proponents of the Vedas, Puranas, and the Epics, the European and Indian scholars have studied this social evil very deeply and this has resulted in a number of prominent theories¹.

A number of scholars who studied the Indian society have equated the Caste and the Varna (social grouping). But it escaped their notice that Varnas were counted only to be three or four, but the castes could be counted in thousands in India. Thus, the 1900AD census recorded 2378 castes but there were still such more castes which were not described².

The Indian caste system is fundamentally the result of geographical, social, political and religious factors. It did not originate at a particular time. The caste-system is a social institution and any social institution is born and develops out of the surrounding environment and the situations.

In fact, wrong ideas have been in vogue in our society since ancient times. For instance, a prevalent traditional view to understand the caste system is that it is described in the Rigveda that the Brahmins were born out of the mouth of the deity Brahma, the Kshatriyas out of the arms, the Vaishyas out of the belly and the Shudras were born out of the Brahma's feet. The people were divided into different parts, as the parts of the body can be divided, but such ideas are not tenable.

Therefore, the European scholars – Max Weber, Smelser and S.M lipset have attempted to look at the caste system from a political perspective. According to the European scholars, the caste system was a political plan devised by the Brahmins. By this, the Brahmins gave a higher position to themselves in society and the lower ones to the others. None could understand this scheme of Brahmins for thousands of years. Thus,

¹ Parkash Singh Jammu, *Changing Social Structure in Rural Punjab*, Sterling Publications Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1974, P-74.

² S.S. Amol, *Bharti Samajak Sansthavan*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1969, P-35.

the Brahmins were largely responsible for encouraging discrimination³ under caste system.

The '*jaat*' word is synonymous of the caste word in English which came from 'casta' of Portuguese meaning 'birth' or 'difference'. Thus, caste means lineage, heredity, birth, family or tribe⁴. This word was first used in Indian society by Garcia-De-Orita in 1563. He had extensively studied the Indian castes, sub-castes and the caste system. Since a long time, the scholars have not been able to collect complete information about the various Indian castes and the caste system because there are thousands of castes⁵ in India.

The caste system started in Punjab after the arrival of the Aryan people. The Aryans came here as foreign invaders. The Aryans used the caste system to strengthen their position. For this, they placed the people of the different classes of the same society into different hierarchies. In fact, the Aryan people established boundaries in the form of castism in which people from lower to higher classes were easily placed according to their hierarchy⁶.

The only goal that the Aryans had in mind in starting the caste system was to merge all castes into the Aryan civilization. Since people from other races also came to India with the arrival of the Aryans, the Aryans divided the people from different races on the bases of their race and culture. During this period, the Dravidian race was accorded a high place because they came to India earlier and they were accomplished in terms of work, civilization and culture. Besides them, there were people from the Austric, the Negroes, the Slaves and the Gypsy tribes which had pretty underdeveloped civilization and culture. These people largely lived outside the villages in forests. But the Aryans considered themselves higher than all of them and they positioned themselves above all of them. The purpose of the caste system started by the Aryans was not to keep themselves away from the Dravid, Austric, Negro, Slave and Gypsy tribes, rather they were to assimilate all of the Indians into their civilization. As the time went by, this caste

³ Manvinder Kaur, *Dharam Ate Jat-Pat*, Proceedings of Punjab History Conference, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2009, PP-75-77.

⁴ Dubies, *A Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, Oxford University Press, London, 1906, P-14.

⁵ S.S. Amol, *Bharti Samajak Sansthavan*, *op.cit.*, P-36.

⁶ Narinder Pal Singh, *Punjab Da Itihas (1469-1839)*, Publication Bureau, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1969, P-2.

system became a horrible disease for the society which resulted in hatred for each other among the different castes. This caused a great decay in the social structure⁷.

The caste system in Punjab had reached its final stages from 1849-1900AD. At that time, people of three main religions were living in Punjab which were the Hindus, the Muslims, and the Sikhs. All these three religions were divided into different classes. Though the Hindus, the Muslims, and the Sikhs have been living together since long times, yet they considered themselves higher than the others. This caused differences among them regularly⁸. In fact, their religious orthodoxy was the main reason for these differences.

The Hindus had a large population in Punjab. The Hindu society was divided into many castes and sub-castes, such as *Brahmins*, *Kshatriyas*, *Vaishyas*, and the *Shudras*. In the Hindu society, the *Brahmins* were considered higher than all other castes. The *Brahmin* class was engaged in teaching and learning along with the worshiping practices. Therefore, they occupied the highest position in the Hindu society. They performed religious duties in the society. In fact, the *Brahmins* were teachers, scientists, poets, and philosophers of their times. They had the responsibility of preserving traditional customs. Due to that the *Brahmins* had preserved the religious literature nicely since old times. In the ancient times, a *Brahmin's* life was divided into four stages. The first stage from 8 to 25 years of age was called the *Brahmcharya*. During this period, a *Brahmin* studied the Vedas. The next stage comprised of 25 to 50 years of age when he lived the worldly life. In the third stage, he had to abdicate home and live in the forest till the age of 75 years. He had to break from the social life and at the end of his life, he had to completely detach from the world. During this period, he endeavoured for salvation⁹. Due to a hard penance and the knowledge he had, he was revered in the society.

After the *Brahmins*, the *Kshatriyas* occupied a high position in the Hindu society. The *Kshatriya* class served in the army and defended the country. In fact, *Kshatriyas* were a martial class whose task was to hold the state power. In the beginning of the Aryan arrival, there was no much difference between the peasants and the soldiers.

⁷ M.S. Gill, *Punjab Society: Perspectives and Challenges*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 2003, PP-26-27.

⁸ J.D. Cunningham, *History of Sikhs*, Lahore Book Shop, Ludhiana, 1931, P-31.

⁹ Sachu Edward C. (Tr.), *Alberuni's India*, Vol. II, Cambridge University Press, London, 1914, PP-132-134.

Actually, the *Kshatriyas* were successors of the old kings who got converted into the soldier class after losing their kingdoms.

From the military perspective, their position in the society was not much lower than the *Brahmins*. *Vaishyas* were the community in the Hindu society other than the *Brahmins* and the *Kshatriyas*. They were mainly engaged in farming, trade and animal keeping. Therefore, the economic progress of the people depended upon the *Vaishya* people. In the olden times, the *Brahmins* prohibited *Vaishyas* from studying the religious texts and they were compelled to live in ignorance¹⁰. The *Shudras* were considered the lowest in hierarchy in the Hindu society. The *Shudra* people served the *Brahmins* and the people of the higher castes. Actually, the *Shudras* were the ones who lived in India before the arrival of the Aryans. The Aryans made them slaves. In the middle ages, the *Shudras* began to be considered as untouchables. This resulted in their low condition. The people from the higher castes imposed strict restrictions on their reading and writing. In fact, the *Brahmins*, *Kshatriyas* and the *Vaishyas* considered themselves higher in order and hated the *Shudras*. Due to this, the *Shudras* had been living a life of pains and difficulties since long¹¹.

Other than these four castes, a number of other sub-castes also came up in the Hindu religion. These were such as blacksmith, carpenter, weavers, pot makers, tailors, barbers, shoemakers, goldsmiths, oilmen, and water carriers, etc¹².

Other than the *Brahmins* and *Kshatriyas* were the other class in the Hindu society. They also occupied a good position just like *Brahmins*. The *Kshatriyas* took a special interest in the trade and the managerial tasks. Actually, they were the moneylenders of the Hindu society who lent money at very high interest rates. The *Aroras* and the *Baniyas* were the other trading communities. The *Rajputs* were another category of people in the Hindu religion¹³. *Rajput* means the progeny of the king. Therefore, the *Rajputs* contended that they belonged to the royalty. They were children of the old *Kshatriyas* and the brave fighters. They were very high class soldiers. Therefore, they took a great pride in their ancestry and blood. The *Rajputs* emphasized upon not to engage in

¹⁰ *Indian Government Census, 1901, Vol-I, Part-I, Delhi, PP-540, 560.*

¹¹ Iqbal S. Sekhon, *The Punjabis the People, Their History, Culture and Enterprise*, Volume II, Cosmo Publications, New Delhi, 2000, PP-103,106.

¹² K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, Delhi, 1970, P-109.

¹³ *Census 1911, Vol. XIV, Punjab, P-412.*

farming, not to marry daughters in poor families, not to accept money during marriage, and keeping the women behind curtains. Therefore, they themselves had to discharge all of the duties outside the house walls¹⁴.

Similarly, the *Jat* people were also part of the Hindu society who resided in the north-eastern parts of the Punjab. Therefore, the *Jats* had a great influence upon the village society of the northern regions. They were mainly engaged in farming. In the middle of the 19th century, the social condition of the Hindu society had greatly deteriorated due to the caste-system. The Hindu class was gripped by the old beliefs, the caste-divisions, the high and low, and the ritualism¹⁵.

Similarly, the Muslims were a separate category from the point of view of the society. The Muslims came to India as invaders and a large number of them settled in India. But the Muslims who came as invaders were small in number. Actually the large number of Muslims were the ones who converted to Islam from within India¹⁶. Along with these foreign Muslims, a large number of soldiers, traders, scholars, Muslim saints and people from a number of other professions got settled in India. Just like the Hindu society, the Muslim society was also divided into various categories, such as the higher class, the middle class, the slave class, the religious class and the ordinary class Muslims. The Muslim religious class was divided into four sub-classes. These included the Sufis, the Sunnis, the Shia and the Ismailis¹⁷.

The Sufis had a positive influence on the society. The Sufis converted a number of Hindus to Islam by their peaceful religious campaigns. Other than the Hindus and the Sikhs, a large number of other people could also be seen in the Sufi *Jamaitkhanas* (the congregations), the religious dogma was absent in this religious class. The number of the Sunni Muslims was great in Punjab. In fact, the Sunnis and the Shias were the two powerful classes in Islam. The Sunnis believed in Hazrat Mohammad being the last incarnation whereas the Shias accorded the highest place to the scripture Kuran. Because of this, conflicts occurred between the Sunnis and the Shias during the religious festivals¹⁸.

¹⁴ Parkash Singh Jammu, *Changing Social Structure in Rural Punjab*, *op.cit.*, P-75.

¹⁵ Trilochan Singh Gill, *Bharat Di Azadi Lehar*, Velvis Publishers P.P.5, Mauriya Enclave, Delhi, 2000, P-60.

¹⁶ Muhammad Idris, *Mughal Bharat (1526-1707)*, Lokgeet Publication, Chandigarh, 2004, P-3.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* PP-3, 4.

¹⁸ Bhagat Singh, *Punjab Da Itihas*, Punjab State University Textbook Board, Chandigarh, 1983,

The most of the Mongols, the Afghans and the Arabs were followers of the Sunni sect. The Muslims coming from Iran followed the Shia sect. The Sunnis and the Shias called each other as the *Kafirs* (atheists or renegades).

The Ismaili Muslims were another sect other than the Sufis, the Sunnis, and the Shias. The Ismaili Muslims were in a very small number in the country. This religious sect, interpreted the Kuran Sharif differently. They believed Hazrat Mohammad to be the last prophet among the lineage of prophets. Other than these, a minority category among the Muslims were the *Karamatias* and the *Al Mehndis*. The *Karamatia* Muslims considered it right to kill the fanatic Muslims as per their principles. The *Shias* and the *Sunnis* both hated the *Ismailis* and the *Karamatias* and they were discriminated greatly¹⁹.

The Ullema Muslims belonged to the scholarly class. They always wore turbans on their heads. They had a complete knowledge of the Islam religion, the Kuran Sharif and the Muslim law. Therefore, they had a proper knowledge of the Persian and Arabic languages. The Hazrat Mohammed called them the successors of the prophet and whoever respected them was considered to be respecting the *Allah* (God). It is because of their profound religious knowledge of the ancient times, they had a high place in the Muslim society. They were orthodox and were in favour of propagating Islam through violent means. This caused hatred among the Muslims and the non-Muslims. In fact, the priestly section of the religious class of the Muslim society had a very orthodox behavior and did not care for religious tolerance.²⁰

After the religious class, the higher class of the Muslim society yielded great influence. Among this were the Sultans, the Begams, the rich ones, and the ministers, who were placed in the upper class. These were the people holding the state power who had the right to run the country's power. The Sultans, though being a part of the society, kept themselves at a distance from the ordinary people. After the upper class, there was the middle class which included the landlords, the soldiers, the traders, the scholars, the writers and the petty managerial officers. They lived a better life than the common people but a lower one compared to the upper class. During the Mughal rule, they had ownership rights over land. The slaves were the lowest category in the Muslim society.

PP-660-661.

¹⁹ S.A.A. Rizvi, *Muslim Revivalist Movement in Northern India: the Sixteenth and the Seventeenth Centuries*, Agra University, Agra, 1965, PP-68, 73.

²⁰ Sudarshan Singh, *Life-Style of the People of Punjab (1849-1925)*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2009, P-30.

In the middle ages, the slavery was one of the important institutions. As per the Roman law, the slaves had no legal or property rights²¹. The members of the upper classes treated the slaves as animals.

There was a commoner's class in the Muslim society which included many people. In fact, these people were the ones who had left their religions and converted to Islam. They had no change in their economic position by changing their religion. Many clans and social groups of Muslims began to live in the Punjab, for example, the *Yusufjais*, the *Gujars*, the *Jats*, the *Gakhars*, etc²².

The Muslim *Jats* were the important part of the village Muslim population. They lived in the south-eastern Punjab and engaged mainly in agriculture. The *Gakhar* Muslims resided mainly in the Gujarat, the Jehlam, and the Hazara districts. The *Khojo* Muslims resided in the central and the eastern Punjab. The *Sayyads* commanded a great respect in the Muslim society. The *Sayyad* occupied a sacrosanct place in the Muslim society since long because they were recognized as the successors of Hazrat Mohammed Sahib. The *Sayyads* were accorded the same place in the Muslim society that the *Brahmins* had in the Hindu society. Other than this, the *Arai* Muslims were engaged in cultivating and selling vegetables. The *Kasai* Muslims were engaged in the occupation of meat. Thus, just like the Hindu society, there were a number of castes, sub-castes, and religious sects²³ in the Muslim society as well which divided the Muslim society into different groups.

The religious class occupied a high place in the Muslim society. The people from the religious section of the Muslim society had a great pride in their being high class. They were given big estates by the Government²⁴.

In Punjab, the Hindu and the Muslim were such traditions who could not tolerate each other but still they adopted each other customs to quite an extent. The Hindus having pained by the excesses of the Muslims started calling the Muslims as Malechas

²¹ Bhagat Singh, *Punjab Da Itihas*, *op.cit.*, PP-660, 661.

²² Bhagat Singh, *Madhkalin Bharat dian Sansthavan*, Publication Bureau, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2003, PP-15,18.

²³ Sudarshan Singh, *Life-Style of the People of Punjab (1849-1925)*, *op.cit.*, P-31.

²⁴ Sudarshan Singh, *Punjab Da Itihas (1849-1949)*, Publication Bureau, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1991, P-4.

(barbarians, invaders) because the foreign invaders were called Malechas in India. Secondly, they did not have the knowledge of the Sanskrit language²⁵.

After the fall of the Mughal empire, the Muslim society started decreased. The feudal among them enjoyed a pretty good life. In fact, their attitude towards the social problems was same as the Hindus who believed²⁶ in the caste-system.

Other than the Hindu and the Muslim religions, the Sikh religion is one of the prominent religions of the world, though it historically came into existence after all other religions. But the Sikh religion carved out a distinct place for itself in a very short time. The greatest reason for this was its modern and pragmatic nature. This was expressed by the founders of the Sikh religion and their successors²⁷.

Guru Nanak was the founder of the Sikh religion. His main aim was to root out the social evils. The social discrimination was very intense during Guru Nanak's time. Therefore, he started the institutions of *Sangat* (congregation) and *Pangat* (dining together) to eradicate the caste and high-low divisions in society. In the *Sangat*, the Sikh people reflected upon the Guru's message which was to get rid of the social evils. The people from all religions, the rich, the poor, the kings, and the beggars all sat in the custom of the *Sangat*. All were considered equals. The *Pangat* (community kitchen) was an institution where the people from all religions sat and dined together without any distinction of high or low or rich or poor. Guru Nanak went to various places to eliminate discrimination in the world. Where ever he went, he started the tradition of *Sangat* and *Pangat*. This dent a strong blow to the caste system²⁸. This institution became an important part of the Sikh religion which could not be separated from the Sikh religion.

After Guru Nanak, Guru Angad Dev sat on the seat of spiritual authority. He also continued campaign against the evils existing in the society. Guru Angad Dev held Vedas to be responsible for spreading caste divisions. Anyone believing in the caste system had no place in the company of the Guru. All castes were accorded equal place. Only the people who were not scared of the restrictions imposed by the Vedas and the

²⁵ Ramdhari Singh Dinkar, *Sabhayachar De Char Adhyai*, Publication Bureau, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1992, P-374.

²⁶ S.K. Bajaj and J.S. Rekhi, *Bharat Da Itihas (1818-1919)*, Publication Bureau, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1987, PP-208-209.

²⁷ Trilochan Singh Gill, *Bharat Di Azadi Lehar, op.cit.*, P-10.

²⁸ Sukhdial Singh, *Khalsa-Prabhusta Sidhant*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1987, PP-5, 7.

caste divisions used to come to the Sikh congregations²⁹. Thus, a Sikh culture was taking its roots slowly under the guidance of the Guru. This demolished the *Brahmnic* system of the Hindu religion and founded a new kind of society.

Guru Amar Das established Goindwal Sahib. Due to an increase in the Sikh population, he established 22 preaching places or seats (the *Manjis*) because there was a danger of Sikhs going back to the *Brahmnic* influence in the absence of the Guru. A Sikh was appointed to manage each of these *Manjis*.

Similarly, Guru Arjan Dev gave an equal place to all the castes³⁰. When he constructed the Harimandar Sahib, he made an eminent Sufi Saint Sai Mia Mir to lay the foundation stone. The Harimandar Sahib had four doors so that people from all religions (Hindus, Muslims and the Sikhs) could enter into it without any discrimination. People from all religions used to visit the Harimandar Sahib. They sat in the *Sangat* and listened to the Guru's message and they sat in the *Pangat* and dined together. By this kind of practices, the Sikh Gurus weakened³¹ the caste discrimination.

Guru Gobind Singh selected the *Panj Pyaras* (the five chosen ones) as leaders of the *Khalsa Panth* to eliminate the untouchability and caste discrimination. Those five belonged to different castes. Though the first nine Gurus attempted to bring equality in the society³² through the institutions of the *Sangat* and *Pangat*, but the caste system kept the society inflicted by it because the Hindu priestly class kept campaigning in support of it. The tenth Guru wanted to give birth to such fraternity where the people were absolutely equal and where no member of Sikh religion needed to know the caste of the other member. Therefore, Guru Gobind Singh started a new society by abolishing caste discrimination by bringing people from different religions and castes to the Sikh fold. There was no place for caste and discrimination³³.

²⁹ Narinder Pal Singh, *Punjab Da Itihas* (1469-1839), *op.cit.*, P-18.

³⁰ Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, (Tr. Bhagat Singh), *Sikh Itihas* (1469-1765), Publication Bureau, Punjabi University, Patiala, PP- 21, 24.

³¹ Shamsheer Singh Ashok, *Punjab Da Sankhep Itihas*, Lahore Book Shop, Ludhiana, 1961, PP-123, 124.

³² Baljit Kaur, *Gurmat and Caste System*, Proceedings of the Punjab History Conference, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2007, P-833.

³³ Dr. Rattan Singh Jaggi, *Sikh Panth Vishav Kosh* (Encyclopaedia of Sikh Panth), Part-I, Gur Rattan Publishers, Patiala, 2005, PP-820, 821; and see also Sahib Singh Arsi, *Athahrvin Sadi Da Sikh Itihas*, Arora Publishers, Chandigarh, 1987, PP-17, 20.

Though the Sikh Gurus vehemently opposed caste system but the Sikhs mainly came from the Hindus. Due to the influence of the Sikh Gurus, people from various Hindu sub-castes converted to Sikhism. Though according to the principles of the Gurus and the Sikhs anyone who joined the Sikh religion was to forget his previous caste, but this principle remained just a doctrine³⁴ after the Sikh Gurus. Due to this, the people who joined the Sikh religion but kept their previous castes with them. After some time, the caste system became prevalent in the Sikh society as well.

Thus, the Sikhs too got divided into several categories such as *Bedis*, *Sodhis*, *Jats*, *Majhbi Sikhs*, *Khatris* and *Aroras*. The *Bedis* and *Sodhis* had a higher place in Sikh religion because on the bases of their lineage they were related to the Sikh Gurus. Because of this, they considered themselves higher than the others. In fact, they had the same place in the Sikh religion which the *Brahmins* had in the Hindu religion and the *Sayyads* in the Muslim religion. The *Bedis* and the *Sodhis* commanded a great respect among the people from the Sikh religion. The *Bedis* considered themselves to be the descendants of Guru Nanak Dev and engaged mainly in the trade practices. The Sikh Sardars (chieftains) had allotted them big estates. For instance, the estate in Una and in other places was decreed in the name of Baba Sahib Singh Bedi. The *Bedis* and the *Sodhis* always attempted to keep a respectful and a powerful place in the Sikh religion. Other than them, the *Jat* caste was the most important and the powerful caste in the Sikh religion. The main occupations of *Jats* were farming and serving in the army. In fact, the *Jat* community was the first ranked community in the world because of their masculinity, physical strength, bravery, and sense of valor. The *Jats* were further divided into various groups through the *Gots* (sub-castes). The *Aroras* and the *Khatris* were also important castes among the Sikhs. Their main occupation was trade. The *Majhbi Sikhs* were also in a great number among the Sikhs. They were known as *Chuhras*³⁵ before their entry into the Sikh religion. But the Gurus gave respect to each low caste and they were called *Majhbi* (the religious ardent) Sikhs after their entry into the Sikh religion. They were in large number in the Sikh religion.

But after the Sikh Gurus, the Sikhs belonging to the lower castes could not receive the same respect as was given to the *Bedis*, the *Sodhis*, the *Jats* and the *Khatris*. Thus, the

³⁴ Rajmohan Gandhi, *Punjab: Aurangzeb Ton Mauntbaitan Tak Da Itihas*, Unistar Book Pvt. Ltd., Chandigarh 2015, PP-35, 40.

³⁵ Bhagat Singh, *Punjab Da Itihas*, *op.cit.* PP-659, 660.

Sikh religion could not give a complete respect to the Sikhs coming from the marginalized community, though it did not believe in the discrimination based on caste. Due to this, the Sikh religion could not come out completely out of the *Brahminism* and the caste influence³⁶.

Besides the *Jats* and the *Khatris*, the Sikh society also included in the artisan castes. such as carpenters, blacksmiths, barbers, tailors, goldsmiths, and the potter, etc. And there were the ones associated with farming such as *Kamos*, *Mali*, *Saini*, etc. Thus, the Sikh society too was divided into numerous castes. Though the Sikh society was inflicted with these evils yet the *Sangat* and the *Pangat* traditions founded by the Sikh Gurus are still in vogue which completely weakens these evils. It is because of this, the caste divisions among the Sikhs are not as rigid as it is among the Hindus. Sikhism is against the caste system. According to Sikhism, all the caste are equal. The Sikhism believed in the one God concept. So, in this concept the caste is doesn't matter³⁷.

Thus, the caste system has greatly affected the Punjab society. The caste system became a big obstacle for the national unity. The people belonging to different castes and religions hated each other and used to quarrel with each other. The spirit of mutual unity diminished among them. Due to the caste system, the road to individual progress was also blocked because the people belonging to the higher castes were given all opportunities of earning money and making progress, but the ones belonging to the lower castes had very little opportunities of progress. The people belonging to the higher castes looked upon the people from the lower castes in hatred because the ones belonging to the lower castes were considered low. This affected not only the individual but the society as a whole as well. The selection of profession was different for different castes and an individual had to select the profession associated with his caste though he might have been interested in any other profession. The caste system gave birth to untouchability. The people from the higher castes hated the Shudras. If they confronted any Shudra while going out to work, they considered to clean themselves essentially. The evil of caste also gave birth to the economic inequality among the people because the Shudras were allowed only to be servants³⁸. This did not give them a good income. But the upper

³⁶ *Ibid.* P-660.

³⁷ D.A. Low, *Status of Occupation of the Dependent Castes in the Punjab Society in the Nineteenth Century*, The Punjab Past and Present, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1983, PP-414, 425.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, P-425, 435.

castes adopted various kinds of professions which made them economically more developed. The caste system was a big blockade in personal development because the people from the lower castes always felt suppressed. This affected the Hindu society most because being more rigid it was subject to more divisions. This greatly weakened the Hindu society³⁹. Actually, the caste system is anti-democratic. Democracy believes in equality whereas the caste system is based on inequality.

Thus, the caste system affects the society very deeply. The impact of caste system had grown abundantly in the Hindu, Muslim and Sikh religions all which took the form of a serious social evil by the beginning of the 19th century. But an important change took place in the caste system in Punjab during 1849-1900. During that time, the British occupied the Punjab and they made attempts to rectify the social evils which resulted in important changes in the society. It had many reasons - such as the influence of modern or western education, industrial progress, progress in the means of transport and communication, urban influence, religious and social movements, and the steps taken by the Government⁴⁰.

Religion was the basis of education before the arrival of the British in Punjab. The education was imparted in the temples, mosques and the *Gurudwaras* only. Only the upper classes received education and the lower classes were thus deprived of education. The religious education was conservative which supported the caste system in a direct or an indirect way, but revolutionary changes took place after the arrival of the British. The British started western education in the Punjab which spread the western ideas among the people of Punjab. Having influenced by the western education, the education spread many new ideas. This brought an awakening among the people through education. The British Government opened schools and colleges at various places where the children from the lower and the higher castes studied together. The western education brought an awakening among the lower castes too and they became aware of their rights. This caused a setback to the caste discrimination⁴¹.

When the British got their rule consolidated in Punjab, they established several industries in Punjab for their economic profit. Due to that, the production work moved from the small village industries to the heavy industries. This made the village artisans

³⁹ *Ibid.*, P-435, 448.

⁴⁰ Rajpal Singh, *Punjab Di Itihasik Gatha* (1849-2000), Peoples Forum, Bargari, Punjab, 2016, PP-35, 44.

⁴¹ Trilochan Singh Gill, *Bharat Di Azadi Lehar*, *op.cit.*, PP-50, 55.

unemployed. But the workers were needed for the industry established by the English. Therefore, the village people from different castes moved to cities and got employment in the big mills of the cities. Due to this, the people from different castes and religions started working in the industry. In the industry, the working people interacted among themselves and a worker had to mix with the workers and employees from each caste. So, because of this, the social evil of caste system started getting eroded slowly due to people's mutual contact⁴². The people started coming closer to each other. Thus, the evil of caste started ending due to the progress of industry. Yes, the evil is ended.

Similarly, the progress in the means of transport is an important feature of the English rule. The English developed the means of transport and communication for their self-interest because it was not possible to run the administration without those means. This increased the contact between the people of the country from different religious and social backgrounds. The people from different castes travelled in the buses, in the carts and in the trains together. This brought people from different provinces close together. They heard each others views and the wrong traditions active in their minds got eliminated. This helped to eliminate the evil of caste system and increased the nationalistic feeling among the people⁴³. Among the means of communication, the radio, the newspaper, the books, and the magazines, etc. influenced the people mainly. The radio disseminated the ideas on international basis. The newspapers, the magazines and the books spread the intellectuals' ideas to the nook and corner of the country and helped in raising voice against the caste system⁴⁴.

In Punjab, the development of cities started with the development of the industry. The people from different religions, castes, classes and the provinces started living in the cities because there was plenty of commerce, trade and industry in the cities. The cities had big population because of the industry, the trade, the employment, and the education. People from different castes mingled with each other in the cities and came closer to each other. The people's relation among themselves reduced discrimination among them⁴⁵.

⁴² Tara Chand, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Volume II, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, New Delhi, 1974, PP-278,280.

⁴³ *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. XX, Delhi, 1909, P-236.

⁴⁴ S.K. Bajaj, & J.S. Rekhi, *Bharat Da Itihas (1818-1919)*, *op.cit.*, PP-165, 166.

⁴⁵ *Gazetteer of Punjab, Provincial Series*, Volume 1, Calcutta, 1888-89, P-110.

The people from different castes worked together in the cities. It was difficult to maintain the caste distinctions and the discriminatory practices⁴⁶.

Besides this, the religious and the social reform movements helped in eliminating the caste system. The big efforts were made by the Brahmo Samaj and the Arya Samaj. The Brahmo Samaj was established by Raja Ram Mohan Roy in 1829. Raja Ram Mohan Roy campaigned through the Brahmo Samaj, vehemently opposed the discrimination by the caste system and stressed upon adopting the principle of social equality⁴⁷. Swami Dayanand raised his voice against the caste system and the other social evils by founding the Arya Samaj in 1875. According to him, the establishment of the Vedic system was possible only after the establishment of the *Varna* system in place of the caste system. Actually, Swami Dayanand considered the caste system harmful because it was based on birth, whereas the *Varna* system was better because it was based on one's profession. Therefore, to reform the society, the implementation of the *Varna* system by eliminating the caste system was needed⁴⁸. The social evils could be weakened by this.

In the Muslim society too, a big contribution was made by the Aligarh and Ahmadiya movements to eradicate the social and the religious evils. The Aligarh movement was started by the eminent socio-religious reformist Sir Sayyad Ahmed Khan. This social movement though could not eliminate the evils from the society but it blocked the spreading of the social evils. Thus, the thinking of the Muslim people changed with the influence of this movement. The distinction of high-low among Muslims was eliminated to a great extent by Sir Sayyad Ahmed Khan's campaign against the social evils⁴⁹. After the Aligarh movement, the Ahmadiya movement was started by Mirza Gulam Ahmed. This movement too contributed in a big way to eliminate the evils prevalent in the Muslim society. An appreciable feature of this movement was that it adopted a soft policy towards other religions⁵⁰.

Similar to this, the Namdhari and Singh Sabha movements emerged to eliminate the religious and social discrimination and the social evils from the Sikh religion. The

⁴⁶ Sudarshan Singh, *Life-Style of the People of Punjab*, op.cit., P-18.

⁴⁷ Manmohan Singh, *Sufi Mat Ate Dharmak Lehran*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1993, PP-76, 77.

⁴⁸ Fauja Singh (ed.), *History and Culture of Punjab*, Publication Bureau, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2010, PP-29, 30.

⁴⁹ Trilochan Singh Gill, *Bharat Di Azadi Lehar*, op.cit., PP-64.

⁵⁰ Ganda Singh (ed.), *Punjab 1849-1960, Bhai Jodh Singh Abhinandan Granth*, Khalsa College, Patiala, 1962, P-171.

Namdhari movement was founded by Baba Ram Singh in 1857. He opposed the social evils found in the Sikh religion very strongly. The Namdharis stressed upon mutual solidarity for this. The Singh Sabha movement emerged in 1873. It also made strong efforts to eliminate the social evils that had entered the Sikh religion. The founders of the Sikh movement knew that an awakening was needed to eliminate the evils of caste system from the Sikh religion. To spread education for this, the *Khalsa* schools and colleges were established. This created awareness among the people. By this, the caste system was kept away from the Sikh religion to a great extent and the society changed⁵¹. Thus, due to the efforts of various religious and social reform movements, this social evil was weakened.

The Government also made several efforts to eliminate the caste system and a number of laws were passed in opposition to the caste system. The English implemented the principle of equality before law for the people from all castes and religions. This gave a blow to the caste system and the position of the Brahmins was quite lowered. The reason for this was that the privileges given to the Brahmins had no importance in the laws implemented by the British. During the period of British administration, the powers of the *Panchayats* were also slowly passed over to the courts⁵². This situation was also not in favour of the caste system because the *Panchayats* also first looked at the caste of the person and then passed the punishment. Thus, the people belonging to the higher castes had mild punishment and the ones belonging to the lower castes were meted out with harsh punishments. This way, this situation also helped in maintaining the social position of the higher castes. But the British changed⁵³ this situation completely through law and all of the castes became equal before the law.

The British also passed some laws of the kind which influenced the caste system greatly. To stop the influence of the caste system, the British took the first step in the form of passing the Caste Disabilities Removal Act, 1850. By this law, the British Government helped those people who were shunted out of their castes. Through this law, someone could change his religion and could convert to any religion. Thus, this was the first legal action of the British Government in favour of the low-castes. Similarly, inter-

⁵¹ Giani Amar Singh, *Sikh Itihas*, Chatar Singh Jivan Singh, Amritsar, 1968, PP-228, 231.

⁵² *Census 1911*, Vol. XIV, Punjab, P-423.

⁵³ Bhagat Singh, *Punjab Da Itihas*, *op.cit.*, PP-730, 731.

caste marriage was allowed⁵⁴ under the Special Marriage Act, 1872. But a prerequisite imposed by the Government for this was that the wife and the husband had to declare that they followed no religion. All these efforts made the caste system very weak⁵⁵.

Thus, we can state that many important changes took place in the caste system. After the establishment of the British rule, there were changes not only in Punjab in the political and economic domains, this also made changes in the same way in the social domain as well. Thus, the education, the means of transport and communication, socio-religious movements and the efforts made by the Government put together important contributions in bringing the change in the caste system. Due to these efforts, the caste system got weakened and a social change began. Though this change had happened slowly. The caste system in India is the paradigmatic ethnographic example of caste. The caste system as it exists today, is thought to be the result of development of Gupta empire and during the collapse of the Mughal era and the rise of British colonial regime in India. Between 1860 and 1920, the British segregated Indians by caste, granting administrative jobs and senior appointments only to Christians and people belonging to certain castes. In 1948 negative discrimination on the basis of caste was banned by law and further enshrined in the Indian constitution, however the system continues to be practiced in India with devastating social effects. New developments took place after India achieved independence, when the policy of caste based reservation of jobs was formalized with list of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Discrimination against lower castes is illegal in India under article 15 of its constitution and a few departments in the government of India track violence against Dalits nation wide.

⁵⁴ Giani Amar Singh, *Sikh Itihas*, *op.cit.*, P-232.

⁵⁵ Ravinder Nath Mukherjee, *Bhartiya Samaj Aur Sanskriti*, Vivek Prakashan, Delhi, 1987, PP-239, 240.

CHAPTER- 2

THE SOCIO-RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS AND THEIR IMPACT

Due to the critical situation in Punjab, a number of socio-religious reform movements emerged in Punjab during 1849 to 1900 AD. The brave and valiant Punjabi fighters were engaged in wars for many centuries. After the consolidation of the English rule, a political peace was established in Punjab. To develop Punjab socially, a number of peaceful reform movements emerged. With the advent of the English in Punjab, the Punjabi people not only got acquainted with the western ideas, the western ideology had immense influence upon them. Due to the spread of education by the English Government, a special passion emerged in Punjab. This resulted in the beginning of a number of reform movements. Some of these reform movements emerged out of Punjab itself and some others came from other provinces of India¹.

The Namdhari movement has an important place in the history of Punjab. This movement was a part of the '*jagiasi* (the enquiring) - '*abhiyasi*' (the practicing) movement which was firstly started by Jawahar Mall. It could also be stated that the Namadhari movement was a form of the *Jagiasi-Abhiyasi* movement started by Sai Jawahar Mall but it separated itself from its original form and took an independent form. This movement campaigned according to the higher ideals of Guru Nanak Dev and Guru Gobind Singh². Sai Jawahar Mall was a true and firm follower of Gurbani, devotional singing and of Gurus' legacy. His primary vocation was to propagate Sikhism. He was given a famous name of Sai because of his absorption in meditation of God. Due to the religious campaign of Sai Jawahar Mall, Hazro became a big campaign center. Baba Balak Singh has been a high profile person of this sect who achieved a great success due to his *Naam Abhiyas* (meditating upon the creative principle) and campaigning for Sikhism. He developed the *Jagiasi-Abhiyasi* movement, propagated and made it grow. His deeds and successes can be guessed from the fact that Baba Balak Singh came to be recognized³ as the founder of the movement started by Sai Jawahar Mall.

¹ Sudarshan Singh, *Punjab Da Itihas* (1849-1949), Publication Bureau, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1991, P-55.

² Shamsher Singh Ashok, *Punjab Dian Lehran* 1850-1910, Ashok Pustakmala, Patiala, 1974, P-55.

³ Piara Singh Padam, *Sankhep Sikh Itihas*, 1469-1989, Kalam Mandir, Lower Mall, Patiala, 1990, P-207.

Baba Balak Singh was born⁴ in 1799 in the home of Dial Singh Arora in a village Sarvaalaan of the Atak district. In 1828, his elder brother Bhai Manna Singh shifted his shop from Sarvaalaan to Hazro. Baba Balak Singh also started living in Hazro. There, he met with *Sai Jawahar Mall*. He was so much impressed by him that he became his disciple. He became famous for his meditation and campaigning for religion. For this, he began to be counted among the founders of this sect⁵. When *Sai Jawahar Mall* shifted to Rawalpindi, he handed over⁶ the management of the Sikh campaign center of Hazro to Baba Balak Singh. He managed this center with great ability till his death. He passed away in 1862⁷.

Baba Balak Singh taught his disciples to meditate upon God always, to have simple marriages, to perform marriages in the Anand-custom, not to accept dowry, to abstain from tobacco and liquor, not to beg, to treat everyone like their co-religious, and not to hurt anyone's feelings⁸. Baba Balak Singh had three famous disciples - one was his nephew Bhai Kahn Singh, the second was Bhai Lal Singh who preached in Amritsar, and the third was Baba Ram Singh Bhaini of the Ludhiana district who later became Guru of the Namdhari movement⁹.

Baba Ram Singh was born in the home of Bhai Jassa Singh carpenter in 1816 AD in the village Bhaini Raia of the district Ludhiana. Baba Ram Singh had knowledge of *Gurmukhi* and theology. The Sikh rule was at its zenith during his young days. He joined the cavalry of *Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh*. In 1831, Baba Ram Singh's platoon had to go to Hazro on a Government assignment. There, he met Baba Balak Singh¹⁰ and he was greatly impressed by him. Because of this, he joined this sect.

In 1857, on the Vaisakhi day at Bhaini Sahib, Baba Ram Singh established a new organization by baptizing five Sikhs. This was named as Namdhari. Guru Gobind Singh also established *Khalsa* on the Vaisakhi day. Baba Ram Singh resurrected the *Khalsa* by baptizing the five Sikhs in the same way. These five Sikhs were Bhai Kahn Singh Nihang, Bhai Labh Singh, Bhai Naina Singh, Bhai Atma Singh and Bhai Sudh Singh. Baba Ram

⁴ *Khalsa Samachar*, 5 December, 1940, Amritsar, P-3.

⁵ Kirpal Singh, *Sikh Itihas De Vishesh Pakh*, S.G.P.C., Amritsar, 1995, P-171.

⁶ *Rawalpindi Gazetteer*, 1883-84, (Lahore; Punjab Govt. 1895 reprint, Sang-e-Meel, Lahore, 2001), P-38.

⁷ *Op.cit.*, P-39.

⁸ Trilochan Singh Gill, *Bharat Di Azadi Lehar*, Velvis Publishers P.P.5, Mauriya Enclave, Delhi, 2000, P-75.

⁹ Kartar Singh, *Sikh Itihas, Bhag Duja*, S.G.P.C., Amritsar, 1961, PP-205, 206.

¹⁰ Sukhjit Singh, *Punjab Dian Rajnitak Te Itihasak Lehran*, Lokgeet Parkashan, Chandigarh, 2014, P-15.

Singh baptized many more Sikhs other than these five. Baba Ram Singh asked all these Sikhs to follow the path shown by Guru Gobind Singh. They were asked to bear the five Ks namely *Kangha* (the comb), *Kachchha* (the loin garment, underwear), *Karha* (the iron bracelet), *Kes* (the hair), and *Kirpan* (the sword). The Government had banned carrying sword then¹¹. Therefore they were asked to carry *Lathi* (the fighting stick).

Besides this, the Namdharis were ordered to wear white dress, support white turban and keep a white string of beads for meditation. The Namdharis were also called Kukas (the shouting ones) because they used to start shouting in passion while reciting the holy verses. Because of this, people started calling them Kukas. Baba Ram Singh has used the tag '*Sant Khalsa*' too for his companions¹².

Baba Ram Singh converted Bhaini Sahib into the main centre for the Kukas. Besides this, he established 22 campaign centres in different parts of Punjab. He appointed a representative in each campaign centre who was called '*Suba*' (literally province). Besides Bhaini Sahib, the Subas began the religious campaigns in Lahore, Amritsar, Sialkot, Mukatsar Sahib, Gujranwala, Jalandhar, Ferozepur, Ludhiana, Ambala, Karnal, Patiala, and Jind, etc.¹³ centres.

When the Namdhari movement started, the social condition was rather bad. All those evils had surfaced again against whom the Gurus had waged a struggle. During Baba Ram Singh's times, the social condition was very precarious. At that time, the people either had forgotten the Guru's advice or were ignoring them deliberately. Due to a phenomenal rise in the social evils, Baba Ram Singh had to face a large number of difficulties. Many *Bedis* and *Sodhis* had proclaimed themselves as Gurus¹⁴.

The women, who were accorded by Guru Nanak a very high rank in the Sikh religion were subject to social oppression again. An abhorable custom of killing the girl child was in vogue. The evil custom such as child marriage was also in vogue. The widows were looked at hatefully as if they were not a part of the society. Actually, they were meted out with a very bad treatment. The custom of dowry had taken a horrible form. The caste and high-low discrimination had increased by leaps and bounds¹⁵. To eradicate those evils,

¹¹ Suwarn Singh Virk, *Kuka Lehar De Amar Nayak*, Lokgeet Parkashan, Chandigarh, 2017, P-3.

¹² Piara Singh Padam, *Sankhep Sikh Itihas*, (1469-1489), *op.cit.*, PP-207, 208.

¹³ Gurcharan Singh, *Punjab Da Itihasak Sarvekhan (Aad Kaal Ton 1947 Tak)*, Kapur Printing Press, Ambala, 1962, PP-300, 301.

¹⁴ Sangat Singh, *Itihas Ch Sikh*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2003, P-144.

¹⁵ Krishan Gopal Lamba, *Punjab Da Azadi De Andolan Vich Yogdan*, Lokgeet Parkashan, Chandigarh,

Baba Ram Singh advised his disciples to abstain from child marriage, and the intoxicants. In fact, the main goal of this movement was to root out the aberrations and evils that had afflicted the Sikh society. Therefore, Baba Ram Singh stressed upon the construction of a progressive society by eliminating the evils prevalent among the people¹⁶.

Baba Ram Singh did not believe in caste and high-low distinctions. He accorded a high place in society to the low ranked ones. He campaigned for inter-caste marriages. Baba Ram Singh was in favour of widow-marriage. Therefore, he encouraged widow-marriages¹⁷. He paid particular attention to the improvement of the women's condition and their progress. He was in favour of educating women just like men. Therefore, he paid particular attention to their education. At that time, many evils such as killing the girl child, selling them, and marrying them at a tender age were prevalent. These evils were more common among the higher castes. Baba Ram Singh campaigned for eradicating these evils from the Sikh society. This resulted in a partial elimination of these evils¹⁸. Baba Ram Singh is remembered as the first liberator of women from the point of view of social reform. He started the custom of *Anand Karaj* (marriage according to the Sikh tenets). In this, a simple marriage was performed without any costly costumes or wasteful expenditure¹⁹.

During the congregation on the Vaisakhi day of 1863, a number of issues regarding social reform were deliberated upon. At that time, a number of notions based on blind faith and social evils were prevalent in the society²⁰. On the one side, Baba Ram Singh lifted the people spiritually with the magnificence of *Nam* (meditation), while, on the other side he brought a revolutionary change by eliminating the evils of the society²¹. The Namdharis paid particular attention to the costumes and the eating habits. The intoxicants were prohibited. Besides this, a particular attention was paid to the cleanliness as well.

PP-13, 14.

¹⁶ Fauja Singh, *Kuka Movement*, Moti Lal Banarsi Das, Delhi, 1965, PP-11, 15.

¹⁷ Sangat Singh, *Itihas Ch Sikh*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2003, P-144..

¹⁸ Dalip Singh Namdhari, *Bharti Sutantarta Itihas Da Sunehri Pana Kuka Lehar 1857-1947*, Lokgeet Parkashan, Chandigarh, 2005, PP-52, 53.

¹⁹ Charnjit Kaur Mann, *Namdhari Movement*, Proceedings of the Punjab History Conference, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2011, P-546.

²⁰ Shamsheer Singh Ashok, *Punjab Dian Lehra, 1850-1910, op.cit.*, P-67.

²¹ Kirpal Singh Kasel, *Tavarikh Sant Khalsa Gur-Itihas*, Arsi Publishers, Chandni Chauk, Delhi, 2006, PP-549, 550

The Namdhari movement was, though, a religious and social movement, even then its political aspect cannot be ignored. Namdhari movement slowly made big strides. In the beginning itself, the number of retired soldiers of the old *Khalsa* army joining Namdhari movement was on a rise. By the time it drew the Government's attention in 1863, it had become a command of saint-soldiers who practiced fighting in the nights²². To gain information about this movement, the British Government started keeping an eye on the Namdharis. The Namdharis resorted to civil disobedience and boycotted the Government products. They considered Baba Ram Singh as Guru Gobind Singh²³. They wanted to finish the foreign rule of the British and wanted to make the country free from them. They also tried to seek help from the ruler of Kashmir and the Governments of Russia and Nepal against the English but they did not succeed. They wanted to make Maharaja Dalip Singh as the ruler of Punjab but could not succeed. The Namdharis also started a campaign against cow-slaughters. Because of this, they killed many cow-slaughters of Amritsar, Raikot, and Malerkotla²⁴ in 1871-72. For this, the Government arrested the Namdharis and executed 66 Namdharis by canon fire. Baba Ram Singh was exiled to Rangoon where he passed away in 1885²⁵.

Thus, we can state that the chief goal of the Namdharis was to eliminate the social evils through social reform. Therefore, they formed their principles by keeping this goal in sight and followed them firmly. Baba Ram Singh had thought that social reform and religious awakening were very essential, to cultivate political awareness among Indians. Therefore, he stated social reform to be the first step of the road to attain liberation from foreign rule²⁶.

After the Namdhari movement slowed down in Punjab, another reform movement Singh Sabha began in Punjab. This comprised of liberal and radical both kinds of Sikhs. The earlier Sikh movements namely Niranjani and Namdhari believed in the living Guru after the ten Gurus. But there were Sikhs in the Sikh religion who disagreed with this

²² Shamsheer Singh Ashok, *Punjab Dian Lehran*, 1850-1910, *op.cit.*, P-131.

²³ *Ibid*, P-28.

²⁴ Ganda Singh (ed.), *Punjab 1849-1960, Bhai Jodh Singh Abhinandan Granth*, Khalsa College, Patiala, PP-107, 108.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, P-112.

²⁶ Gurcharan Singh Brara, *Bharti Azadi Da Andolan*, Punjab State University, textbook Board, Chandigarh, 1975, PP-43, 44.

concept of Namdharis²⁷. For this reason, the Namdhari movement slowed down and the Singh Sabha movement started.

There were a number of reasons for the beginning of the Singh Sabha movement. There were some evils in the Namdhari movement of Baba Ram Singh which were against the tenets of Sikh religion. Idol worship, caste-discrimination and untouchability were some of the evils which had engulfed the Sikh religion. This took the people of Sikh religion away²⁸ from the Guru's advice. The Namdhari movement made efforts to eradicate the caste-discrimination and other social evils from Punjab. It was successful to a great extent in this. But after the lapse of some time, these evils affected Baba Ram Singh too. This made the social reformist Namdhari movement slow down in Punjab. The result of this was that the social evils which were reduced to an extent, they raised their head again. The obnoxious evils of caste-discrimination occupied the main space in society. The Sikhs from the lower castes were not allowed to enter the *Gurudwaras*. This made these people turn to the Christian religion²⁹.

At that time, the large fear which was faced by Sikhism from the Christian missionaries, because after Punjab was made a part of the British imperialism, the missionaries accelerated their activities in Punjab. When Maharaja Dalip Singh and the Raja of Kapurthala joined the Christian religion, it made a big blow to the Sikh society. The Sikhs from the lower castes were already joining the Christian religion very easily. By this they hoped for a better employment and they also attained a good status in the society. The youth which attained education in the missionary schools came under the influence of the Christians and they paid no attention to Sikh customs and started trimming their hair. The second biggest danger to Sikh religion then was from the Arya Samaj. At that time, Swami Dayanand started negating other religions to campaign for the Hindu religion and to establish the importance of the Vedas. The Sikh community couldn't tolerate this abuse. Other than this, four Sikh students Aya Singh, Atar Singh, Sadhu Singh and Santokh Singh of Amritsar *mission* expressed their desire to join the Christian religion. This caused a bit tumult among the Sikhs. Pandit Shardha Ram Philauri used some inappropriate words about the holy scriptures of Sikhs while he was delivering a religious discourse at Guru Ka

²⁷ Shamsheer Singh Ashok, *Punjab Dian Lehran*, 1850-1910, *op.cit.*, P-84.

²⁸ Surjit Singh Nanua, *Sankhep Sikh Itihas*, Manjot Parkashan, Patiala, 2008, P-203.

²⁹ Kartar Singh, *Sikh Itihas*, *op.cit.*, PP-268, 269.

Bag, Amritsar³⁰. This caused a vibration among the Sikhs and this became a main reason in starting the Singh Sabha movement.

To save the Sikh religion from the onslaught of the Christian religion and to eliminate the evils prevailing in the society, Sardar Thakar Singh Sandhawalia gathered the Sikhs at Amritsar in 1873. Harnam Singh, a Sikh aris to crat from Kapurthala converted soon after Maharaja Dalip Singh. The Sri guru Singh Sabha at Amritsar was formed at a meeting on 1st October 1873. This was attended by several elits Sikhs including some Gianis, priests, and Granthis. The following were selected as office bearers : Thakar Singh Sandhawalia president, Giani Gian Singh Amritsar secretary, Amar Singh Deputy secretary and Dharam Singh was Treasurer. The organization decided to work to “re established the real Sikh values”³¹. Singh Sabha at Lahore was formed by the Sikh elite in Lahore on 2 November 1879. The majority of Sabhas were members of the Khalsa Diwan. A number of rules were framed to run this Sabha in a proper manner. It was essential to have faith in the Gurus’ advice to become its member. Each member had to take an oath for remaining faithful to the Sabha and to serve the Sikh thought. Other than this, he had to pay some levy too to the Sabha. In the beginning of the Singh Sabha Amritsar, it had 95 members and this number increased. The Singh Sabha formed its Executive Committee which comprised of the President, Secretary and some more members. These were elected democratically. Thakar Singh Sandhawalia and Giyani Giyan Singh³² were appointed its President and Secretary respectively.

Thakar Singh Sandhawalia was born in 1837. His father’s name was Sardar Lehna Singh. Since he was of a very young age at the time of the annexation of the Punjab, he couldn’t be a part of the upheavals of 1848-49. He was first appointed as an Extra Assistant Commissioner in 1865. After this, he remained a member of the Committee made for the management of Darbar Sahib, Amritsar. This made him know the evils prevalent in the society and campaigns of the Christian religion. Due to this, he took other Sikhs with him and started the Singh Sabha, Amritsar.

The goals of the Singh Sabha movement were to establish the sanctity of the Sikh religion once again, to eliminate the caste-discrimination and to remove illiteracy, to get the

³⁰ Shyamala Bhatia, *Social Change And Politics In Punjab*, Enkay Publishers, New Delhi, 1987, P-151.

³¹ Harjinder Singh Dilgeer, *Sikh History in 10 Volumes*, Sikh University Press, vol. 4, Belgium, 2012, PP-49,69.

³² *Report On The Administration Of Punjab And Its Dependencies For Lahore 1897-98* (Lahore 1898) No. 162, P-cccix.

religious and historical books written and to get them published, to seek help from the British in the educational policies, and to eliminate the evils³³ which were hurdles in the development of the Sikh religion.

The development of the Singh Sabha was at great pace during the last years of the 19th century. In the light of the progress of the Singh Sabha Amritsar, many Singh Sabhas were formed in different parts of the Punjab. It was a new turn in the Sikh history, when the Singh Sabha movement gathered momentum. This gave a new energy to the Sikhs. After the Singh Sabha movement began, the educated people, the Sikh scholars and the Sikh missionaries of Punjab joined the movement. This greatly added to the impact of Singh Sabha movement. The chief aim of this Sabha was to eliminate the social evils and to spread the western education. Due to these reforms³⁴, the Singh Sabha faced opposition³⁵ too at several places.

There was no such unity among the top three founders of the Singh Sabha Amritsar, which is essential for the success of any organization. These founders were Thakar Singh Sandhawalia, Kanwar Bikram Singh Kapurthala and Baba Khem Singh Bedi. Among them, Kanwar Bikram Singh had the view that the Singh Sabha should engage only with the social reform activities and should keep away from politics. Sardar Thakar Singh Sandhawalia wanted to uproot the British empire from Punjab and establish the Sikh rule again. Baba Khem Singh Bedi supported the social reforms on the one hand and having faith in the living Guru, he campaigned in support of this. Due to these conflicts of opinion, this Sabha couldn't become much popular. This made the activities of the Sabha dim further³⁶.

After the influence of the Singh Sabha Amritsar waned, the Singh Sabha Lahore was established in 1879 with the efforts of Bhai Gurmukh Singh³⁷. Bhai Gurmukh Singh was born in 1849 in the house of Vasawa Singh of Kapurthala who was a poor peasant *Jatt*. He gained education with the help of Kanwar Bikram Singh. Along with his education, Gurmukh Singh used to join Singh Sabha Amritsar with Bikram Singh. Due to this, Bhai Gurmukh Singh engaged himself with the social reform and with the elimination of evils prevailing in the Sikh religion. In 1876, when Gurmukh Singh realized that influence of the

³³ Jagjit Singh, *Singh Sabha Lehar 1873-1902*, Lahore Book Shop, Ludhiana, 1974, P-14.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, P-26.

³⁵ Giani Amar Singh, *Sikh Itihas*, Bhai Chatar Singh Jivan Singh, Amritsar, 1968, P-230.

³⁶ *Khalsa Akhbar*, April 14, 1899, Lahore, P-8.

³⁷ *Op.cit.*, P-231.

Singh Sabha had waned and that the campaign for the Christian religion was on the rise³⁸, the Singh Sabha Lahore was then founded with his efforts.

Dewan Boota Singh was the President and Bhai Gurmukh Singh was the Secretary of the Singh Sabha Lahore. The Singh Sabha Lahore had greater influence than the Singh Sabha Amritsar because the Singh Sabha Amritsar was under the influence of the elite Sikh Sardars whereas the Singh Sabha Lahore was more democratic in nature. The most of its members came either from the middle class or from the lower class. Bhai Gurmukh Singh, Giyani Ditt Singh, Bhai Jawahar Singh and Bhai Lakshman Singh were all either from middle or from the lower class. In this way, the Singh Sabha became the centre of the Sikh renaissance³⁹.

Besides this, another institution 'Khalsa Dewan Amritsar' was established. This was established to remove the differences between the Singh Sabha Amritsar and the Singh Sabha Lahore. The ruler of Faridkot, Bikram Singh was made the Patron, Baba Khem Singh Bedi was made the President, and Bhai Ganeshi Singh and Bhai Gurmukh Singh were made Secretaries of the Dewan. But the Dewan had some managers with Hindu leanings. In the 1890, Sikh groups formed many Khalsa Diwans in towns and cities, while qural groups formed their own Sikh Sabhas. By 1902, there were over 150 Singh Sabhas and Khalsa diwans in existence another attempt brought 29 of these Khalsa diwans and other Sikh societies under a Chief Khalsa diwan, partly due to the need for greater political coordination in the face a for more powerful common adversary, the Arya Samaj, the main representative of political Hinduism in Punjab. This and the nature and character of the Singh Sabha's modernizing zeal, was motivated in large part by the Arya Samaj's own political innovation of the term 'Hindu' from meaning a non-muslim inhabitant of India to a specifically religious identity embodied by the term. "Hinduism" that was a reason Khalsa Diwan invite the Hindu⁴⁰. The managers of the Khalsa Dewan couldn't stop untouchability, Hinduised Sikh customs, idol worship, particularly the idol worship inside Sri Darbar Sahib Amritsar⁴¹. Bhai Gurmukh Singh didn't like all this phenomena. Due to this, he established the Khalsa Dewan Lahore in 1886⁴². Bhai Gurmukh Singh and his

³⁸ Kartar Singh, *Sikh Itihas, Bhag Duja, op.cit.*, PP-274-275.

³⁹ Piara Singh Padam, *Sankhep Sikh Itihas 1469-1989, op.cit.*, P-218.

⁴⁰ D. Petric, *Memorandum On Recent Development In Sikh Politics*, The Punjab Past and Present, Vol. IV, Part II, Patiala, 1970, PP-310-311.

⁴¹ *The Civil And Military Gazetteer*, April 30, 1888, Lahore.

⁴² Trilochan Singh Gill, *Sikh Itihas*, Velvis Publishers P.P.5, Mauriya Enclave, Delhi, 1998, P-78; The

comrades were the members of this Sabha. All the members of this Sabha were determined social reformists. Therefore, the efforts for removing the untouchability among Sikhs and the evils such as caste-discrimination started immediately after the establishment of the Sabha.

At this time when social reformists in India and Punjab were working hard for removing religious and social evils, the British rulers paid no attention to it. But due to the pressure mounted by these movements, the Government passed the inter-caste and community marriage Act in 1872. In 1891, by another law they abolished the child marriage⁴³. The most important social reform carried out by Singh Sabha movement was the reform for women⁴⁴. It contributed in providing a place to women which is equal to men. They campaigned for education to women and for widow-remarriage. The Singh Sabha achieved a complete success in providing a higher status to women⁴⁵. The Singh Sabha struggled for changing peoples' attitude towards women and eliminating the veil-custom among them, because there was no place for such custom in the Sikh society⁴⁶.

The Singh Sabha made great contribution to education by establishing educational institutions. The Singh Sabha opened the schools at various places for promoting education. These institutions stressed upon the development of the Punjabi language along with the religious education. Though the Singh Sabha opened these schools for promoting education but this doesn't mean that they opposed western education. Rather, they equally stressed upon the need for attaining the western education by the students from the schools established according to the Sikh tenets⁴⁷. In 1876, the Singh Sabha opened the Punjab University Oriental College. The study of Punjabi language was begun there. Bhai Gurmukh Singh was appointed Professor of Punjabi there⁴⁸. Gurmukh Singh and Ditt Singh together carried out big reforms. They made the people aware about the social evils and made them move on the right path⁴⁹. Gurmukh Singh and Ditt Singh played an

Khalsa, June 6, 1900, Lahore.

⁴³ Rajwant Singh Rana, *Azadi Di Lehar Vich Punjab Te Bangal Da Hisa*, Manprit Parkashan, Delhi, 1997, P-31.

⁴⁴ *Khalsa Advocate*, 22 April 1905, Amritsar, P-3

⁴⁵ *District Gazetteer Multan*, Lahore, 1901-02, P-98.

⁴⁶ *Khalsa Akhbar*, January 3, 1896, Lahore.

⁴⁷ Ganda Singh (ed.), *Punjab 1849-1960*, *op.cit.*, PP-127, 128.

⁴⁸ Jagjit Singh, *Singh Sabha Lehar 1873-1902*, *op.cit.*, PP-19, 20.

⁴⁹ *Census Report of The Punjab*, 1911, Volume XIV, Punjab, P-294, Para 386.

important part in the Lahore Singh Sabha of 1879. They started the '*Gurmukhi Akhbar*' in 1880⁵⁰.

Bhai Gurmukh Singh started campaigning in 1880 for starting the Khalsa College, to promote education. He proposed a resolution to the Singh Sabha and wrote several articles for this in the *Gurmukhi Akhbar*. Bhai Gurmukh Singh expressed his views for establishing the Khalsa College before the Sikh religious (*Panthak*) heads. The Sikh Sardars formed a committee to deliberate upon this. After the deliberations, the Sikh Sardars handed a letter to Lord Duffron on 22nd April, 1885⁵¹. The English Officer greatly appreciated the educational movement of the Sikhs. This greatly encouraged Bhai Gurmukh Singh. He started seeking help from the British Government for establishing the Khalsa College. Financial help was also sought from the Sikh *Riyasats* (principalities). With the support of the British Government, the Khalsa Diwan Lahore constituted the 'Khalsa College Sthapna Committee' on 22nd February, 1889 to promote education movement⁵². Its first meeting was held in Lahore on 22nd February, 1890. Bhai Gurmukh Singh was founder of this. After a long struggle, the foundation of the Khalsa College was laid by James Lyal the Lord in Amritsar on 5th March, 1892. Sir William Ratingon was made the first President of the Khalsa College and Mr. J.C. Omen the first Principal. One of the founders of the Khalsa College, Sardar Jawahar Singh was made Secretary⁵³ of the 'Khalsa College Council'.

Similarly, to impart education to the women, famous women education centres like Sikh Kanya Mahavidyalya, Ferozpur, Khalsa School, Kairon, and Vidya Bhandar, Bhasaurh were opened. By this, the Singh Sabha made great contributions to spread education among the women and to their upliftment⁵⁴.

Besides this, the Singh Sabha started to get the Punjabi books published and the Khalsa Printing Press was established in Lahore in 1883. Many other printing presses were opened along with this where books related to the Sikh history and religion and small magazines were printed in Punjabi. The publication of newspapers in Punjabi also began. The first *Khalsa Akhbar* was printed in Punjabi in 1885.

The *Khalsa Samachar* was founded in 1899 which became a prominent Sikh magazine. This magazine made great strides during Bhai Vir Singh's tenure because he was a

⁵⁰ *Khalsa Samachar*, November 11, 1899, Amritsar.

⁵¹ Gurnek Singh Neki, *Singh Sabha Lehar De Usraie*, Literature House, Amritsar, 1985, PP-29, 30.

⁵² *Ibid.*, P-30.

⁵³ Ganda Singh (ed.), *Punjab 1849-1960, op.cit.*, P-128.

⁵⁴ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, May 6, 1898, Lahore.

prominent scholar, poet, and commentator on religious books. He established the Khalsa Tract Society in 1894. It had its head office in Amritsar and Bhai Kaur Singh was its main guide. A monthly '*Masik Tract*' started being published by it. Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha published '*Gurshabd Ratnakar Mahan Kosh*' during this period which is considered his great literary contribution. The Singh Sabha also published the book on Sikh religion⁵⁵ by McCauliffe.

With the efforts of the Singh Sabhas, Khalsa hospitals were opened in Punjab where poor were treated free. The *Yatim Khanas* (orphanages) were opened for the orphans belonging to the Sikh religion and *Andh-Ashram* (shelter for the blind) for the blinds. The Singh Sabha missionaries reformed the society by opposing the untouchability, caste-discrimination, and false value system. This made the Amritsar and Lahore Singh Sabhas as the favourite institutions of the Sikhs.⁵⁶

During this time, the Singh Sabha had no political goal. They didn't want to oppose the British in any way. In the beginning, the Singh Sabha and the British Government worked together. The educated Sikhs were of the view that jobs and some other concessions be obtained from the British. But the Singh Sabha couldn't remain aloof from the political situation prevailing then because the Singh Sabha campaigns brought awareness among the people which made them demand particular political rights⁵⁷. Thus, the reforms carried out by the Singh Sabha in the social and religious domains made significant contributions to eliminate the evils affecting the Sikh society⁵⁸. The spread of education brought awakening among the people which developed a national sentiment among them.

During the later half of the 19th century, reform movements took place to eliminate the evils of the Hindu society. Through these reform movements, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Devinder Nath Tagore, Keshav Chander Sen, Ishwar Chander Vidya Sagar, Swami Vivekanad, and Swami Dayanand made significant contributions to eliminate the social evils in Punjab⁵⁹.

⁵⁵ Harjinder Singh Dilgir, *Sikh Kaum Di Duji Jaddojehd: Sikh Tavarikh* (1849-1947), S. Surjit Singh Chhadauri, 2008, PP-722-724.

⁵⁶ Khushwant Singh, *Sikh Itihas (1839-2004)*, Tr. Gurcharan Singh Aulakh, Lahore Book Shop, Ludhiana, 2006, P-155.

⁵⁷ Jodh Singh, *Sikh Dharam Vishavkosh*, Publication Bureau, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2008, P-504.

⁵⁸ Jagjit Singh, *Singh Sabha Lehar 1873-1902*, *op.cit.*, P-20.

⁵⁹ S.K. Bajaj and J.S. Rekhi, *Bharat Da Itihas* (1818-1919), Publication Bureau, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2000, P-202.

Swami Dayanand was born into a Brahmin family in 1824. When he was 14 years of age, he visited a Shiva temple along with his family to worship there. He realized that the Shiva idol save others which cannot save itself from the rats. Thus, Swami Dayanand lost faith in religion and he started living with Swami Virjanand in Mathura. After acquiring teachings from Swami Virjanand, Swami Dayanand engaged in removing social evils and superstitions from the people. He used to deliver lectures at various places and inspired people to get rid of the social evils affecting the Hindu society. He went to Banaras, Calcutta, Punjab and Rajsthan for this⁶⁰. Swami Dayanand was a reformer and believed in pragmatism. He preached against many rituals of the Hindu religion such as idol worship, caste by birth, animal sacrifices and restrictions of women from reading Vedas. He was not only a great scholar and philosopher but also a social reformer and a political thinker. Dayanand was responsible for the revival of the Indian educational system by bringing together pupil from different strata of the society under one umbrella, that is, classroom. He wrote a book named '*Satyarth Prakash*'⁶¹ in 1874. He described his teachings in this book.

Swami Dayanand had a great faith in the Vedas and considered Vedas as the repositories of true knowledge. There was no place in Arya Samaj for the worship of Gods and Goddesses. They believed only in one God. Therefore, they argued against the idol worship. They didn't believe in caste-system either. The people of all castes were equal for them. Besides this, Swami Dayanand campaigned for equal status of men and women. He also campaigned against the *Sati Pratha*, female infanticide and for widow-marriage. He was in favour of women's education.

Thus, Swami Dayanand felt the pulse of the times and arrived at the conclusion that an institution to eliminate the social evils should be established through which the people's thinking could be changed. For this, he established an institution named Arya Samaj in Bombay in 1875. Slowly, the branches of this institution started spreading in the whole of India. But the Arya Samaj achieved the greatest success in Punjab⁶².

In January 1877, the Viceroy of India, George Litton called the famous Delhi Darbar. Swami Dayanand also participated in this. Some representatives from Punjab met Swami Dayanand there and invited him to visit Punjab. After some time, Swami Dayanand started

⁶⁰ Sudarshan Singh, *Punjab Da Itihas* (1849-1949), *op.cit.*, PP-72, 73.

⁶¹ Tara Chand, *History Of The Freedom Movement In India, Volume II*, Ministry of Education, Government of India, New Delhi, 1967, PP-421-422.

⁶² S.K. Bajaj & J.S. Rekhi, *Bharat Da Itihas* (1818-1919), *op.cit.*, P-202

for Punjab and reached Lahore via Ludhiana. He established the first Arya Samaj of Punjab in Lahore. Lala Mool Raj was appointed its first President and Lala Sai Das its first Secretary. In the beginning, the Lahore Arya Samaj had 300 members. The Arya Samaj gained such an astounding success in Punjab that it left the Bombay Arya Samaj behind⁶³.

After the establishment of the Lahore Arya Samaj, Swami Dayanand stayed in Punjab for 15 months and he visited different cities of Punjab during this period. First of all, he established Arya Samaj in Amritsar, Gurdaspur and Jalandhar. The members of these Arya Samaj spread Swami Dayanand's ideas with great enthusiasm which made a large number of educated people to join Arya Samaj. The Punjab Brahmins were less orthodox compared to the Brahmins of other provinces. They were engaged in occupations other than the priestly engagements. These Brahmins and the people from the Khatri and Vaish castes considered Swami Dayanand's teaching akin to theirs. Therefore, Swami Dayanand gained better success in the Punjab⁶⁴. There were several reasons for Arya Samaj's success in Punjab. First, the people of Punjab had been facing foreign attacks. They were tired of the war life. Therefore, they were in search of a leader who could liberate them from such evil society⁶⁵.

The people of Punjab had a new ray of hope after listening to Swami Dayanand's teachings. During the Middle Age when India was engulfed by conservative customs and superstitions, Guru Nank Dev and his successors brought a thinking among the people through their teachings which eliminated the social evils of the world. But with the passage of time, the people were again infected by these customs and superstitions. The Sikh Gurus liberated them from these. Thus, Swami Dayanand came as a new ray of hope for the people of Punjab⁶⁶. But the Christian missionaries and the Muslims were attempting religious conversions in Punjab. Swami Dayanand raised his voice against the conversions and started the Shuddhi or religious conversion movement again to bring the people from the lower castes back into the Hindu religion. He joined the people who had converted to Christianity or Islam back into the Hindu religion and gave them a status equal to the higher castes. Arya Samaj started the Shuddhi movement in Lahore too in 1893. Brahma Samaj

⁶³ Ganda Singh (ed.), *Punjab 1849-1960, op.cit.*, PP-149,150.

⁶⁴ Ravinder Kaur, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements And The Press (1885-1910)*, Proceedings of the Punjab History Conference, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2008, P-630.

⁶⁵ J.N. Sarkar, *Swami Dayanand Saraswati - His Place In India, A Life History*, Harbilas Sharda (ed.), Dayanand Commemoration Volume, Ajmer, 1937, P-10.

⁶⁶ *Op.Cit.*,P-11.

had also been established in Punjab by then. A large number of educated Bengalis joined the Brahmo Samaj. They started obtaining higher level jobs in Punjab. This proved to be a challenge⁶⁷ for the people of Punjab. Due to this, they started joining the Arya Samaj. A reason other than this for the success of the Arya Samaj in Punjab was to give an equal status to women in society. Also, most of the Arya Samaj members were literate and a large number of them were teachers, doctors and lawyers. The caste-system was also weakening the Hindu society during those days. The Arya Samaj not only opposed the untouchability, it also made every effort to bring the people from the lower castes back into their society through the Shuddhi movement. The people saw a new hope in this and they started joining Arya Samaj. Actually, the Arya Samaj came into existence through the efforts of the common people. The middle class joined it in great numbers which became a factor for its success⁶⁸. At that time, some such evils afflicted the society of Punjab which needed a fight against them. A lower status to women, prohibition of widow-remarriage, child-marriage, the veil-custom, the dowry custom, and the untouchability were such social evils which were eating into the society of Punjab. The Arya Samaj decided to eliminate these evils.⁶⁹

Swami Dayanand accorded rights to women equal to men. He considered men and women equal. The principles framed by him applied equally to both. Swami Dayanand was in favour of educating boys and girls both. He motivated women to get educated and to study the Vedas. Some women made important contribution to the Arya Samaj movement⁷⁰. The Arya Samaj not only raised its voice against the child-marriage, it also motivated people for widow-remarriage. In the Arya Samaj gatherings, a campaign was waged against these evils. The D.A.V. institute didn't allow admission to the married children⁷¹. Lala Lajpat Rai, Harbilas Sarada, and Mukhtiar Singh worked for making a law for abolition of child-marriage and in favour of encouraging inter-caste and inter-religious marriages. This is called Sarada Act. Ganga Ram founded the '*Vidhwa Vivah Sahayak Sabha*' (the society helping widow-marriage) in Lahore and its branches were opened in many cities of

⁶⁷ Satish Kumar Sharma, *Social Movement And Social Change - A Study Of Arya Samaj And Untouchables In The Punjab*, B.R. Corporation, Delhi, 1985, P-25.

⁶⁸ Ganda Singh (ed.), *Punjab 1849-1960, op.cit.*, P-152.

⁶⁹ *Op.cit.*, P-26.

⁷⁰ Satyendra Prakash Nanda, Aas, *Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati: Jivan Karya Evam Darshan*, Alok Prakashan, Pathankot, 1996, P-85.

⁷¹ Madhu Chopra, *Bharat Ke Samajik Aur Dharmik Jivan Me Aarya Samaj Ka Yogdan*, Satyam Publishing House, 2006, P-73.

the country. This was to encourage widow-remarriages. The Arya Samaj opened *Ashrams* (homes) in many places. They also made many efforts for the widow women⁷². The veil-custom was prevalent among women then. The Arya Samaj took strong steps against this. The women were invited in the societal meetings. They were encouraged to engage in social service. Sarla Devi and Poorni Devi's names are eminent for such work. The Arya Samaji women joined to form a League. They trained women in tailoring and embroidery⁷³. The Arya Samaj also raised its voice against the dowry-system. The Arya Kumar Sabha made particular contribution in this⁷⁴. The Arya Samaj also worked against the evils of drinking and gambling. The Arya Samaj also raised its voice against prostitution. They formed a *Naik Jati Sudhar Sabha* for this purpose. The girls belonging to this caste were admitted to the Arya Schools. Besides, they were housed in *Arya Ashrams*⁷⁵.

The caste system have kept India greatly backward. The Shudra caste was particular victim of this evil. A feeling of untouchability against them got established. This caste was prevented from entering the Hindu temples. The Christians and the Muslims took advantage of this frailty. They began attracting the lower castes into their religious fold. Swami Dayanand raised his voice against this custom. He started the Shuddhi movement and provided equal status to the Shudra caste people in his society. Some Arya Samajis did not like it in the beginning. The Christians stated about this that the Arya Samaj has given up the caste system but the Arya Samajis have not⁷⁶. There is no doubt that our society is still shackled by the caste-system. Though there were some evils prevalent in the Arya Samaj, but yet the Arya Samaj gave a direction⁷⁷ to our society like the Sikh Gurus.

After the death of Swami Dayanand on 30th October, 1883, the Arya Samaj decided to establish a Dayanand Anglo-Vedic School in his memory. The people made huge donations for the success of this school. Rs. 7000/- got collected in the first gathering itself. Malik Jawala Parsad made a contribution of Rs. 8000/- and Baba Narayan Singh that of Rs. 10000/-. Some people decided to contribute one tenth of their salary every month. In this

⁷² *Ibid.*, P-74.

⁷³ S.R. Bakshi, Arya Samaj, *Swami Dayanand And His Ideology*, Volume II, Anmol Publications, New Delhi, 1991, P-11.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*,P-12.

⁷⁵ Jagjivan Mohan Walia, *A History Of The Punjab (1799-1947)*, Kalyani Publishers, Ludhiana, 1992, P-239.

⁷⁶ Sudarshan Singh, *Punjab Da Itihas (1849-1947)*, *op.cit.*, PP-72-73.

⁷⁷ Ganda Singh (ed.), *Punjab 1849-1960*, *op.cit.*, P-154.

way, they started contributing to the Dayanand Fund on the occasion of birth day, promotion in job, marriage and other occasions for celebration. Lala Lal Chand was elected the first President of this Fund committee. The appeals made by Lala Lajpat Rai, Guru Dutt Vidyarthi, and Mahatma Hans Raj for the funds never went empty. One must remember that Sayyad Ahmad Khan's Islami College, Aligarh, or Khalsa College, Amritsar were fully patronized by the provincial rulers and the British Government. But the Arya Samaj had no help of this kind. Even if the British Government offered any help to them, they did not accept it⁷⁸. According to the principles laid out for the Dayanand College, there was a special arrangement for the study of Hindi, Sanskrit, and the Vedas but the study of Science and English literature were also given importance. A training of industrial skills was also promised along with the general studies⁷⁹. According to the rules of this institution, only the representatives from Arya Samaj could be its members and only the Indian teachers could teach there. Along with this, they accepted no economic help from the British Government. A rule was also laid out to give free education to students as far as possible⁸⁰.

All these facts show how Arya Samaj wanted to kindle a spirit of self-confidence and self-reliance among the people. It brought the *Swadeshi* (nativity) spirit in the education system. Actually, the Arya Samaj set a standard of its own for its educational institutions which were distinct from the prevalent western system to a great extent. Mahatma Hans Raj agreed to become the Honorary Head Master of the Dayanand School and he became Honorary Principal later on. He did a great work for Dayanand institutions⁸¹. In 1899, D.A.V. School was opened and D.A.V. College was opened later on. Both of these institutions became famous in Punjab. At the time of the Silver Jubilee celebrations of this institution, the School had 1739 students on its rolls and the College had 903 students. Of these, 700 students lived in the boarding house. Not only in terms of the number, in terms of results to the students of the D.A.V. institutions have kept their place of pride at the University level⁸². The Arya Samaj have made particular contribution for the women education too. The place which the D.A.V. School and the D.A.V. College had for boys'

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, P-155.

⁷⁹ Amrit Lal Gupta, *Bharti Sutantarta Da Itihas*, Punjabi Publishers, Jalandhar, 1964, PP-90, 91.

⁸⁰ S.R. Bakshi, *Arya Samaj And Philosophy Of Swami Dayanand*, Vista International Publishing House, Delhi, 2005, P-180.

⁸¹ Madhu Chopra, *Bharat Ke Samajik Aur Rajnitik Jivan Me Aarya Samaj Ka Yogdan*, *Op.Cit.*, P-141.

⁸² *Report Of The Managing Committee Of The D.A.V. College Trust And Management Society*, New Delhi, 1984-85, PP-1, 2.

education in Punjab, the same place was held for the girls' education by the Kanya Mahavidyalya⁸³ established in 1891 at Jalandhar.

Besides this, the Arya Samaj carried out several important works of social welfare. To support the orphan children was considered to be the most important responsibility by the Arya Samaj. Due to this, an orphanage was established in 1877 at Ferozepur. Children from each caste and each religion were kept in this orphanage. In 1877, one third of the children of this orphanage belonged to the Muslim religion. Along with the boarding and lodging of the children here, arrangements were also made for their education. During the horrible famines of 1896-97 and the 1899-1900 in the country, the Arya Samaj helped the people affected by the famines a lot. During this time, the Arya Samajis went to the famine affected regions and worked in all of the regions of the country and brought the orphaned children to the Ferozepur orphanage several times⁸⁴. Impressed by the good work of this orphanage, the Arya Samaj opened 10 more orphanages.

The Arya Samaj was though a religious and social reform movement, Swami Dayanand never raised his voice against the British Government. In fact, Swami Dayanand was not in favour of any revolt or agitation against the British Government, because he had no political goal. He was a religious and social campaigner. But the Arya Samajis like Lala Lajpat Rai participated in the political issues very enthusiastically. Due to this, the British Government always suspected the Arya Samajis⁸⁵. To make the Arya Samajis suspects in the eyes of the British, the Muslim opponents of the Arya Samaj also dubbed them as a political movement. Though the Arya Samaj movement was not a political movement, but Swami Dayanand's slogans of 'Back to the Vedas' and 'India for the Indians' inspired the common people to participate in the national movement. Swami used the *Swadeshi* word first of all and advised to use *Swadeshi* (native) goods⁸⁶. This filled the people with a national spirit and the Arya Samaj participated in its full power in the first national movement in Punjab. In the movement against the Patiala rule, court cases against many Arya Samajis were registered⁸⁷. Thus, the Arya Samaj infused the national spirit among the people through religious and social reforms.

⁸³ *Op.cit.*, P-142.

⁸⁴ S.R. Bakshi, *Arya Samaj And Philosophy of Swami Dayanand*, *op.cit.*, P-181.

⁸⁵ Sudarshan Singh, *Punjab da Itihas (1849-1947)*, *op.cit.*, P-74.

⁸⁶ Ganda Singh (ed.), *Punjab 1849-1960*, *op.cit.*, P-159.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, P-160.

We can, thus, state that the Namdhari, Singh Sabha and the Arya Samaj movements active during the years 1849-1900 have a special place in the social history of the Punjab. Though these were religious movements, they carried out several social reforms. These greatly helped to give birth to a new society, because they weakened the discrimination caused by the untouchability and the caste-system. A spirit of unity and equality spread around. The women were given equal place to men in the society. Thus, if these movements attempted to bring a particular change in the social structure here, the educational institutions run by them produced such patriots who never hesitated to give any kind of sacrifice for the freedom of the country.

CHAPTER-3

ROLE OF EDUCATION TO UPLIFT SOCIETY

In the ancient times, the whole of world had almost identical education system. The present day schools and colleges came to India with the advent of the Europeans and they were not very old in Europe as well. The big Universities in Europe also were schools for the religious scholars, the way they were in our country. Because of the early and fast progress of Science in Europe, their education system changed before ours' one¹.

Before the arrival of the Muslims here, the ancient Brahmins, Jains and the Budhists taught the students in their homes. The students used to be very small in number. Therefore, their teacher had no fixed time for teaching them. When the child became wise, the parents used to leave him with the Guru (teacher) for education along with some donations. The students stayed with the Guru during all the time and came back after attaining education. After this, if the student's home was near to the Guru's home, the students came back home in the evenings and went to the Guru again in the mornings to get education. They were to reach the Guru before the sun-rise and came back after the sun-set. There was no definite time of arrival or departure also. During those times, there was no system of grades also².

But with the passage of time, the methods of education also changed. In place of the ancient Gurus and Gurukuls, the Brahmins started teaching in the temples and the rest houses in the towns. The kings allotted estates to the education-temples. Various generous people donated money, built particular temple or boarding house, made food arrangement for the teachers and the students for this. This added to the spread of education and these religious cum education places kept becoming libraries as well³. Like Hindu temples, the Masjids also became centres of education with the advent of the Mughal rule where the Maulvis (muslim priests) delivered religious education. The method of teaching was akin to the temples and in place of Vedic chants, Gita or Bhagwat and other than a complete teaching of Kuran Sharif, meaning and interpretation of history, land measurement⁴, etc. were also taught.

¹ H.R. Mehta, *A History Of Growth And Development Of Western Education In The Punjab* (1846-1884), Language Department Punjab, Patiala, 1971, P-17.

² T.S. Sodhi, *Bharti Sikhia*, Bawa Publishers, 4141 Urban Estate, Phase-II, Patiala, 1995, P-475.

³ Des Raj Grover, *Development Of Primary Education In Punjab*, Proceedings of Punjab History Conference, Patiala, 2007, P-532.

⁴ G.W. Leitner, *History Of Indigenous Education In Punjab Since Annexation And In 1882*, Sang- e Meel Publications, Calcutta 1882, PP-1,2.

In the beginning when a child went to a Masjid for education, he was generally made to start on Friday after the Friday Prayer (*Jumme di namaaj*). The Maulvi was offered a piece of *jagari*, a cotton sheet of two and half to three yards and four to five *annas* (a coin, sixteenth part of a rupee). This offering could be more or less. It depended on one's wish and capacity. The Maulvi had no fixed salary. They made up their living from the earnings from the land decreed to the Mosques and the *Madrasas* or from the offerings by the students⁵. Like Sanskrit pathshalas (schools) and the Farsi-Urdu Masjids, there was arrangements for Punjabi in the Sikh *Gurudwaras* and the *Dharamshalas*. In the Gurudwaras in the towns, the *Granthis* (the Sikh priests) managed all of the education affairs, but in the villages this management was in the hands of the *Nirmalas* and the *Udasis* (two Sikh sects). They recited from the Guru Granth Sahib in the morning, recited *Rehras* and *Kirtan Sohla* (two religious compositions) and taught the children in the day time. Their method of teaching was also like the Hindus and the Muslims⁶. Earlier, the letters were taught on the leveled soil or ash but later it changed to drawing letter lines on the wooden tablets. They faced no difficulty because Punjabi was their mother-tongue. The children learned to recite Guru Granth Sahib after *Panj Granthi*, *Bai Vaaraan*, *Bhagat Bani* and the *Das Granthi* (collections of different compositions from the Guru Granth). There were no *Brahmanic Sanskrit Pathshalas* in the villages. These were either in the towns or in the big temples⁷.

In the beginning of the 19th century, when Maharaja Ranjit Singh controlled whole of Punjab, the chief language of the Lahore Darbar was Farsi. Therefore, anyone seeking a Government job had to learn Farsi well. But the illiteracy was wide-spread among the Punjab Sikhs at that time and all people of the lower castes belonging to Hindu and Muslim communities were illiterate. Only the priests (the *Granthis*) were literate at that time. Their knowledge was also restricted to reciting and singing the holy verses (Gurbani). During the Sikh rule, the Hindus and Muslims were appointed on a number of jobs such as Munshis, clerks, writers, etc. because of their good acquaintance with the Farsi language⁸.

⁵ B.S. Nijjar, *Punjab Under The Great Mughals 1526-1707*, Thacker, Bombay, 1968, P-146.

⁶ H.R. Mehta, *A History Of The Growth And Development Of Western Education In The Punjab (1846-1884)*, *op.cit.*, PP-14, 15.

⁷ *Ibid.*, P-15.

⁸ Bhagat Singh, *Punjab Da Itihas*, Punjab State University Textbook Board, Chandigarh, 1983, P-632.

During that time, the Punjabi, Hindi and Sanskrit were taught in the Gurudwaras, the temples and the mosques and the Pathshalas in the Punjab. The children belonging to different religions used to go to the Pathshalas for education. At that time, there were a number of schools in Amritsar for teaching Gurmukhi, which included schools run by Joona Singh Granthi, Bhai Ram Singh, Bhai Lakkhan Singh, Bawa Amar Das Udasi, and Bhai Kharak Singh Dhupia. Even then, the education was wider among the Hindus and the Muslims during the Sikh rule. Maulvi Shiekh Ahmed opened a Madrassa (the Muslim school) in Sialkot where proper knowledge of Farsi was provided⁹. In those Farsi schools, the Hindus and Sikhs also gained education. In Lahore, Fakir Azizudin opened a Madrassa from his own pocket to encourage the Farsi and Arabic languages. This promoted education.

But at that time, illiteracy was wider among the women. There were arrangements for education for the upper classes only. To teach the girls from the affluent families, the older learned women used to go to their homes. They were usually taught literature, mathematics, religious literature and the household chores. The number of literate women was very small at that time. But they commanded a great respect in the society. The wives of Maulvis and Sikh priests (Granthis) taught other children also along with their own which left a good impact for women in the society.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh himself was though not properly educated, but he still realized the importance of education. Therefore, he took full interest in the education for common people. He extended big economic assistance to the Muslim Madrassas, the Hindu Pathshalas, and Sikh Gurmukhi schools and established a number of new native schools¹⁰. To promote English education along with the native education in Punjab, he sent Lehna Sikh Majithia to England in 1834 to learn English there and made appropriate arrangements for the English education of his son Sher Singh. To promote English education he called John Lorry, the famed teacher of Mission School Ludhiana, to Lahore and asked him to open an English School in Lahore. The missionary priest Lorry made a condition that along with English he would teach Bible also. The Maharaja did not yield to this condition and thus his dream to open an English school in Lahore could not become a reality. He advised his subordinate to get their children educated in English language. He provided Government sponsorship for many children to go to the mission school in Ludhiana to gain

⁹ *Ibid.*, P-633.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, PP-632, 633.

a knowledge of the English language. The scholars were immensely respected during the Sikh rule. This resulted in the emergence of great historians like Sohan Lal Suri at that time. To promote education, the Maharaja allotted greater estates and scholarships to the institutions teaching Farsi, Arabic, Hindi and Gurmukhi. Thus, Maharaja Ranjit Singh made every possible attempt to promote education during the Sikh rule, but he could promote only the native education system¹¹.

The powerful Sikh rule started decaying after the demise of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. After a few years, the English annexed Punjab in 1849. With the annexation of Punjab, the whole of India came under British control. When the British occupied Punjab, the old native education system prevailed in Punjab. The western education system got started with the advent of the British. The western education had a big impact on the people of Punjab, because this new education system was associated with the new political power (namely the English). The people of Punjab started seeing a new civilization and a new world in the western education system¹².

When the British rule arrived in Punjab, the most of the schools in Punjab belonged to Farsi and Urdu ones, which were also called the vernacular schools. The most of the schools in Punjab villages were the Primary schools where the children were taught till the 5th standard and after that they were sent to the middle schools in the towns. The number of such middle schools was very small. In the middle schools, the children were taught till the 8th standard. The first three classes in the middle schools were in Urdu and the fourth used to be in Farsi. The students were adept at Farsi after studying in these schools. The Roman script was taught in the last two classes. If the students were to migrate to English schools after the primary stage in the native schools, they had to attend a special class called the Junior Special Class. In that class, the students were taught English of up to five classes. Similarly, the students passing from the vernacular middle school had to attend the one year Senior Special class. In this way, the students faced a number of difficulties due to the native education system and the western education system¹³. Still these students used to be more intelligent than the other students because they had a good knowledge of Urdu, Farsi, and the Roman scripts.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, P-634.

¹² Sonu Kapla, *Punjab Ka Rajnitik Aur Aarthik Itihas*, Lokgeet Parkashan, Chandigarh, 2004, P-64.

¹³ Ganda Singh (ed.), *Punjab (1849-1960)*, *Bhai Jodh Singh Abhinandan Granth*, Khalsa College, Patiala, P-367.

Though the western education started in the 18th century but the English had occupied many Indian regions by then. This new education system had a huge impact on the Indian people. But the English were very conspiratorial and they wanted to keep the Indians away from the influences of western education, because their goal was to keep their political power in tact. Since people could get awakened with the influence of western education, the new rulers of Punjab, the British, made attempts to promote native education system in Punjab. They wanted to keep Indians away from the influences of the western education at all costs.

Due to this reason, the English officer Warren Hastings suggested the Company Government to keep Indians away from the western education and to promote the native Pathshala system. The Company Government agreed to that suggestion. It opened a Madrassa for the Muslims in Calcutta in 1780. In this way, they wanted to win the sympathy of the Muslims by pleasing them on the one hand and to keep them away from the western education system on the other. There were about 40 students admitted in the first year in that Madrassa¹⁴. The English administrators provided text books, boarding and lodging facilities free of cost to encourage Muslims for the native education system. After about 11 years of this, the Banaras administrator Duncan opened a Sanskrit college in Banaras in 1791 to win the sympathy of the Hindus by pleasing them this way. Only the religious education was taught there. Similarly, after the military revolt in Vellore in 1811, Lord Minto sent suggestions to the British higher authorities to promote the old traditional education system.

Ten years after this, the Governor General constituted a public instructions committee with the consent of his Council which had the responsibility to preserve the native education system. This also included Prinsep and Wilson, the leaders from the eastern India. Elphinstone, the Governor of Bombay, Sir Thomas Munro, the famous William Adam from Bengal, Thomson, Lieutenant Governor of north-western states, Dr. Leitner of the Panjab University, all of these administrators were of the opinion that the native education system should be the basis of education for the Indian people¹⁵ and the Indian people be kept away from the influence of the western education to keep their political position strong.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*,P-368.

¹⁵ *Imperial Gazetteer of India, Provincial Series, Punjab*, Vol. I, 1908, P-337.

For this reason, the British Government wanted to keep the people of Punjab also away from the influences of the western education after the annexation of Punjab. The western education could widen the Punjab people's knowledge horizons which could cause awakening among them, they would then not like the subordination of the British and could revolt against the English Government. This could pose a danger to their political power. Therefore, the English wanted the old traditional mode of education to keep going on in Punjab. For instance, the Maulvis taught in the Maqtab and the Madrassas, Pathshalas were established in the Hindu temples and emphasized upon the Gurmukhi schools for the Sikhs. They wanted to restrict the Punjab education system only to religion. During that time, the Akal Bunga in Amritsar and the Damdama Pathshala in Raipur were there for the higher education in Punjab¹⁶. There was an arrangement of highly ranked scholars there.

But by that time, the Christian missionaries had also arrived with the English. They started the modern mode of education in Punjab. Those Christian missionaries opposed the English policy of depriving the people of Punjab off the modern education because the Christian missionaries wanted to propagate Christian religion through the modern education. Slowly, the English too agreed with the Christian missionaries. The British realized that the spread of Christian religion through missionary schools would strengthen the British rule in Punjab¹⁷. Therefore, the British Government extended all economic support to the Christian missionaries to open missionary schools. The Christian missionaries opened missionary schools very quickly. The first such school was opened in 1843 at Kotgarh near Simla. After that, the American mission opened an English School in Jalandhar in 1848. The district schools were opened at Rawalpindi, Gujarat, Saharanpur, Multan, Jehlam and Jalandhar between 1851-54¹⁸.

The Presbyterian Mission also made big contributions to the field of education during that time. Actually, the Presbyterian Mission had opened education centres at Ludhiana in 1834 during Maharaja Ranjit Singh's rule. But they were not in favour of propagating Christian religion in Punjab in any manner. But this Mission gave full cooperation to the Church Mission in spreading modern education in Punjab after the

¹⁶ Sonu Kapila, *Punjab Ka Rajnitak Aur Aarthik Itihas*, *op.cit.*, P-65.

¹⁷ Sudarshan Singh, *Life-Style Of The People Of Punjab (1849-1925)*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2009, PP-61, 62.

¹⁸ *Selections from Educational Records (1840-1859)*, Part II, Calcutta, 1922, P-280; and see also H.R. Mehta, *A History of the Growth and Development of Western Education in the Punjab (1846-1884)*, *op.cit.*, P-26.

demise of the Sikh rule. The Presbyterian Mission opened their famous centres at Ambala in 1848, at Lahore in 1849, and at Rawalpindi in 1865. The Church Mission opened their centres at Amritsar in 1852, at Kangra in 1854, at Multan and Peshawar in 1855. In a short time, these missionary campaigners had established 14 missionary centres, 3 small middle schools, 9 Urdu schools, 35 girls' schools, and many other schools of other kinds. The American Mission was the first to enter Punjab. They established their missions at Ludhiana in 1834, at Saharanpur in 1835, at Jalandhar in 1848, at Lahore in 1848, and at Ambala in 1850. After this, the Church of Scotland established their centres and schools at Sialkot, the Methodist Church at Lahore, Bathinda, Fazilka, Gurgaon, and Rohtak in 1881¹⁹. For this reason, this era is called the Age of Mission Schools. The Christian missionaries laid more emphasis on the middle, high and college education system. In Punjab, Punjabi was mostly spoken. But with the arrival of the British, English and Urdu languages were given more importance because Urdu was the language of the Indian courts and English was the language of the new rulers of the Punjab. The British Government was paying more attention to the modern education system not because of the social welfare of Punjab but because of their industrial profits and political interests so that they could avail more and more employees for keeping the Government machinery running. Though Punjab had produced a large number of scholars and saints before the arrival²⁰ of the British but they were of no use to the English. They needed cheap bureaucracy for their administrative and industrial needs, which was not available then. Therefore, the main motive of the British for spreading western education in Punjab was to produce clerks and petty-officers (Babus) for their needs. They wanted to promote the western education only up to the level of producing office clerks. Therefore, they wanted to create a culture through the western education where the persons were Punjabis only in colour and race but they had a outlook and ideas in support of the British. That was why the British Government gave full support to the Christian missionaries to spread the western education.

Though the education started spreading at a faster rate at that time, but the standard of the native education system had fallen very low due to the spread of the western education and the presence of the Christian missionary schools. The Government schools were completely finished in Punjab because the British Government had turned their backs completely to the traditional education system to perpetuate their political power. The

¹⁹ Ganda Singh (ed.), *Punjab (1849-1960)*, *op.cit.*, P-368.

²⁰ T.S. Sodhi, *Bharti Sikhia*, *op.cit.*, P-6.

British Government had given complete freedom to the Christian missionaries in the field of education along with the financial assistance²¹. The Christian missionaries wanted to finish the traditional education system of Punjab for a maximum promotion of the Christian religion. Secondly, the mission school teachers were well educated and they had financial support from their Government. The Company officials also used to support the mission schools financially and by other economic means. This brought the education system of Punjab completely in control of the mission schools. To promote the new education system in Punjab, the British declared that an appropriate acquaintance with English language was essential to enter a Government job. It made the people to realize that the English was the sole instrument to make a place in the new state administration. Due to such intrigues of the British Government, the Pathshalas and Madrassas, etc. started appearing to be of no use. The social reformists had a big influence on the decay of the native education system because they supported the modern education system. Therefore, when Sanskrit college was to be opened in Calcutta, the social reformists raised their voice against it. Raja Ram Mohan Roy wrote a letter to the British Government demanding modern education. He vehemently opposed the native education system. The British Government was not in favour of educating the people because they did not want to spend money on it. But they wanted to win the sympathy of the Hindus and the Muslims by opening those Hindu and Muslim schools. Due to the intrigues of the British Government and due to the support of the social reformists for the modern education system, the old Government schools started disappearing²². The presence of the native schools was reduced to only the Gurudwaras, temples and the mosques.

By the middle of the 19th century, the education had spread widely in the cities and the Tehsils. Therefore, the British officials began to think like the Christian missionaries. They promoted western education in their regions. An administrative board was constituted in 1853 and the Judicial Commissioner was given the responsibility of managing education. Till 1854, the education had spread in a big way through many missionary and native Government schools and other private educational institutions. Now the British wanted to organize the new education system in a proper way. By this time, the English language was accepted as the medium of education in Punjab because it had a number of languages where more than 100 languages were spoken which included the central and other languages. It

²¹ *Punjab Administration Reports*, 1849-51, Calcutta, 1854, P-143.

²² Sudarshan Singh, *Life-Style of the People of Punjab*, op.cit., P-62.

was very expensive to print books to promote education in different languages. The British Government was not in favour of spending much on the new education system. Therefore, the English was accepted as the medium of education for western education. Schools and colleges had been established at various places²³.

Though the new education system spread pretty fast till 1854, yet still the education system had a number of deficiencies. No University was established in Punjab till then. There was no proper arrangement for the training of the teachers. This resulted in a scarcity of good teachers. The native education system of Punjab was completely demolished. The missionary schools intensively exploited the native education system for the growth of the new education system. The England Parliament set up a committee to remove all those deficiencies. On the basis of the recommendations of this committee, the Chairman of the Board of Control, Sir Charles Wood, prepared a detailed plan about education. That plan is called the Wood's Dispatch. This Dispatch after being written was sent to the Company Government of India. The fundamental principles of education policy were given in this Dispatch²⁴. The British Government accepted the responsibility of the Government to provide education to the Indian people.

In fact, Charles Wood was a supporter of English education and knew well that the English education system was very essential to promote education system in Punjab. His policy on education is considered a watershed in the history of Punjab. That is why it is called Magna Carta of modern education in Punjab. This policy on education remained a guideline to take the Punjab education system into a right direction²⁵. In fact, it was a major step taken by the Company Government to promote education in Punjab. The goals of promoting the old native education system of Punjab and the western education system together were given.

That Wood's Dispatch gave main suggestions to the East India Company; for example, the native languages would also be promoted along with English; the private education institutions would be encouraged; the Government suggested to start the grant-in-aid scheme for those institutions. The Dispatch also recommended to establish an Education Department in each province. This education department was under a Director. 2 Inspectors, 11 Deputy-Inspectors, and 6034 Assistant-Deputy-Inspectors were appointed to

²³ *Ibid.*, P-63.

²⁴ *Administration Reports of the Punjab and Its Dependencies*, 1901-02, Punjab Government Press, Lahore, P-67.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, P-68.

assist the Director. The Universities to be established in the big cities and under them Intermediate degree colleges and arrangement for High schools, Anglo-Vernacular schools, Middle schools and Primary schools below them to be made. To raise the standards of education, normal schools be opened for the training of the teachers. The number of both the type of schools, the Vernacular schools and the Anglo-Vernacular schools, would be raised. In the north-western provinces, the basic education be given through the native schools as per the Thompson plan. This Dispatch described special facilities for the promotion of the women education. The good quality books to be got written and published for the students and a scholarship plan be drawn to help the talented students²⁶.

The suggestions given in the Wood's Dispatch were implemented in Punjab. The Education Department was established in Punjab in 1856 and a Director was appointed in it. T.W. Arnold was appointed the first Director of the Punjab Education Department. Other than Punjab, the education departments were established in Bengal, Madras, the western province of Bombay. The education department was kept under a special officer namely the Director of Public Instructions²⁷, who was to send a report to the Government about the progress made in education. After 1854, the European education spread fast in the Punjab and within a few years there were 128 schools under the Government which included 24 district schools, 100 tehsil schools and 4 normal schools for the training of the teachers. To bear the expenditure on education of Punjab, a special tax of one per cent on land was imposed. The money thus collected was to be spent on the native schools but it got spent on all the schools under the education department. As per the wish of the people of Punjab, Punjabi and Hindi schools were opened at different places. Under the impact of this Dispatch, about 100 schools got opened in 9 years. In 1857, three Universities were established in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras on the pattern of the London University to conduct examination. Grants were also given by the Government to schools. To prepare good teachers under the new education policy, the normal schools were opened in Lahore, Delhi, and Rawalpindi in 1859²⁸. After 22 years of this, the Central Training College, Lahore was established. In 1860, particular changes were made in the administration of the

²⁶ Dr. Amrit Walia, *Development of Education and Socio-Political Change in the Punjab 1882-1947*, Ph.D. Thesis, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1999, P-59.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, P-60.

²⁸ Sudarshan Singh, *Punjab Da Itihas (1849-1949)*, Publication Bureau, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1991, P-31.

Vernacular schools. The salaries of the teachers were raised which led to the closer of many schools due to shortage of funds. To get over the financial difficulty, the people of the 'local institutions' were allowed to collect funds in 1871 for an appropriate educational arrangement. To provide English education to the children of the rich people and the high officials, a large number of teachers from Bengal started coming to Punjab. The situation of the primary education was not particularly good before the implementation of the Wood's dispatch. The primary education was neglected by both the Government and the mission schools; but the Wood's dispatch paid particular attention to the primary education. In 1859, the responsibility of the primary education was given to the provincial Governments but this could not bring any improvement in the condition of the primary schools. Each province was given freedom to form education policy which caused the uniformity among the primary schools to be eroded. Each province started preparing education policy as per its own understanding. The primary education was not particularly good in Punjab. In 1882, there were 279 grant-in-aid based primary schools, 17549 Government run schools, and 13109 primary schools which received no grant-in-aid²⁹.

Important changes took place in the educational field of Punjab due to the Wood's dispatch. It made a faster growth in education. But the people receiving the modern education were mostly the rich people of Punjab who wanted to acquire good jobs through the English education. Secondly, the Government had a diplomatic policy that the education should not spread among all of the Punjabis. The Government wanted to provide education only to higher class to use them for its administrative needs. With the passage of time, the education started percolating to the lower class also which triggered the emergence of the middle class in Punjab. The Punjab peasants were not yet aware about the western education. They were of the view that education was necessary only for the people who want to get jobs³⁰. Therefore, only a person who was to get a job entered in education.

Since the British Government was not initially in favour of educating all the Indians, most of the schools, therefore, were opened only in the big cities, e.g. Ludhiana, Amritsar, Sialkot, Lahore and Rawalpindi. The British Government wanted to keep the common people away from the educational influence. The British Government also made efforts for the girls' education and for this, the first girls' school was opened in Rawalpindi

²⁹ Raj Kumar Khanna, *Development of Education System in India*, Patiala, Twenty First Century Publications, 2007, P-116.

³⁰ T.S. Sodhi, *Bharti Sikhia, op.cit.*, P-10.

in 1856. Soon, the number of the girls' schools was increased. In 1862, the English officer Robert Montgomery made hard efforts to bring the girls' education to Punjab but he failed. All of the girls' schools were kept under the grant-in-aid scheme for a good financial support to them. The Christian missionaries emphasized upon the women education. They opened the boarding schools and orphanages for the women education. The girls from the rich families were provided proper education by visiting their homes. The women education gained significant encouragement only in 1885-86 when the private social reformist institutions raised their voice for the women education³¹.

In 1856-57, a number of schools and colleges had been opened but with that all classes did not receive encouragement for education. The Hindus made a good gains from the British education policy but the Muslims were not prepared to adopt a foreign language due to their religious orthodoxy. Secondly, the British Government was also not in favour of spending too much on education system. The following table shows the money spent on education in different provinces in 1856-57³²:

Province	Income in Pounds	Expenditure on Education	Percentage of Total Income Spent on Education
Punjab	1,057,987	14,487	1.369
Bengal	11,202,641	94322	.841
Madras	4,718,036	34,222	.725
Bombay	4,600,478	35,243	.766
North-Western Province	2,724,141	33,060	1.213

The result of the entrance examination of Calcutta University in 1861:

³¹ *Op.cit.*, P-117.

³² *The Friend of India*, 7 Feb. 1861, Calcutta, P-144.

Province	Number of Candidates	Christian	Muslim	Hindu	Parsi
Punjab	2	2	-	-	-
North-Western Province	23	3	1	19	0
Lower Provinces	749	41	24	683	1
Bihar	22	1	1	20	0
Ceylon (Sri Lanka)	13	12	0	0	1
Total	809	59	26	722	2

Thus, we come to know that not only in the Punjab but also in whole of the India the Muslims were making benefit of the modern education system because the British did not have the policy of providing 'secular education' to all the Indians³³.

Other than the British Government and the Christian missionaries, 'Anjuman-E-Punjab' was established in 1865 with the efforts of Dr. Leitner which opened the first law school in Lahore in 1868. Dr. Leitner who was earlier a Professor of Arabic and Muslim law at the Kings College, London was a strong supporter of the eastern education. This made him to establish the 'Anjuman-E-Punjab' at Lahore in 1865. It had its goal to spread the eastern education in Punjab and spread knowledge among the people of the Punjab through the local languages. He opened a library and a Pathshala also for this. He opened the Oriental School in Lahore which received the financial help of Rs. 310/- from the Government. To promote the native education, the 'Anjuman-E-Punjab' opened a college and a Madrassa in which the education only of Arabic, Farsi, Sanskrit, Urdu, Hindi and Punjabi was given³⁴. Here, the western education was translated into native language. But this school was closed after one year due to the lack of money.

³³ *Ibid.*, 13 January, 1861, Calcutta, P-119.

³⁴ L.P. Mathur, *University of the Punjab, Lahore: its Origin and Objects*, The Punjab Past and Present, Vol. II, Part-1, S.No.3, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1968, P-138.

The British Government got alerted due to Leitner's those activities. The British Government assured Leitner that it would send tough directives to the Education Department for the growth of education in Punjab. Leitner was not to give in any way. He suggested the Education Department in 1865 to develop native languages, to create new literature, and to spread knowledge in the Punjab through the native languages. He gathered the social reformists for this and made them to demand the Oriental University in the Punjab. By this, he wanted to spread the western education in the country through the medium of the native languages. By this, the knowledge of modern education could be made to reach each rich and poor person living in Punjab. But the British Government was not in favour of providing education to all classes. The British Lt. Governor discussed the issue with the Principals of Madras and Calcutta. But both of them were supporters of the British Government. The British Government knew that the native education had completely ended³⁵ by then and the new education system was foreign to Punjab and by gaining knowledge through this, the people could only be able to do the work of offices and stations. Therefore, the British officials agreed to Leitner's idea. But in place of the Oriental University in Punjab, the British Government accorded permission to the plan of Panjab University College. The Panjab University College was established in January 1870 which had two primary goals of its establishment - to study the eastern language and literature and interaction of scholars with the Government officials for the education of the people of Punjab and to spread modern education in Punjab through the native languages. The Oriental School was also opened with this college where the knowledge of native languages was imported by modern methods. After two years, this school was converted into a college and the University College was converted into a University in 1882. This university had a very wide impact. Soon, Farsi, Arabic, and Sanskrit started being taught up to the general masters degree in the Shastri Department of this University³⁶. An appropriate arrangement was made for Hindi, Urdu and Punjabi in the 'Language Department'. Along with this, several schools were also established where the students were given basic education to enable them to get the college education. Apart from this, these colleges had a separate department where appropriate arrangements were made for teaching English, Medicine, Engineering, and Science.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, P-139.

³⁶ T.S. Sodhi, *Bharti Sikhia*, *op.cit.*, P-12.

Other than this, the Lahore University was established in 1869 which took the shape of the Panjab University in 1882. Mahindra College, Patiala was established in 1872 which had affiliation with the Calcutta University and it reached the degree stage by 1887. Besides this, two Government colleges were opened in Lahore and Delhi in 1864. The Government College, Delhi got closed after 12 years and the Saint Stephen College took its place. The British Government established the Law School in Lahore in 1862. This Law School had to be closed due to the establishment of the Khalsa College³⁷.

Before 1870, the Punjab Education Department faced many difficulties due to the lack of financial resources. Due to the 'financial decentralization' resolution of the Lord Mayo Government, pretty good amount was collected for educational development. Due to this, the number of primary schools in the villages and the cities increased very rapidly. But the higher education was not paid much attention. But still some institutions regarding technical education and teacher training were started during this time. For instance, the Mayo School of Industrial Art and the Central Training College were established in Lahore in 1875 and in 1881, respectively³⁸. An appropriate arrangement for the training of the students was made in this college.

The Government made special arrangements for the education of Muslims and the Muslims also took full advantage of the educational facilities provided by the British Government. Still, very few Muslim students studied beyond the middle level. Therefore, the Government encouraged them to go for appropriate education. Scholarships were arranged for the Muslim students and the college fee for them was reduced to half. In particular, Anglo-Vernacular School was opened for the Muslims³⁹.

Thus, the British Government encouraged the people to gain western education to strengthen its political position and for industrial benefits. They were successful in this to a great extent.

To promote the western education still further, the Government constituted a 22 member commission in 1882 under the Presidentship of Sir W.W. Hunter. The main aim of this commission was to examine the extent of application of the Wood's Dispatch of 1854 and to give its suggestions for encouraging the education further. This commission was

³⁷ *Gazetteer of the Rawalpindi District*, 1893-94 (Lahore: Punjab Govt. 1895 reprint, Sang-e-meel, Lahore, 2001), PP-253, 254.

³⁸ S.K. Bajaj & J.S. Rekhi, *Bharat Da Itihas* (1818-1919), *op.cit.*, PP-212, 214.

³⁹ J.C. Aggarwal, *Landmarks in the History of Modern Indian Education*, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1984, PP-22, 23.

constituted by Lord Ripon. In their investigation, the commission found that the Board of Education had not followed the 1854 policy in full⁴⁰. No appropriate steps were taken to implement the education system in the Punjab and Bombay. The British officials supported the missionary education system which resulted in the complete dismantling of the native education system. Therefore, the commission submitted its report⁴¹ in 1883 to get rid of the deficiencies prevailing in the education system in the whole country.

In that report, the suggestions about the education system were of this kind: The private educational institutions should be promoted; the grant-in-aid be continued to assist them; Particular attention to be paid for the development of the primary schools; The management of the primary schools be handed over to the municipal committees and the district boards; In a phased manner, all of the secondary schools be handed over to the private agencies and Government should give grants to assist them. This commission gave suggestions to pay particular attention to the education of women, backward classes and the Muslims. The students should be imparted knowledge about moral principles and the duties of the citizens. Special efforts to be made to support the physical education department. The Commission also gave suggestions about vocational education, libraries, text-books and scholarships⁴². But the Hunter Commission failed to recommend that the primary education be made compulsory like England in the Punjab also.

Thus the suggestions of the Commission made important contribution in the development of education. This is considered as a mile-stone like the Wood's dispatch of 1854 because it labeled the education system determined by the Wood's dispatch as a good one and stated that the latter needed no change. All of the suggestions of the Hunter Commission were accepted by the Council of the Governor General through a resolution in 1884. Due to this, the development of education in the different parts of the country gained pace. The year 1882 is still more important in the educational history of Punjab because the Panjab University, Lahore was also established during this year. It was established during the tenure of Viceroy Lord Ripon and Lt. Governor Charles Aitchison. Both of these officials made many efforts to promote education in Punjab. With the establishment of the

⁴⁰ *Home Government File No. LXXVI, on the Subject of Education in India, 1854-68, Para 6 of Letter No.14, Dated 8 April, 1861, New Delhi.*

⁴¹ *Imperial Gazetteer of India, Provincial Series, Punjab, Vol.1, Calcutta, 1908, PP-135-136.*

⁴² *J.C. Aggarwal, Landmarks in the History of Modern Indian Education, op.cit., P-23.*

Panjab University, Lahore, Punjab was saved from the possible difficulties in the growth of the educational system of Punjab⁴³.

In 1882, the Punjab Provincial Committee was formed to implement the recommendations of the Hunter Commission. With this, the women education, along with the primary, secondary, and the higher education in Punjab grew immensely during the coming years. The primary education became an important part of the local institutions. The municipal and the local boards opened many schools of theirs. This changed the complexion of the primary education completely. The primary education became almost free of cost. The local boards got the opportunity to serve the common people, they discharged their responsibility very nicely. This resulted in many reforms in the primary education and the native schools were also accepted as main part of the education system and grants were started for them. After the acceptance of the Hunter Commission's suggestions, the number of Government and private schools increased rapidly. This Commission paid particular attention to the women education. To promote the education in the private domains, the Swadeshi schools were given more assistance by the Government. Thus, the main goal of the Hunter Commission was that the public education department to be developed in such a way that the British Government could implement a good education system in Punjab⁴⁴. The management of the Government schools, thus, shifted to the boards and municipal committees. The Government started looking after a large number of Government schools which were under the Christian missionaries earlier.

There were a number of reasons for the British Government to take such steps about the education system in 1882; the people of Punjab had become quite aware due to the influence of the western education system and a movement of national awakening had originated among them. Secondly, the religious and the social reformers had also started completely opposing the missionary education of the British Government in Punjab because the missionary schools also propagated the Christian religion along with the education. This was not tolerated by the religiously orthodox Hindus, Sikhs and the Muslims of Punjab⁴⁵. This made them oppose the education policy of the British Government.

⁴³ J.F. Bruce, *A History of the University of Punjab*, Ishwar Das, Lahore, 1993, P-69.

⁴⁴ Raj Kumar Khanna, *Development of Education System in India*, *op.cit.*, P-116.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, P-117.

In 1886, the *Zimindari* (landlord) schools were also opened. The children of the feudal lords obtained education in these schools. These schools were closed during the harvest period. Those schools ran well for some time but later those were closed because they were found to be unneeded. In 1900, the number of the *Zimindari* schools had risen to 187. The number of children receiving education in those schools had reached 5562. At that time, they included the secondary education which comprised of the Vernacular and the Anglo-Vernacular schools⁴⁶. Those schools developed a lot because the demand for English was rising in Punjab and the secondary schools had appropriate arrangements for the English teaching. This resulted in a fast increase in the number of secondary schools after 1882. These schools were mostly under the Christian missionaries and the British Government. In the Punjab alone, the number of secondary schools had reached 372 by the year 1900⁴⁷. The main goal of the secondary education was to provide modern education to the students in English language.

The social reform movements also made great contribution in the spread of education in the Punjab. When the British established their full political control over India with the annexation of the Punjab in 1849, they promoted the native education system to please the Indian people. The eminent people such as the social reformer Raja Ram Mohan Roy opposed the native education system and demanded the promotion of the western education system in the Punjab. This brought social and political awareness among the people. The English wanted to keep the people of the Punjab away from the influence of the western education system. With the arrival of the Christian missionaries, the western education spread very fast in the country. After sometime, the British Government also agreed with the education system of the missionaries because the missionary schools also propagated the Christian religion also along with the western education. Secondly, the British wanted to provide the western education only to the upper classes and not to all of the Punjabis so that they could create linkages with the other common people through the rich people. Besides, the Christian missionaries wanted to completely demolish the native education system. For this, the Christian missionaries demanded more money from the Government for the missionary schools and demanded to open more schools. They also demanded in the newspapers to close down the Government schools⁴⁸. It appeared from the

⁴⁶ J.C. Aggarwal, *Landmarks in the History of Modern India Education, op.cit.*, P-24.

⁴⁷ *Selection from Educational Records (1840-1859)*, Part II, Calcutta, 1922, P-281.

⁴⁸ Amrit Walia, *Development of Education in the Punjab, 1882-1919*, M.Litt. Thesis, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1979, PP-43, 60.

education policy of the Wood's dispatch that all the Government schools in small number would be closed or would be handed over to the Christian missionaries.

Therefore, the social reformers strongly opposed the education policy of the missionary schools and started condemning the missionary schools. This brought an awakening among the Hindus, Sikhs and the Muslims in Punjab. By that time, the missionary schools had been established through the width and breadth of Punjab with the help from the British Government. A large number of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims started converting to Christian religion which gave birth to a sense of competition among the people of different religions to save their existence. This gave rise to a number of social reform movements in Punjab, e.g. Arya Samaj, Singh Sabha, Anjuman-E-Himayat-E-Islam, Satt Sabha, Dev Samaj and the Chief Khalsa Dewan⁴⁹.

The founders of the social reform movements knew well that the awareness among people was essential to save their existence. This awareness could be brought only through education. Therefore, the Arya Samaj, Singh Sabha, and the Anjuman-E-Himayat-E-Islam made big contributions for the growth of education in Punjab. The Namdhari movement took no interest in the growth of education. The Namdhari movement boycotted the British Government and also boycotted the schools run by the British Government and the Christian missionaries⁵⁰.

Seeing the rise of the social reform movements, the Christian missionaries also started spreading their education fast. The missionary schools and the missionary colleges were opened at a great pace. For instance, Forman Christian College Lahore in 1886, Scott Mission College Sialkot in 1892, Gordon Mission College Lahore in 1892, Gordon Mission College, Rawalpindi in 1893, Church Mission College, Amritsar in 1900, Edward College, Peshawar in 1900, Mission College, Lahore in 1866-69, Saint Stephen College, Delhi in 1881, Forman Christian College, Lahore in 1881, the Church of Scotland High School, Sialkot in place of the Mission College, the Inter College in 1889 and the Degree College in 1900 were opened⁵¹. That resulted in spread of the western education through the English language by the Christian missionaries and they rose fast.

The social reformers of Punjab were also impressed by the missionary education system. To save the Punjab youth from the foreign religion and culture, they (the Hindus,

⁴⁹ *Khalsa Akhbar*, 25 May, 1894, Lahore.

⁵⁰ J.F. Bruce, *A History of the University of the Punjab*, *op.cit.*, P-69.

⁵¹ Rajpal Singh, *Punjab Di Itihasik Gatha* (1849-2000), People Forum, Bargari, Punjab, 2016, P-56; *Districts and the State Gazetteers of the Undivided Punjab* Vol. I & II, New Delhi, 1993, PP-538, 540.

Muslims, Sikhs) too promoted their religion and culture through education. To fulfill this task, the social reformers started using the means of the Christian missionaries. The social reformers started opening schools of their own communities. Soon, the Islamia, the D.A.V., the Khalsa, etc. the schools with the Hindu, Muslim and the Sikh names started opening for a proper education in Punjab. The social reformers of the Punjab were in favour of promoting the education system which resulted in opening of the D.A.V. School in 1886, D.A.V. College, Lahore in 1888, Khalsa College, Amritsar in 1892, and the Islamia College, Lahore in 1892, etc. The reformers were not against the western education but they were against the propagation of the Christian religion by the Christian missionaries. They were in favour of getting all kinds of assistance from the British Government. Therefore, those native institutions demanded economic assistance from the British Government to run their schools and colleges the way the assistance was being received by the Christian missionary schools and colleges⁵². The social reformers put a demand before the Hunter Commission that the teaching of the Bible should not be compulsory for the non-Christian students studying in the Christian schools. The British Government quickly accepted that demand of the social reformers⁵³. With that, those native education institutions became main part of the education system in a very short time.

This resulted in acceleration of the development of the education system of the Punjab. Soon, three more colleges with the names of Dyal Singh College, Lahore, Sanatan Dharam College, Lahore and Khalsa College, Gujranwala were established. With this, the three older colleges namely Municipal Board College, Amritsar, Church Mission College, and the Victoria College, Lahore were closed down. In fact, Dyal Singh Majithia was greatly influenced by the ideas of the Brahma Samaj which had a goal of promoting the education system with an amalgamation of the eastern and the western culture (education). Sardar Dyal Singh School and College were good examples of the western education which wanted to promote the western education through the native languages⁵⁴.

The Panjab University got recognition from the Oxford University in 1889 and from the Cambridge University in 1896. During that time, the training of the school teachers also received particular attention⁵⁵. Normal schools were established in Jalandhar,

⁵² Rajpal Singh, *Punjab Di Itihasik Gatha* (1849-2000), *Ibid.*, P-57.

⁵³ Fauja Singh, *History and Culture of the Punjab*, Part III, Publication Bureau, Punjabi University, Patiala, PP-24, 25.

⁵⁴ Ganda Singh (ed.), *Punjab 1849-1960*, *op.cit.*, P-379.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, P-380.

Lahore, Rawalpindi, and Multan for the training of the teachers of the primary vernacular schools. The industrial schools were opened in Hoshiarpur, Gurdaspur and Kasur where education of all kinds of craftsmanship was given. The industrial school of Hoshiarpur was closed after some time and a similar school was opened in Ludhiana. Panjab University was granted authority in 1891 to award the Law and the Medicine degrees⁵⁶.

Though a large number of social and religious reform movements paid no attention to promote the education system, but the Singh Sabha movement was founded to awaken the people and education was essential for this awakening. The reform in peoples' thinking was possible only through education. Therefore, the Singh Sabha first of all established the Punjabi School in Lahore. Here, the students were taught Punjabi in the Gurmukhi script. Besides this, Kanya Pathshala, Satt Sabha School, and the Khalsa College, Amritsar were started. Singh Sabha, Lahore was formed after the Singh Sabha, Amritsar and with this the education movement among the Sikhs got going in full pace. Baba Khem Singh Bedi, the founder of the Singh Sabha, Amritsar, was the first person in Punjab who opened Gurmukhi Pathshalas for girls at Rawalpindi, Pothohar, Jehlam, and Gujarat. In 1876, the number of those Gurmukhi schools was 40 and it had reached 42 till 1879⁵⁷. Because of his great efforts, Baba Khem Singh Bedi is named the founder of the women education in the Punjab.

In the 1891, during the time of Baba Khem Singh Bedi, when all preparations were being made to open the Khalsa College, Bhai Takhat Singh Ferozepuri and Prof. Bhai Gurmukh Singh became his companions under the influence of the Khalsa Dewan, Lahore. They established the Sikh Kanya Pathshala, Ferozepur in 1892. This Pathshala, took the form of the Sikh Kanya Mahavidyalya after some time with some intense struggle. In the same college, Bhai Takhat Singh Library was opened after some time for research into the Sikh history and literature which is now famous as Bhai Ditt Singh Library⁵⁸.

The Khalsa College had been established in 1892. A few years after this in 1990, the Khalsa Dewan Lahore tried to hold an education conference to accelerate the education movement. But this conference could not be held for some time. Singh Sabha Lahore and the Singh Sabha Amritsar opened a number of other schools and colleges with the help of the Government which included Khalsa Bhujangan Ashram established by Bhai Nihal

⁵⁶ Fauja Singh, *History and Culture of the Punjab, op.cit.*, P-26.

⁵⁷ Gurnek Singh Neki, *Singh Sabha Lehar De Usraiye*, Literature House, Amritsar, 1985, P-49.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, P- 50.

Singh. Babu Teja Singh established a Bhujangan Ashram at Bhasaur. Both of these Ashrams became the main centres of women education. The founders of the Singh Sabha wanted to promote education for boys and girls both. That is why the Singh Sabha movement is called the golden age⁵⁹ of Sikh education and women education.

During this period, a number of scholars and writers made efforts to promote the native languages under the influence of Anjuman-e-Punjab and the reforms of the social reform movements. Kour Jagjot Singh, the grandson of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, made distinct contributions in promoting the native education system. He hired a number of scholars and with his own expenses opened a printing press in village Pipri, in Jhanari area in district Behrich (Awadh) to spread the Gurmukhi script. It was named Guru Nanak Press. This printing press printed books such as *Dharam Shastar*, *Granth Rajniti*, *Sikhan de Raj di Vithia*, and *Punjabi Batchit* along with *Roos da Birtant* by Bhalu Dutt⁶⁰.

The British Government made many efforts for women education. The Christian missionaries too tried to promote the women education but they could not succeed much. The Christian missionaries and the British Government could promote women education only with the help of the social reformers. In 1865-66, when the vernacular training schools were opened for the training of the teachers for the vernacular education of the girls, it was a good step at that time for the women education⁶¹. In 1882, the Hunter Commission also stressed upon the education system because the women had no right to education in the Calcutta, Madras and the Bombay universities before 1875. But the women were granted the right to higher education after the Hunter Commission⁶². In 1883, Mrs. Steele was appointed on temporary basis to look after and manage the girls' school. She was a competent woman who had good experience in the women education. The British Government appreciated her work. In 1885, Miss Waunton and Mrs. Rogers were appointed in Delhi, Lahore, Rawalpindi, Gujranwala, Jehlam and Ludhiana districts for examining and for a proper management of the women schools. In 1886, Punjab Education Department appointed good, competent and well educated teachers in all the women schools. This made a large number of women to engage in study. In 1888, Mrs. Francis was appointed to examine the reforms carried out for women education. She had appreciable

⁵⁹ Shamsheer Singh Ashok, *Punjab Dian Lehran*, Ashok Pustakmala, Amritsar, 1974, PP-248, 249.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* PP-243, 244.

⁶¹ Ganda Singh (ed.), *The Singh Sabha and the Other Socio-Religious Movements in the Punjab (1850-1925)*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1973, PP-14, 15.

⁶² Ram Ahuja, *Rights of Women: A Feminist Perspective*, Rawat Publications, Jaipur, 1992, P-96.

acquaintance with the native languages of the Punjab. Due to this, the education of women through the native education system got accelerated. But two obstacles marred the education system at that time; those were, the parents' illiteracy and teachers' apathy towards children. The British Government started sending⁶³ good and wise teachers in the Normal schools. In 1892, Normal classes were held in Alexandra School, The Christian Boarding School, The Municipal Board School and the Church of Zanana Mission to produce good women teachers for the girls' education. In 1892, the number of primary schools for women education had reached 295 to 301 and the number of candidates had gone up from 8918 to 10,027. At that time, Medical schools were opened in Ludhiana in 1894 for the Christian women with the efforts of Miss Brown. They took the shape of Medical Colleges⁶⁴ in a short time. A large number of women started obtaining education in those.

The socio-religious institutions and the social reformers made arrangements for admission of women in Medical College, Lahore in 1885. Swami Dayanand made particular contribution in women education to strengthen the economic and social position of women in society. In 1890, the *Jalandhar Samaj* started Girl School, Arya Kanya Pathshala, 9 other schools and two colleges in 1886. The Arya Samaj opened Arya Putri Pathshala, Abohar, Arya Girls' Middle School, Moga, Sain Das A.S. Girls' School, Jalandhar and the Banwari Lal Vedic Kanya Pathshala, Abohar⁶⁵. Kanya Mahavidyalya, Jalandhar was established. Thus, it was a great time for the expansion of the women education. The British Government, the Christian missionaries, the Singh Sabha, and the Arya Samaj movements made commendable contributions⁶⁶ to promote the women education system. This brought improvement in the economic and social condition of women.

Thus, a number of changes occurred in society due to the growth of education. The higher ideas developed among people due to the education. This made them make efforts to eliminate social evils. Before the arrival of the British, the education system of the Punjab

⁶³ Rajwant Kaur Bhullar, *Development of Female Education*, Proceedings of the Punjab History Conference, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2013, PP-407, 408.

⁶⁴ Ganda Singh (ed.), *The Singh Sabha and the Other Socio-Religious Movements in the Punjab*, op.cit., PP-116, 117.

⁶⁵ Sukhdev Singh, *Educational Aspects of Arya Samaj*, M.Phil. Dissertation, G.N.D.U., Amritsar, 1983, P-52.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, P-53.

was restricted to religion. The education in Punjab was obtained for religious propagation. With the support from the western education, the realm of the Punjab education widened. They started having new expectations. Other than the religion, the people started obtaining education about mathematics, technology, and science, etc. Only due to the education, a sense of respect for women was born among the people and the people were made aware about the excesses committed against the women. The social reformers and the British Government opened many schools and colleges to promote the women education where the women gained education and made an equal place with the men. They started coming out of the house-walls while receiving education. They started working in the Government and the non-Government offices. This made them compete with men in all fields of society. After the arrival of the British in Punjab, they started education system without any discrimination which made students from different religions get education together. Due to the getting of the education together by students from different castes and religions, the caste discrimination started eroding⁶⁷ in the society. This was very essential for the building of a nation.

The western ideas started spreading in the Punjab with this. The people got encouragement for reforming the social and the cultural environment. The people of the Punjab started looking critically at the social evils. The growth of education only gave birth to the literate middle class who started building public opinion, press, and the public institutions. They made people aware about the social evils which gave birth to the social reform movements. With this, the Punjab society, which was orthodox and backward, started changing slowly. Due to the growth of the education only, a sense of national unity emerged among people, because people spoke different languages in the country before the growth of education but the English language was used for the growth of the western education. The English education spread in different provinces of the Punjab which made the people from different castes to come into contact with each other⁶⁸.

We can state, thus, that important development occurred in the field of education after the merger of the Punjab with the English rule. The education in Punjab was imparted only in the temples, mosques, and the Gurudwaras. The scientific education like the present one was not imparted there. Neither did they move away from the religious literature on their

⁶⁷ Syed Nurullaha & J.P. Naik, *A History of Education in India*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1978, PP-180, 181.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*,P-182.

own. The Wood's Dispatch of 1854 established the school, college, and the University structure of today. In the same year, the Education Departments were established in the Punjab under the Director of Education. In 1882, the Panjab University was established. Similarly, the Hunter Commission on education was constituted in 1882 which made an important advance in education, though the British developed education for their own self-interest. The Government at that time did not want to spend much money on education because they were an alien Government. They wanted to produce only the literate clerks for them. Along with this, very little progress was made in the fields of the women and vocational education. But there is no doubt that the education was the biggest catalyst for change and the society had started changing with the growth of the western education in the beginning itself. This change, though, had happened very slowly.

CHAPTER-4

CHANGE IN THE CONDITION OF WOMEN DURING 1849-1900

The condition of women in India has always been very pathetic. They have always been considered below men. Due to this, they have not been given their rightful place in the society. In the Hindu society, women were never considered to be able to think and work independently at any stage of their lives. She lived under the supervision of her father in her childhood, was under the subordination of her husband after marriage and was under the subordination of her son during widowhood¹.

In the ancient times, woman was given pretty high status. No function was complete without her. In the religious life, no oblation was considered successful without her. During the Vedic period, the women had the right to education. They were married after their education and at a right age. They had the right to chose their husband. At that time, the widows had the right to remarry. They had a place in society which was equal to men². But with the change of time, the conditions changed and the social and religious status of women kept going low. During the Upanishada period, the status of women was further downgraded. At that time, her birth was considered to be the cause of all pains and the difficulties. During the Epic period, the Puranas became famous. During that time, the custom of child-marriage started and the women were deprived of the right to education. The evil of *Sati Pratha* also came into existence³.

During the period of the Smritis, status of woman was reduced to a means of producing children and of amusement. According to Manu, a woman should live under the protection of man. She should obey her husband. The Budhists and the Jainis regarded woman as a hindrance on the path to salvation. Thus, from the independent⁴ status that woman had in the ancient times, she became a slave to males and became a victim of the evils with the change of time.

With the advent of the Muslims, the position of women deteriorated still more. The veil custom started with the arrival of the Muslims. Along with this, the practices of female killing, child-marriage, Sati Pratha, etc. became prevalent. One reason for this was that

¹ Fauja Singh, *History of the Punjab*, Vol III, Punjabi University, Patiala (Third Edition-2002), P-263

² *Ibid.*, P-264.

³ Bhupinder Kaur, *Status of Women in Sikhism*, S.G.P.C., Amritsar, 2000, P-10.

⁴ Saini, B.S. *The Social and Economic History of Punjab* (1901-1939), ESS Publications, Delhi, 1975, P-64.

when the invaders attacked the land, they used to take the girls away with them. Due to that, the people started killing the girls after their birth⁵ itself and the practice of child-marriage started.

Similarly, the Hindu woman had no good status in the society even during the sixteenth century. After marriage, they were occupied merely with the household chores, such as grinding the wheat grain, milking the buffaloes, preparing food, churning the curds, spinning cotton, and fetch water for home. Their life was considered successful by merely keeping the husbands in complete comfort. The Muslim women had the custom of Burqa (veil). They had to wear Burqa from their childhood whereas the Hindu women practiced veil only after their marriage⁶. The elite women, whether they were Hindus or the Muslims, were confined within the household boundaries. It was considered against the discipline if they moved out. Therefore, they were dependent on men economically which made the men to think they were not equal to them in intellect and it is not essential to ask their opinion in all the matters⁷.

Because of the practice of marriage at a very tender age, a number of widowed women were seen in the society. In the Hindu society, the woman were not allowed to remarry. A large number of them burnt themselves in the husband's pyre. The *Sati Pratha* was more prevalent among the higher castes such as Brahmins and Kshatriyas. This practice was in vogue among the Rajputs too. When a women underwent *Sati* (killing oneself by jumping into the pyre of husband) she was respected as a goddess martyr; and the one who did not undergo *Sati*, had to spend her life in pains and difficulties. Such women were not respected in society. Therefore, they considered Sati to be better than suffering throughout the life. The practice of Sati was not both ways. This practice was not applicable to husbands⁸. If the wife of a person died before him, he never committed Sati. The practice of Sati was a test of a wife's true love and faithfulness. The practice of Sati was of two types. One was with the dead body of the husband and the other was with some token belonging to him. To die by burning oneself with the husband's dead body was called

⁵ Sukhdial Singh, *Shiromani Sikh Itihas* (1469-1708), Sangam Publication, Samana, 2014, PP-15-19.

⁶ A.B. Pandey, *Society and Government in Medieval India*, Central Book Depot, Allahabad, 1965, PP-203, 204.

⁷ *District Gazetteer of Gujarat*, Delhi, 1921, P-60.

⁸ K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan*, Munshiram Manohar Lal Publishers, Delhi, 1970, P-166.

'*sehmarna*' (co-dying) and if the husband died at a different place and the wife killed herself with some token of him, it was called '*anumarna*' (post-dying⁹).

Among the Muslims, a man could have four marriages as per his religion. The Muslims had the custom of divorce. The highly placed persons and the rich ones had many marriages. There was no provision of divorce among the Hindus¹⁰. Though there was no religious bar on marrying more than once, but among the Hindus too the higher placed people kept more than one women. If there was no child born of the first wife or due to some chronic body ailment, the second marriage was not considered an evil¹¹. The Hindus had a bad custom of killing the girls. At that time, the Emperor Akbar made some efforts¹² to stop the social evils of child-marriage, *Sati Pratha*, and the killing of the girl child, but it had no impact on the Hindu society.

During that time, the Sikh Gurus made a number of efforts to give a high status to women in the society. They were given equal position in the congregation (*Sangat*) and the community dining (*Pangat*). Besides, they were given the advice of removing the veil. They were stopped from *Sati* and encouraged them to fight in the battlefield on the sides of men in the society¹³. The status of women in Sikh religion was different from that of the Hindu and the Muslim women. The Sikh religion talked about the oneness of the humanity and equality of each kind. Guru Nanak raised the voice for the women's rights and he stated why the one who has given birth to the men and the kings be considered low. He stated, while hailing the women, that a human is born of woman, is engaged and married to a woman, and the reproduction of the world is due to woman and if the first wife dies, the husband searches for another wife¹⁴. Therefore, the woman has the right to have more respect than man.

Guru Amar Das also raised his voice against this evil. While opposing the dowry system, he stated that this practice was a social evil. According to him, a girl during

⁹ G.S. Chhabra, *Social and Economic History of the Punjab*, Sterling Publisher, Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1962, P-96.

¹⁰ Fauja Singh, *History of the Punjab*, Vol.-III, *op.cit.*, P-263.

¹¹ *District Gazetteer of Gurgaon*, Delhi, 1883-84, P-263.

¹² Pratima Asthana, *Women's Movement in India*, Vikas Publishing House, Delhi, 1974, P-4.

¹³ Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha, *Mahan Kosh: Encyclopaedia of Sikh Literature*, Language Department Punjab, Patiala, 1974, P -258.

¹⁴ Daljit Singh, *Madhkalin Samaj Vich Aurat Da Darja*, Proceedings of the Punjab History Conference, Punjabi Univeristy, Patiala, 2013, PP-572, 573.

marriage should carry the dowry of good qualities and not that of objects¹⁵. While interpreting the meaning of Sati, he said that it was not essential to burn yourself alongside husband for Sati, rather the blow of separation from the husband was more painful than dying by burning oneself. Similarly, the Gurus opposed the practice of veil and supported widow-marriage. They knew that no society can make progress till its women are not given a rightful place¹⁶. Thus, due to the teachings of the Gurus, women got a rightful place in society to a great extent. Though the Gurus made many efforts for improvement of the position of women, yet these evils prevailed in society.

By the 19th century, the condition of women had extremely deteriorated. In the Punjab, more than one marriage, the practice of killing the girl child immediately after birth, the lack of practice of widow-marriage, the practice of dowry, the *Sati Pratha* and many evils of this kind remained prevalent as it is among the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs. Though it was a crime, the killing of the girls was very rampant. It was prevalent among the Hindus, the Rajputs in particular, among the Bedi, Sodhi, and Jatt castes of the Sikhs, among the Sayyads of Muslims and among the other high ranked castes¹⁷. This practice was prevalent in most of the northern region of India, among the Rajputs of hills in Punjab, among the Khattris of Gujranwala, and in the regions of Multan, Jhang, Shahpur, Jehlam, and Lahore. It was in vogue among the most of the Bedis in Punjab. Because of this, the Bedis were generally called ‘the killers of girls’. The Jatts of Multan, Gujranwala, and Jehlam, the Sodhis of Ambala, Patiala and Nabha and also the Muslims of Jehlam and Ferozepur¹⁸ used to kill their girls.

This custom had no religious sanction but yet it came into existence to solve some problems of the society. Among the Rajputs, lot of money was spent on marriages due to the social mores. If they did not spend immensely on the girl’s marriage, their respect in their community was lowered. The Rajputs considered that day a curse the day a girl was born. The birth of son was given big importance because he was considered to be the caretaker of the family and the inheritor of the property¹⁹. It was also believed that after the death of the parents they could achieve salvation only by the religious rites by their son and only a son could carry their family’s name forward. The birth of a girl was not considered

¹⁵ Payne, C.H., *A Short History of the Sikhs*, Nelson & Sons, London, 1915, P-31.

¹⁶ J.D. Cunningham, *Sikh Itihas*, Lahore Book Shop, Ludhiana, 1985, P-59.

¹⁷ *The Gazetteer of India*, Vol. II, Delhi, 1973, P-638.

¹⁸ Payne, C.H., *A Short History of the Sikhs*, *op.cit.*, P-32.

¹⁹ K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan*, *op.cit.*, P-168.

good because the Rajputs and the high caste people thought that they would have to yield to the families where their girls were married into²⁰. The way they found out for all of those problems was to kill the girls after birth. Many methods were used to kill the girls. An opium ball was put in the girl's mouth²¹ after birth which got melted in the saliva and thus entered the body and caused the girl's death. Among the most common methods was to starve her or to put her in a pitcher till she lost her breath²². The practice among the Rajputs was to paint the mother's chest with stramonium and this poison killed the girl. In Punjab, the juice of an Akk like plant was used. Also, a pit was dug and it was filled with milk and the child was immersed into it and it resulted in the girl's death with drowning²³. Other than this, sometimes a ball of jagari was put in the girl's mouth²⁴.

In 1846-47, two thousand Bedi families lived in Jalandhar Doab and fifteen hundred in Dera Baba Nanak. There was not even a single girl alive in these families because the birth of a girl was not considered good among them and she was considered a burden²⁵. A delegation of Bedis met John Lawrence, the Commissioner of the Jalandhar Doab, on 25th April²⁶, 1846. They handed over a request letter to him. In that, they stated²⁷ that the practice of killing the girls was in vogue among them since past 400 years. The reason they gave for this was that they were from Guru Nanak's lineage and all the Sikhs worshiped him. Due to the great respect for the Guru, they did not marry the girls from their families. It was further stated in the letter that the British Government did not want to interfere in any religion. Therefore, the Hindus and Muslims should be allowed to live as per their customs without any hindrance²⁸. John Lawrence had a dialogue with them and told them that the practice was a punishable crime and a true Sikh would not have any contact with someone who committed the crime of killing one's girls. John Lawrence said that the Government

²⁰ *Ibid.*, P-169.

²¹ *Hoshiarpur District Gazetteer*, Lahore, 1904, P-60.

²² Saini, B.S. *The Social and Economic History of Punjab (1901-1939)*, *op.cit.*, P-238.

²³ Manmohan Kaur, *Role of Women in the Freedom Movement*, Sterling Publishers, Delhi, 1975, P-89.

²⁴ *Ibid.* P-90.

²⁵ Bhagat Singh, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh and His Times*, Sehgal Publishers, New Delhi, 1990, P-321.

²⁶ R.R. Sethi, *Johan Lawrence as the Commissioner of the Jalandhar Doab (1846-1849)*, Punjab Government Record Office Publication, Delhi, 1930, P-30.

²⁷ *Punjab District Gazetteer*, Vol. XIII A, Hoshiarpur District, Part A, 1904, Lahore, 1905, P-36.

²⁸ Bhagat Singh, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh and His Times*, *op.cit.*, PP-322-323.

would not allow the continuation of such a custom²⁹ and a tough punishment would be given for that crime.

Similarly, there was a bar on widow-marriage among the Hindus and the Muslims³⁰, but widow-marriage prevailed among the Jatts. In that, the elder or the younger brother-in-law of the widow used to marry her, which was called '*chaader paana*' or³¹ '*kareva*'. In this way, the widow was married in a simple ceremony.

The practice of veil was there among the Hindu and the Muslim women of Punjab. This was also there among the Sikh women. The Sikh Gurus condemned the practices of veil and the *Sati* very strongly but still the Sikh women practiced veil in front of their elders. It was not liked that they go out.³² Similarly, the *Sati Pratha* prevailed among the Sikhs under the influence of the Hindu religion. All because of this, 4 queens and 7 maidservants committed *Sati* with Maharaja Ranjit Singh³³.

Thus, the child-marriage was widely prevalent among the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs. The girls were not allowed to live in parents' home after their 6-7 years of age. Marrying a girl later than this age was not considered good. At the time of the marriage, the dowry practice was also widely prevalent³⁴. On the occasion of the marriage, the parents gave her some money and goods as per their capacity but sometimes the parents could not afford dowry due to their poverty and they used to marry their daughter with an older man³⁵ after getting some money from him.

All those evils remained in fact till the British occupied the Punjab. When the British annexed Punjab in 1849, all those evils had increased manifold. The British Government enacted many laws to eliminate those evils. Due to those social evils, the social and religious movements began³⁶ during that period which played an important role to give proper place to women in society.

²⁹ R.R. Sethi, *Johan Lawrence as the Commissioner of the Jalandhar Doab (1846-1849)*, *op.cit.*, PP-30, 31.

³⁰ B.S. Nijjar, *Punjab Under the Latter Mughals*, Thacker, Jullundher, 1972, P-257.

³¹ *Lahore District Gazetteer*, Lahore, 1883-84, P-51.

³² Saini, B.S. *The Social and Economic History of Punjab (1901-1939)*, *op.cit.*, P-240.

³³ Gulcharan Singh, *Women in the Life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, The Past and Present, Punjabi University, Patiala, April 2000, Vol. XXXI, Part-1, Serial No. 60, P-6.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, P-7.

³⁵ P.N. Chopra, *Some Aspects of the Society and Culture During the Mughal Age*, Shiva Lal Aggarwal & Co. Ltd., Educational Publishers, Agra, 1955, P-103.

³⁶ V.B. Singh, *Economic History of India*, Allied Publishers, Bombay, 1945, P-66.

In 1853, John Lawrence called a gathering in Amritsar to eliminate the practice of the killing of girls. The gathering included people from different classes. In that gathering, heated controversies took place about the killing of the girls. The people who participated in that gathering realized that they were committing a crime of killing the girls. The decisions of that gathering had a strong impact in many districts of the Punjab which made people oppose that practice. In the Punjab, that practice had been almost completely stopped by 1856³⁷. Before that, the most important action to improve the condition of women was done by Raja Ram Mohan Roy by eliminating the *Sati* practice by law. He awakened the people against the *Sati Pratha* through newspapers and through movements³⁸. He appealed the British Government to take steps against that evil. Due to that, Lord William Bentinck passed a law in 1829 with the help of Raja Ram Mohan Roy. According to that law, to kill a widow by burning her alive was declared against the law. Thus, Raja Ram Mohan Roy had taken the first step to improve the women's condition by having that practice stopped³⁹. With this, the *Sati Pratha* was eliminated from the society by law.

The widowed women were not allowed to remarry in the Hindu society⁴⁰. Ishwar Chand Vidyasagar have made a major contribution in eliminating that evil and raising the status of the women in society. In this field, he proved to be an associate of Raja Ram Mohan Roy. He waged a long struggle for widow-marriage which led to a strong movement in support of widow-marriage in 1855. He made people aware against this and with his efforts, the Government legally recognized the widow-re-marriage in 1856⁴¹. 35 widow marriages took place in 1860 with his efforts. Vidyasagar established 25 Kanya Vidyalayas for women education. Of these, he ran many schools from his pocket⁴².

An act was passed in 1870 to stop girl child killing. By this act, the officials were authorized to form a committee in places where the child killing was rampant to investigate the obligatory registration of the birth of a girl and to monitor her existence after few years

³⁷ *Punjab District Gazetteer*, Hoshiarpur, Revenue Department, Punjab, Chandigarh, 1980, P-40.

³⁸ Manmohan Kaur, *Role of Women in the Freedom Movement*, *op.cit.*, P-75.

³⁹ Sukhinder Kaur, *Status of Women (1849-1901)*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1980, P-13.

⁴⁰ Fauja Singh, *History of the Punjab*, Vol. III, *op.cit.*, P-264.

⁴¹ S.P. Sharma, *The Press: Socio-Political Awakening*, Mohit Publications, New Delhi, 1996, P-101.

⁴² *Ibid.*, P-102.

of her birth⁴³. The result of this was that the Government reports showed the decrease that occurred in the girl's number⁴⁴. Though the killing of the girls had ended but still they did not get the care which the boys got because the boys were considered the inheritors of the family and the girls were considered to be a burden on the family⁴⁵.

Similarly the Special Marriage Act was passed in 1872. By this Act, the inter-community marriages were legalized. As per this Act, those people who did not believe in any religion were able to marry⁴⁶. In this context, the Civil Marriage Act was passed in 1872 with the contributions of Kesav Chander Sen⁴⁷. This act banned the marriage of a girl below 14 years and a boy below 18 years of age. This Act also banned⁴⁸ marrying more than one woman.

Swami Dayanand also made seminal contribution in giving women an equal place to men in society. In this field, the Arya Samaj founded by him strongly opposed the evils like child-marriage, polygamy, veil practice, and the dowry practice. He was of the opinion that the women cannot have an honourable place in society till they are educated. That is why he gave an equal status to women with men in the Arya Samaj. He condemned the Medieval Age for the view that the women and the Shudras should not be allowed to get educated. Dayanand refuted the view that such an idea was available in the Vedas⁴⁹. The Arya Samaj opened the Kanya Mahavidyala in Jalandhar in 1891 for the growth of education among women which got fame not only in the country but also abroad. In 1889, the Arya Samaj established a school for girls in Ferozepur⁵⁰. After this, they also made them a part of the social reform movement.

⁴³ R.C. Majumdar, *British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance*, Part II, Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, Mumbai, 1965, P-275.

⁴⁴ Mohinder Singh (ed.), *History and Culture of Punjab*, Atlantic Publications, New Delhi, 1988. P-238.

⁴⁵ *Punjab District Gazetteers, Vol. IIIA, Hoshiarpur District, Part A*, 1904, Lahore, 1905, P-37.

⁴⁶ Amrit Varsha Gandhi, *Suppression of Female Infanticide in Punjab: Modes and Motives of the Colonial State*, Proceedings of Punjab History Conference, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2007, PP-484, 485.

⁴⁷ Manmohan Kaur, *Role of Women in the Freedom Movement*, *op.cit.*, P-76.

⁴⁸ *Census Report 1911, Punjab, Vol. XIV*, P-138.

⁴⁹ J.N. Farquhar, *The Arya Samaj*, The Punjab Past and Present, Punjabi University, Patiala, April 1973, Vol. VII, Part-I, PP-225, 226.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, P-227.

Similarly, Swami Vivekanand awakened the people by campaigning for the women's rights⁵¹. The Aligarh and the Ahmadiya movements contributed for improvement of the condition of women in the Muslim society. Though the veil practice had not ended in the Muslim society, yet it had weakened in some high ranked families. Along with this, the practice of child marriage also became weak. Many families adopted the western way⁵² of life. This led to an improvement in the condition of women.

The Namdhari and the Singh Sabha movements also made important contributions in improving the condition of women in the Sikh society. Baba Ram Singh, the founder of the Namdhari movement, made the women an equal part in the congregation (*Sangat*) by baptizing (*Amritpan*) them. He started the practice of baptizing women in 1863 in the village Siarh of the Ludhiana district and made them get an equal status. He directed his followers that they should not kill the newborn girls. He made it obligatory to end the practice of child-marriage, to educate girls and to remarry the widows. By this, the women gained higher status⁵³ in the Sikh society. In the same way, the Singh Sabha took important steps for giving an appropriate place to women in society. The Singh Sabha started a campaign for changing people's views about women⁵⁴. They also paid full attention to the women education because very few girls received education due to the veil practice and the child marriage. Baba Khem Singh Bedi was the first one to spread education among women. A number of schools were opened in the Pothohar region with his efforts. The Kanya Pathshalas were also opened in the Rawalpindi district.

For the education of women, there was no such centre at that time where the girls could come for education from outside. Bhai Takhat Singh filled this gap. Bhai Takhat Singh was a great supporter of women education and dedicated his complete life to the women education⁵⁵. In 1892, he opened many Mahavidyalayas in Ferozepur⁵⁶. The other Singh Sabhas learned from this practice and schools for girls' education were opened in

⁵¹ Saini, B.S., *The Social and Economic History of Punjab (1901-1939)*, op.cit., P-66.

⁵² Ganda Singh (ed.), *Punjab (1849-1960)*, *Bhai Jodh Singh Abhinandan Granth*, Khalsa College, Patiala, 1962, P-171.

⁵³ Dalip Singh Namdhari, *Bharti Sutantarta Lehar Da Sunehri Pana Kuka Lehar (1857-1947)*, Lokgeet Parkashan, Chandigarh, 2005, PP-52, 53.

⁵⁴ D. Petrie, *Memorandum on Recent Development in Sikh Politics*, 1911, The Punjab Past and Present, Punjabi University, Patiala, October 1970, Vol. IV, Part II, P-310.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, P-311.

⁵⁶ *Khalsa Samachar*, August 30, 1905, Amritsar.

many cities⁵⁷. These schools were opened in Lahore, Sialkoat, Rawalpindi, Gujranwala and many other places. During this time, the Kanya Pathshala was established at Amritsar. This was a type of Pathshala which educated the Sikh girls for propagation of *Gurmat*⁵⁸.

The British Government too developed many educational institutions for the growth of education among women. The Government decided to extend economic assistance for women education by the 1854 Declaration⁵⁹. In 1882, the Hunter Commission suggested to spend the major part of public funds on women education. This led to the establishment of educational institutions for them. This Commission established the Normal schools for women teachers⁶⁰. Thus, by the end of 882, the number of girls sitting for the matriculation examination increased⁶¹ from 2054 to 41,582. In 1886, a medical college for women was established in Amritsar⁶². In 1886, the first women hospital was established in Bombay. The Christian missionaries established two medical colleges in Ludhiana to educate women in surgery. Thus, the condition of women started improving with the spread of education among them.

Thus, with the efforts made by the British Government and the social reformers for improving the condition of women brought many changes in their condition. They were given high status in the society. With the legal status given to the widow remarriage, the widowed women got the right to marry. They had no such right earlier, wherever, a man could marry again after his wife's death. This injustice was undone by this Act. The children born after the remarriage were given full rights regarding property, etc⁶³. The child killing ban act was passed to stop girl's killing after birth. The birth of a girl was not welcomed. They were considered to be a blot on family's respect. Therefore, they were killed after birth. With this Act, such killings were banned⁶⁴. Similarly, the child marriage

⁵⁷ Chief Khalsa Dewan, *Silver Jubilee Book*, S.G.P.C, (Amritsar 1935), PP-155-60.

⁵⁸ Gurnek Singh Neki, *Singh Sabha Lehar De Usrayiye*, Literature House, Amritsar, 1985, PP-49, 50.

⁵⁹ *Report on the Administration of Punjab and its Dependencies for 1901-02*, Punjab Government Press, Lahore, P-164.

⁶⁰ *Report of the Hunter Commission, 1882-83: From Educational Documents in India (1831-1968)*, New Delhi 1968, P-19.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, P-20.

⁶² Sir James Dowie, *The Punjab North-West and Kashmir*, Cambridge University Press, London, 1916, P-125.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, P-126.

⁶⁴ R.C. Majumdar, *British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance*, Part II, *op.cit.*, P-276.

was banned by the civil marriage act. The age for the marriage of the boys and girls was fixed. The child marriage had a negative effect on the health of the children and the children born after their marriage were not healthy. They suffered from various types of ailments. The passing of this act in such conditions proved to be a blessing for the society⁶⁵. Due to the passage of these laws, the condition of women improved significantly.

The educational institutions started by the British Government and the social reformers for the education of women led to the spreading of education among women. Before this, they received no education of any kind and they remained illiterate throughout their lives. Due to these educational institutions, the education started growing among them. This made them aware about their rights. The social reformers too made efforts at different times to improve the condition of women. These included the equal inclusion of women in educational institutions of Namdhari, Singh Sabha and the Arya Samaj, etc. This made them to start participating in the national movement too. In Punjab, the arrival of the British and the growth of the western education made big impact on women. When they came to know that the British women and men worked equally, they became aware of their rights and they started demanding their rights⁶⁶.

Thus, we can state that the condition of women had started improving to a great extent in Punjab after 1849. A number of evils were prevalent in the society at that time, for instance the *Sati Pratha*, the child-marriage, infant killing, and the practice of veil, etc. But due to the efforts made by the religious movements active at that time and by the British Government, an improvement in the condition of women started taking place. The education was spread among women through the educational institutions established by the British Government. This gave birth to an awakening among them. Other than this, due to the start of educational institutions by them for the women education and due to their making the women an equal part in the social reform movements, the women came to know about their rights. Along with this, the acts passed by the Government put an end to the evils like *Sati Pratha*, child-marriage and the non-existence of widow remarriage, etc. But still, the evils such as child-marriage and female infanticide existed and are still existing in the society.

⁶⁵ Amrit Varsha Gandhi, *Suppression of Female Infanticide in Punjab: Modes and Motives of the Colonial State*, Proceedings of Punjab History Conference, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2007, P-486.

⁶⁶ Manmohan Kaur, *Role of Women in Freedom Movement*, *op.cit.*, P-80.

CONCLUSION

A number of changes took place in Punjab during 1849 to 1900 which ended the ancient orthodox society and the beginning of a new society took place. The British annexed Punjab in 1849. When the British annexed Punjab, a number of social evils were in vogue in the Punjab, for instance, the caste-system, the child-marriage, the *Sati Pratha*, the practice of veil, female infanticide, and polygamy, etc. This caused a severe deterioration of the condition of women in society. The British Government was not in favour of putting an end to these evils prevalent then. But the British Government too faced a number of difficulties due to these evils. The social reformers too raised their voice against these evils. This made the British Government and the social reformers to make their contribution to eliminate these social evils in Punjab.

The caste-system had seriously afflicted the society at that time. There were three major classes in Punjab, i.e. the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs. All three of them were divided into different classes due the caste-system. The Hindu society was divided into the Brahmins, Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas and the Shudras. Several sub-castes also had emerged out of these castes, for instance the Jatts, the Rajputs, and the Khatri. The caste-system among the Hindus was caught in orthodoxy. The people of one caste hated the ones from the other caste. Similarly, the Muslim society too was divided into several classes. These were, the high class, the middle class and the lower class comprising of Sufis, Sunnis, Shias, Ulemma, Sayyads, and the Ismailis, etc. Like the Hindus, the caste system was very rigid among the Muslims too. As was the case with the Hindus and the Muslims, the Sikh society too could not escape the influence of the caste-system. Though, there was no place for caste discrimination in the Sikh religion as per the teachings of the Gurus. A person had no connection with his previous caste, once he entered the Sikh religion, but after the Sikh Gurus, their teachings became just theories. This divided the people of Sikh religion into different castes, for example the Bedis, the Sodhis, the Jatts, the Majhbis, the Khatri and the Aroras. The Bedis and the Sodhis had a higher status in the Sikh society because their caste was from the Gurus' lineage. They regarded themselves higher than the other Sikhs. In fact, they had the same position in the Sikh religion which the Brahmins had in the Hindu religion and the Sayyads in the Muslim religion. But the principles of congregation (*Sangat*) and community-kitchen (*Pangat*) founded by the Sikh Gurus were making the caste-system very weak. This was the reason that the Sikhs were not as conservative as the Hindus and the Muslims. But a number evils became prevalent due to the caste-system. This had

caused a severe deterioration in the status of women. The evils such as the child-marriage, the *Sati Pratha*, polygamy, and female infanticide had spread very widely in the Punjab.

The social structure of Punjab underwent many changes during 1849 to 1900. The main reason for this was the establishment of the British rule in Punjab. With the arrival of the British, the modern and the western education spread in Punjab. The new society took birth in Punjab due to the industrial development, the means of transport and communication, the urban influence, and due to the efforts of the social and religious movements and British Government.

The education had religious bases in Punjab before the arrival of the British. The education was imparted only in the temples, mosques and the Gurudwaras and it was restricted to religion, which was received only by the people belonging to the religious class. But with the arrival of the British, the western education started in Punjab. In the beginning, the British Government wanted to keep the people of Punjab away from the influence of the western education, because the western education could bring awakening among the people of Punjab, but the Christian missionaries also came with the British Government. They criticized the Government's policy towards the education of the people of Punjab because the Christian missionaries wanted to propagate the Christian religion through the modern education system. The British officials, however, were in favour of continuing the native education system in Punjab. After some time, the British Government agreed with the Christian missionaries because the British realized that the spreading of the Christian religion in Punjab would strengthen their political position. Therefore, the British Government promoted the western education system in Punjab with the help of the Christian missionaries. Very soon, the British Government opened district schools with the help of the Christian missionaries in Rawalpindi, Gujarat, Shahpur, Multan, Jehlam, and Jalandhar in 1854. In 1854, education had quite grown in the cities and the tehsil headquarters. A large number of schools and colleges had been established with English as the medium of education. But there was no proper arrangement for the training of the teachers. Therefore, the British Parliament constituted a committee to remove the deficiencies that had cropped up in the education system. On the recommendations of this committee, Sir Charles Wood, the Chairman of the Board of Control, prepared a detailed plan for education. This is known as the Wood's Dispatch. After the 1854 Dispatch, the British Government accepted the responsibility of providing education to the people of Punjab. In 1856, the Department of Education was established in Punjab with T.W. Arnold as the first Director. With the establishment of the education department, the growth of

education acquired a fast pace. In a few years, the number of schools under the Government reached 124, which comprised of 24 district schools, 100 tehsil schools and 4 Normal schools were opened for teacher training. To arrange the finances for education, 1 per cent special tax was imposed on land. After this, a 22 member education commission was constituted by Lord Ripon. Sir William Hunter was its Chairman. The Commission realized during its investigations that the Government was not practicing the 1854 policy on education in full. This policy was not completely implemented in Punjab. Therefore, the Hunter Commission gave some suggestions to promote the education system in Punjab. This accelerated the modern education system.

The social reformers also raised their voice against the social evils in Punjab. The Namdhari movement took strong steps against the social and religious evils in Punjab. Baba Ram Singh opposed the evils prevalent in the society. He condemned the caste discrimination and to bring an improvement in the condition of the women, he condemned the Sati Pratha, female infanticide, and the child-marriage. For this, he is known as the first liberator of the women as a social reformer. After the waning of the Namdhari movement in the Punjab, the Singh Sabha movement started. The Singh Sabha was founded in 1873. It was founded to eradicate the social evils from the society. The Singh Sabha wanted to propagate the Sikh religion through social and religious reforms. They were in favour of promoting the modern education and eliminating the caste ideologies. The founders of Singh Sabha knew very well that education is an instrument to bring awakening among the people. Therefore, the Singh Sabha opened Khalsa schools to promote education in Punjab. In 1876, the Singh Sabha established the Panjab University Oriental College. The foundation of Khalsa College, Amritsar was laid in 1892. To bring improvement in the condition of the women, the women education was promoted. For this, the famous Sikh Kanya Mahavidyalya Ferozepur, the Khalsa School, Kairon, and the Vidya Bhandar, Bhadaur were opened. In this way, the Singh Sabha attempted to bring awakening in Punjab by promoting education. With this, the improvement in the condition of women occurred because of the elimination of the social evils. This also greatly weakened the caste distinctions.

Similarly, Swami Dayanand founded the Arya Samaj in Bombay in 1875 for social and religious changes. After some time, he laid the foundation of Arya Samaj in the Punjab. Listening to his ideas, a new awakening was born among the people of Punjab. The people who were engulfed by superstitions and the caste divisions began to become aware. With the establishment of the Arya Samaj in Punjab, a number of doctors, lawyers, and teachers

became its members. Due to the entry of the educated middle class in it, the Arya Samaj was successful in eliminating the social evils to a great extent. The middle class people, campaigned very fast among the common people to bring an awareness among them. Swami Dayanand, for improving the condition of women, raised his voice against the dowry system, the child-marriages, the caste system, and the infanticide. After his death, his followers established the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic School. After 1899, the D.A.V. School and the College were established. The Arya Samajis opened a number of schools and colleges to promote the women education. Thus, the British Government and the social reform movements eliminated the social evils by promoting education and by bringing the social change. The British Government enacted many laws along with the education to improve the condition of the women and to eliminate the caste system. This was a big blow to the social evils. For instance, the Caste Disabilities Removal Act, 1850 was the first step taken by the Government to eliminate the caste system. This act protected the rights of the people who were removed from their caste. In 1872, the inter-caste marriages were allowed by the Special Marriage Act. Thus, the efforts made by the British Government ended the caste system. The English official John Lawrence called a gathering in Amritsar in 1853 to eliminate the female infanticide. The people were made aware against the social evils. Raja Ram Mohan Roy made an appeal to the British Government to end the Sati Pratha through law. He awakened the people against the Sati Pratha through newspapers and campaigns. With the help of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Lord William Bentinck passed an act in 1829 and declared the burning of a widow alive an illegal act. Due to the strong demonstration of strength by the social reform movements, the Widow-Remarriage was given legal status by the British Government. Besides this, an act was passed in 1870 to end the female infanticide. The Special Marriage Act was passed in 1872. The people who did not believe in any religion or caste could marry under this act. In the same way, the Civil Marriage Act was passed in 1872 with the help of Kesav Chander Sen which banned the marrying of a girl below 14 and the boy below 18 years of age. This act also barred marrying more than one woman.

Thus, we see that a number of social changes took place after the arrival of the British in Punjab. This ended the prevalent social evils. The western education grew in Punjab with the arrival of the British. This gave birth to the middle class and the social reform movements. They awakened the people of Punjab against the social evils by their appropriate education. The social reform movements made people aware about the caste system, untouchability, child marriage, polygamy, Sati Pratha, and infanticide, etc. The

social reformers promoted modern education system to awaken the people. The growth of education brought awareness among the women. They started working by moving out of their household walls. They came to know about their rights which started the process of improvement in their condition. The British Government too enacted laws to eliminate the social evils with authority which made the social changes to happen in Punjab. Thus, the British Government and the social reform movements made commendable contributions in ending the social evils during 1849 to 1900. Society has changed a lot, but still, many social evils exist in our society which people must be aware about.

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**SOCIAL CHANGES IN PUNJAB DURING BRITISH RULE
(1849-1900)**

**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY
IN
HISTORY**

**BY
NISHA RANI
ROLL NO. 166191013**

**SUPERVISOR
Dr. Daljit Kaur Gill
(HOD Deptt. of History)**



University College of Basic Sciences and Humanities
**GURU KASHI UNIVERSITY TALWANDI SABO
BATHINDA (PUNJAB)
(2018)**

CONCLUSION

A number of changes took place in Punjab during 1849 to 1900 which ended the ancient orthodox society and the beginning of a new society took place. The British annexed Punjab in 1849. When the British annexed Punjab, a number of social evils were in vogue in the Punjab, for instance, the caste-system, the child-marriage, the *Sati Pratha*, the practice of veil, female infanticide, and polygamy, etc. This caused a severe deterioration of the condition of women in society. The British Government was not in favour of putting an end to these evils prevalent then. But the British Government too faced a number of difficulties due to these evils. The social reformers too raised their voice against these evils. This made the British Government and the social reformers to make their contribution to eliminate these social evils in Punjab.

The caste-system had seriously afflicted the society at that time. There were three major classes in Punjab, i.e. the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs. All three of them were divided into different classes due the caste-system. The Hindu society was divided into the Brahmins, Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas and the Shudras. Several sub-castes also had emerged out of these castes, for instance the Jatts, the Rajputs, and the Khatri. The caste-system among the Hindus was caught in orthodoxy. The people of one caste hated the ones from the other caste. Similarly, the Muslim society too was divided into several classes. These were, the high class, the middle class and the lower class comprising of Sufis, Sunnis, Shias, Ulemma, Sayyads, and the Ismailis, etc. Like the Hindus, the caste system was very rigid among the Muslims too. As was the case with the Hindus and the Muslims, the Sikh society too could not escape the influence of the caste-system. Though, there was no place for caste discrimination in the Sikh religion as per the teachings of the Gurus. A person had no connection with his previous caste, once he entered the Sikh religion, but after the Sikh Gurus, their teachings became just theories. This divided the people of Sikh religion into different castes, for example the Bedis, the Sodhis, the Jatts, the Majhbis, the Khatri and the Aroras. The Bedis and the Sodhis had a higher status in the Sikh society because their caste was from the Gurus' lineage. They regarded themselves higher than the other Sikhs. In fact, they had the same position in the Sikh religion which the Brahmins had in the Hindu religion and the Sayyads in the Muslim religion. But the principles of congregation (*Sangat*) and community-kitchen (*Pangat*) founded by the Sikh Gurus were making the caste-system very weak. This was the reason that the Sikhs were not as conservative as the Hindus and the Muslims. But a number evils became prevalent

due to the caste-system. This had caused a severe deterioration in the status of women. The evils such as the child-marriage, the *Sati Pratha*, polygamy, and female infanticide had spread very widely in the Punjab.

The social structure of Punjab underwent many changes during 1849 to 1900. The main reason for this was the establishment of the British rule in Punjab. With the arrival of the British, the modern and the western education spread in Punjab. The new society took birth in Punjab due to the industrial development, the means of transport and communication, the urban influence, and due to the efforts of the social and religious movements and British Government.

The education had religious bases in Punjab before the arrival of the British. The education was imparted only in the temples, mosques and the Gurudwaras and it was restricted to religion, which was received only by the people belonging to the religious class. But with the arrival of the British, the western education started in Punjab. In the beginning, the British Government wanted to keep the people of Punjab away from the influence of the western education, because the western education could bring awakening among the people of Punjab, but the Christian missionaries also came with the British Government. They criticized the Government's policy towards the education of the people of Punjab because the Christian missionaries wanted to propagate the Christian religion through the modern education system. The British officials, however, were in favour of continuing the native education system in Punjab. After some time, the British Government agreed with the Christian missionaries because the British realized that the spreading of the Christian religion in Punjab would strengthen their political position. Therefore, the British Government promoted the western education system in Punjab with the help of the Christian missionaries. Very soon, the British Government opened district schools with the help of the Christian missionaries in Rawalpindi, Gujarat, Shahpur, Multan, Jehlam, and Jalandhar in 1854. In 1854, education had quite grown in the cities and the tehsil headquarters. A large number of schools and colleges had been established with English as the medium of education. But there was no proper arrangement for the training of the teachers. Therefore, the British Parliament constituted a committee to remove the deficiencies that had cropped up in the education system. On the recommendations of this committee, Sir Charles Wood, the Chairman of the Board of Control, prepared a detailed plan for education. This is known as the Wood's Dispatch. After the 1854 Dispatch, the British Government accepted the responsibility of providing education to the people of Punjab. In 1856, the Department of Education was established in Punjab with T.W. Arnold as the first Director. With the establishment of the education department, the growth of education acquired a fast

pace. In a few years, the number of schools under the Government reached 124, which comprised of 24 district schools, 100 tehsil schools and 4 Normal schools were opened for teacher training. To arrange the finances for education, 1 per cent special tax was imposed on land. After this, a 22 member education commission was constituted by Lord Ripon. Sir William Hunter was its Chairman. The Commission realized during its investigations that the Government was not practicing the 1854 policy on education in full. This policy was not completely implemented in Punjab. Therefore, the Hunter Commission gave some suggestions to promote the education system in Punjab. This accelerated the modern education system.

The social reformers also raised their voice against the social evils in Punjab. The Namdhari movement took strong steps against the social and religious evils in Punjab. Baba Ram Singh opposed the evils prevalent in the society. He condemned the caste discrimination and to bring an improvement in the condition of the women, he condemned the Sati Pratha, female infanticide, and the child-marriage. For this, he is known as the first liberator of the women as a social reformer. After the waning of the Namdhari movement in the Punjab, the Singh Sabha movement started. The Singh Sabha was founded in 1873. It was founded to eradicate the social evils from the society. The Singh Sabha wanted to propagate the Sikh religion through social and religious reforms. They were in favour of promoting the modern education and eliminating the caste ideologies. The founders of Singh Sabha knew very well that education is an instrument to bring awakening among the people. Therefore, the Singh Sabha opened Khalsa schools to promote education in Punjab. In 1876, the Singh Sabha established the Panjab University Oriental College. The foundation of Khalsa College, Amritsar was laid in 1892. To bring improvement in the condition of the women, the women education was promoted. For this, the famous Sikh Kanya Mahavidyalya Ferozepur, the Khalsa School, Kairon, and the Vidya Bhandar, Bhadaur were opened. In this way, the Singh Sabha attempted to bring awakening in Punjab by promoting education. With this, the improvement in the condition of women occurred because of the elimination of the social evils. This also greatly weakened the caste distinctions.

Similarly, Swami Dayanand founded the Arya Samaj in Bombay in 1875 for social and religious changes. After some time, he laid the foundation of Arya Samaj in the Punjab. Listening to his ideas, a new awakening was born among the people of Punjab. The people who were engulfed by superstitions and the caste divisions began to become aware. With the establishment of the Arya Samaj in Punjab, a number of doctors, lawyers, and teachers became its members. Due to the entry of the educated middle class in it, the Arya Samaj was successful in eliminating the social evils to a

great extent. The middle class people, campaigned very fast among the common people to bring an awareness among them. Swami Dayanand, for improving the condition of women, raised his voice against the dowry system, the child-marriages, the caste system, and the infanticide. After his death, his followers established the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic School. After 1899, the D.A.V. School and the College were established. The Arya Samajis opened a number of schools and colleges to promote the women education. Thus, the British Government and the social reform movements eliminated the social evils by promoting education and by bringing the social change. The British Government enacted many laws along with the education to improve the condition of the women and to eliminate the caste system. This was a big blow to the social evils. For instance, the Caste Disabilities Removal Act, 1850 was the first step taken by the Government to eliminate the caste system. This act protected the rights of the people who were removed from their caste. In 1872, the inter-caste marriages were allowed by the Special Marriage Act. Thus, the efforts made by the British Government ended the caste system. The English official John Lawrence called a gathering in Amritsar in 1853 to eliminate the female infanticide. The people were made aware against the social evils. Raja Ram Mohan Roy made an appeal to the British Government to end the Sati Pratha through law. He awakened the people against the Sati Pratha through newspapers and campaigns. With the help of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Lord William Bentinck passed an act in 1829 and declared the burning of a widow alive an illegal act. Due to the strong demonstration of strength by the social reform movements, the Widow-Remarriage was given legal status by the British Government. Besides this, an act was passed in 1870 to end the female infanticide. The Special Marriage Act was passed in 1872. The people who did not believe in any religion or caste could marry under this act. In the same way, the Civil Marriage Act was passed in 1872 with the help of Kesav Chander Sen which banned the marrying of a girl below 14 and the boy below 18 years of age. This act also barred marrying more than one woman.

Thus, we see that a number of social changes took place after the arrival of the British in Punjab. This ended the prevalent social evils. The western education grew in Punjab with the arrival of the British. This gave birth to the middle class and the social reform movements. They awakened the people of Punjab against the social evils by their appropriate education. The social reform movements made people aware about the caste system, untouchability, child marriage, polygamy, Sati Pratha, and infanticide, etc. The social reformers promoted modern education system to awaken the people. The growth of education brought awareness among the women. They started working by moving out of their household walls. They came to know about

their rights which started the process of improvement in their condition. The British Government too enacted laws to eliminate the social evils with authority which made the social changes to happen in Punjab. Thus, the British Government and the social reform movements made commendable contributions in ending the social evils during 1849 to 1900. Society has changed a lot, but still, many social evils exist in our society which people must be aware about.

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Nisha Rani

PREFACE

Many social changes had occurred in Punjab during the years 1849-1900 AD. This led to the end of the orthodox social set-up and new social set-up emerged. Before this, many social evils were prevalent in Punjab, such as the caste-system, child marriage, the veil system, killing of the female child, and the Sati Pratha, etc. The Hindus, Muslims and the Sikhs were divided into various castes due to the caste-system. The Hindus were divided into Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and the Shudras and the Muslims into Sufi, Sunni, Shia and Ismailis, etc. Similarly, the Sikh religion was also divided into different castes, such as Bedis, Sodhis, Jats, Majhbis, Khatri and the Aroras. Though the Gurus had opposed the caste-system, yet it was prevalent in the Sikh religion. The people from different castes hated each other. The position of women in society was also very miserable. They were considered as wearable shoes. They were treated as slaves. The girls were killed immediately after their birth, which led to their smaller number compared to the males. They were married in their childhood. Similarly, the level of education was also very low because education was largely imparted in the Temples, Mosques and the Gurudwaras. This education could not bring awareness among the people because of its being religious in nature. Due to these evils, the society was in a pathetic shape. But when the British Government captured Punjab in 1849, the British Government and the social reformers made many efforts to eliminate these evils. The British Government negated the social evils present in society through legal measures. The British Government promulgated the Caste Disabilities Act in 1850 which was the first step to weaken the caste-system. In 1872, the inter-caste marriage was given sanction through the Special Marriage Act 1872, which weakened the caste system to an extent. At the same time, the Namdhari, the Singh Sabha and the Arya Samaj movements raised their voices against the caste-system. They campaigned widely to weaken the caste-system. To improve the position of women in society, the British Government made the child-marriage, the killing of the girl child, the bar on widow-marriage, and the *Sati Pratha* illegal through legal instruments. The social reformers also campaigned against all these evils. They included women in the social reform movement by giving them representations in their institutions. Besides this, they made important contributions in the field of education after 1849. The education grew in Punjab after the 1854 Wood's Dispatch. Among these, the Lahore University College was established in 1869 which took the shape of the Panjab University in 1882. The Mahindra

College, Patiala was established in 1872 which reached the degree level by 1887. Thus, the British Government established many schools, University colleges, and primary and secondary schools to raise the level of education. The British Government paid full attention to the women education as well. They established many schools and the University for such education. This led to growth of education in Punjab. Similarly, the movements by the social reformers also developed many educational institutions. Special centers for women education were established in these institutions, for example, the Singh Sabha founded Kanya Vidyalaya, Ferozepur and the Khalsa School, Kairon, etc. The Arya Samaj founded the Kanya Mahavidyalay in Jalandhar in 1891. This brought an important change in the educational scene. Thus, many social evils were eliminated in 1849 by the efforts of the British Government and the social reformers. The women began to receive an equal respect with men. With the spread of the Western education, the orthodox Punjab society started changing. By the efforts made for social reform by the British Government and the social reformers, a golden age dawned in Punjab.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Khushwant Singh, *Sikh History*, (1469-1988), Navyug Publishers, New Delhi, 2003. This book provides us information about the causes for the beginning of the Singh Sabha movement and the social reforms done by it. It also gives information about giving a higher status to women in society and the educational institutions founded by them with the aim of the growth of education.

H.R. Mehta, *A History of the Growth and Development of the Western Education in the Punjab 1846-1884*, Director, Language Department Punjab, Patiala, 1971. This book tells about the pre-1849 education system. It tells that the education was imparted in the Temples, Mosques and the Gurudwaras and the modern education was spread fast in Punjab after 1854 by the British Government. The information about the schools and the Universities established by the British Government is also available in this. **Sudarshan Singh**, *Life-Style of the People of Punjab*, (1849-1925), Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2009. This book reveals about the caste-system during the 19th century. The Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs were divided into different classes/castes. We also get information about the social and religious reform movements during that period, for example, the Namdhari, the Singh Sabha and the Arya Samaj. We also get information about the social reforms carried out by them. Besides this, we get information about the modern education system of the British Government. **Jaggi, Rattan Singh**, *Sikh Panth*

Vishavkosh (Encyclopaedia of Sikh Panth) Part - I, Gur Rattan Publishers, Patiala, 2005. This text provides us information about the campaigns against the caste-system by the Gurus and the reforms that occurred in the caste-system. **Raj Paul Singh**, *Punjab Di Itihasic Gatha*, (1849-2000), People's Forum, Bargari, Punjab, 2016. This book throws light on the caste-system in the 19th century, such as what castes did exist in the society at that time. Besides this, we come to know about the origin of the Namdhari movement, the efforts made by them for the social reform and about the modern education that had begun at that time. **K.M. Ashraf**, *Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, Delhi, 1970. This book gives us information about the caste-system of 1849, the development of the modern education in Punjab, and about the status of women. **Ashok, Shamsheer Singh**, *Punjab Dian Lehran*, 1850-1910, Ashok Pustakmala, Patiala, 1974. This book describes the social reforms carried out by the social reform movements such as the Namdhari, the Singh Sabha and the Arya Samaj movements. **Jagjit Singh**, *Singh Sabha Lehar*, 1873-1902, Lahore Book Shop, Ludhiana, 1979. This book provides the information about the origin of the Singh Sabha movement, the social reforms carried out by them and about the educational institutions founded by the Singh Sabha movement. **Fauja Singh (ed.)**, *History and Culture of Punjab, Part-III*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1975. This book illustrates about the educational institutions established by the British Government after 1849. Besides this, it provides information about the universities established for education in various regions of Punjab. **Cunningham, J.D.** *History of the Sikhs*, Lahore Book Shop, Ludhiana, 1931. This book gives information about the divisions into different classes among the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs. It also reveals about various evils prevalent among them.

SCOPE

In 1849, Punjab was completely captured by the British. Many changes occurred in Punjab during that time. By this research, I have presented the social changes that took place during that time. Many movements had happened against the caste-system at that time. The modern education was started. This brought significant change in the society. Besides this, many improvements were made in the status of the women. Laws were enacted to eliminate evils among them. Thus, this research has a very wide range. It describes the social reforms from 1849 to 1900.

NEED OF STUDY

The aim of studying the ‘Social Changes in Punjab During British Rule (1849-1900)’, was to describe the social condition of Punjab at that time along with describing the contributions made by the British Government and the social reform movements which took place at that time. The aim was also to bring out the role that the caste-system played during that time and to provide information about the contributions made by the social reform movements in eliminating the caste-system and the extent of the social reforms by those movements was also aimed at. Besides this, the aim was to give information about the growth of the Western education and the number and places of the schools and the universities established by the British Government for the growth of education in Punjab. The study of this field is also essential to know about the situation of women in the society, about the evils prevalent among them and the extent and the way their situation changed at that time.

OBJECTIVES

- To describe the social condition of Punjab during 1849-1900.
- To provide information about the caste-system prevalent at that time in Punjab.
- To describe the impact of the social reform movements of that time and the changes they brought in the society.
- To present the changes brought by the Western education started by the British Government.
- To give information about the condition of women and their status in the society.
- To describe the contributions made by the British Government and the other social reform movements with regard to the improvement of the condition of women.

PLAN OF WORK AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The plan for the study of this topic is based on the materials of the main sources. The materials for this research have been found from the Department of Historical Research, Amritsar, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, Khalsa College, Amritsar, Sikh Reference Library, Amritsar, State Central Library, Patiala, Punjabi University, Patiala, and the Panjab University, Chandigarh, etc. The excerpts from manuscripts of a number of scholars and writers, the newspapers, and the statements by different leaders are presented in this study.

CHAPTERIZATION

1. Various Reforms in Caste System:

Information about the caste-system is provided in this chapter. The word *Jati* comes from the English word *caste* which in turn is derived from the Portuguese word *casta* which means 'birth' or 'difference'. The Hindus, the Muslims, and the Sikhs were divided into several sections, the Hindus into the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas, and the Vaishyas, the Muslims into the Sufis, the Sunnis, and the Shias, the Sikhs into the Bedis, the Sodhis, the Jats, the Majhabi Sikhs, the Khattris and the Aroras. During the period of 1849-1900, an important change took place in the caste-system. The causes for this were the spread of the modern education, industrial development, the means of transport and the communication, the rise in the influence of the cities, and the efforts made by the religious and the social movements and the efforts made by the Government.

2. The Socio-Religious Movements and Their Impact:

This chapter provides information about the Namdhari, the Singh Sabha and the Arya Samaj social reform movements. The Namdhari movement, which was founded by Baba Ram Singh in 1857, aimed at eliminating the social evils in the society. The Arya Samaj was founded by Swami Dayanand in 1877. It aimed at eliminating the social evils in the Hindu society.

3. Role of Education to Uplift Society:

After 1854, the present day Primary, High, and Secondary schools, colleges and the universities structure was established through the Wood's Dispatch. In the same year, the Education Department was established in Punjab under the Director of Education, which led to the opening of many schools and colleges and the establishment of the Punjab University in 1882. Besides these, the Khalsa schools and colleges and the D.A.V. schools and colleges were opened by the social reformers.

4. Change in the Condition of Women During 1849-1900:

The condition of women at that time is described in this chapter. The condition of women during this period of 1849-1900 was not good as it was during the Vedic period. During the Vedic period, the women had a status equal to the men, but their status deteriorated with time and the evils such as the *Sati Pratha*, the custom of veil, the killing of the girl child, the child