

EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC REFORM OF RAJA RAM MOHAN RAJ

Dr. Mrs. S. Jeyanthimala

Assistant Professor of History

A.P.A.College for Women, Palani

Education has great value. It is the measurement of the development of the society. The true dignity of a society is well known though the education system it provides. The condition of India in 18th Century was worse because of the lack of pure and proper education. The society was completely in darkness of superstitions and traditional conventions like child murder, suttee system, polygamy, etc. Warren Hastings established the Calcutta. Madrassah in 1781 to promote the cultivation of Persian and Arabic along with Muslim theology and law. The court language of then was Perian. The next institution was the Benaras Sanskrit College opened in 1792 and established by lord Cornwall is though the instrumentality of Jonathan Deccan, a highly reputed oriental scholar who was also resident or the Government at Banaras, for organizing Sanskrit Studies.

In 1811, Lord Minto Submitted a minute in which he expressed deep concern about a pain tally monotonous routine which did not inspire the boys at all ¹. So he requested the higher authority to provide more effective facilities for education. He also stressed for the use of science and technology in Education.

Hindu College

At about the same time in 1815 Rajarammohun Roy settled down in Calcutta after retiring from the Government service. Government to some extent turned its attention to the problem of education of Indians, as some money sanctioned from England was to be devoted to this purpose. The main point was as to what kind of education most desirable and necessary for the uplift of the masses should be boldly introduced. The establishment of a Sanskrit College found favor with the Authorities, atlas tin 1821, When the Government under Lord Amherst was considering the question of utilizing the special grant of Rs. One Lakh, it was decided to establish with the help of Wilson and other reputed orientates, a Sanskrit college in Calcutta of the type of that of Benares, but on a comprehensive scale². The company Government decided to established a Sanskrit school under Hindu Pandits to impart such knowledge as was already current in India.

Rajarammohun Roy protested against this decision. He wanted the natural Science, Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics etc., to be taught on 11th December, 1823 he addressed a letter to the Governor - General Lord Amherst, Bishop Herber, the metropolitan of Indian, put this letter in the hands of Lord Amherst, J.H. Horizon. The President of General Committee of Public Instruction, wrote that. It was entitled tone reply. The education commission appointed by Lord Ripon on 1882, reported 'It took twelve years of controversy,

the advocacy of Macaulay and a decisive action of new Government – General, before the committee could as a body, acquiesce in the policy urged by him (Rajarammohun Roy)”.

This advocacy of scientific education Vis – a 0 Vis the to system of education by Rajarammohun Roy had been Minister prated, misrepresented and viciously attacked by men up holding the traditional system of education.

Soon after Rajarammohun Roy established in Calcutta he started Atmiya Sabha in his own home at Manicktola, where his friends and others of his way of thinking used to meet to discuss social, educational and religious matter.

Baidynath, Banerjee who was present in the Atmiya Sabha took the first opportunity of calling upon the chief Justice of the Calcutta supreme court, Sir Edward Hyde East and acquainted him with the proposal³

A meeting was that called at East’s place early in May 1816, and it was decided to set up an English School (which was later named as Hindu college) when the building of Hindu College was completed it was shifted there from Bow Bazar street. Thirty years later in 1855 the Hindu College was split. Later, the College expanded after some time with an extension of the science classes for which Mr. Harington, Chief Judge of the Sadder Dewant Adawlat of Calcutta helped by including the British and Foreign school society to gift a number of books and apparatus. Western education system should be teach through English in India. In 1852 a remarkable reform of Bentinck which was organized be education committee by Lord Macaulay.

Anglo - Hindu School

Rajarammohun Roy returned to Calcutta from Rangpur and plunged into action to which he gave priority. He started a small school where English was also taught. This school was established in 1816 at Suripara under the rank of Anglo - Hindu school. Here the boys received education tree of cost and the entire cost was born by Rajarammohun Roy himself. This was the first English School in Calcutta run entirely by the Indians. He was established by Justice Ramada for the evolution of education among the people.

Vedanta College

Rajarammohun Roy educational activities led to the establishment of A Vedanta college in about 1825 at the house No.74 in Maniktala street also Mr. Willam Adam appreciated⁴. In that college a fee youths were than instructed by a very eminent pandit in Sanskrit literature, with a view to the propagation and defense of Hindu Unitarianism with this institution he was also willing to connect instructions in European Science and learning and in Christian Unitarianism provided the instructions were conveyed in Bengali on Sanskrit Language.

Hare’s School

How Vicious Rajarammohun Roy’s name had become to the conservative gentry of Calcutta would be clear form the following incident to connection with the establishment of

Hare's school, Hare's school which adjoined Hindu college, opened in 18213 after the merger of

- a. Ar pooli Bengali Pathshals
- b. Ar pooli English School
- c. Pataldanga English School

The last two came under the Calcutta school society in 1823 and these schools were run solely by David Hare⁵.

Support of Scientific Education

In February 1824, the board of directors issued a letter to Indian Government which enclosed the ideas of Rammohun Roy towards education. Emphasis was laid that the education should consist of useful knowledge not simply Hindu knowledge. Useful knowledge undoubtedly referred to the knowledge of science.

The education commission appointed by Lord Ripon in 1882, declared that western education in India is an outcome of Rammohun's inspiration. Modern India itself is a living example of Rammohun Roy's far-sightedness. His tireless efforts at last bore fruit and English and science were included in the education curriculum of India. That is why he is rightly called the maker of modern India.

As An Educationist

It is well-known that Rajarammohun Roy himself founded and helped others in founding schools. He took prominent part in the great educational controversy between the "Orientals" and the "Anglicists" and sided with the latter. But for his opposition the dominance of the former for the exclusive pursuit of oriental studies would most probably have prevailed⁶. His letter on English education to Lord Ambers is a remarkably convincing production for the direct and indirect beneficial results of western education. We are indebted to Rajarmohun Roy as much as to Lord Macaulay, Lord William Bentinck, David Hare and others. He was a pioneer and promoter of Education.

Economic Reforms

Jawaharlal Nehru had written about Rammohun 'He was a great founder and scholar but he was mainly a reformer'. In fact, Rammohun left no aspect of national life untouched by his incessant efforts. He moulded the thinking of his countrymen and to improve their life. While struggling for multifarious reforms, he finally waged a war against the middle age traditions. Vipin Chandrapal reflects his contribution. "his chief achievement has been his struggle against middle age traditions and evil practices so he has a right to be known as the father of the re-awakened India".

Students of Indian economics are familiar with the fact that every year nearly 45 cores of rupees (now more) of India's capital is drained off to foreign parts without any hope of return. This drain of wealth did not escape the eye of Rajarammohun Roy. In his answer to questions on the revenue system of India" he says that as a large sum of money is now annually drawn from India by Europeans retiring from it with the fortunes really there a

system which would encourage Europeans of capital to become permanent settlers with their families would necessarily greatly improve the resources of the country. he prepared several tables to prove this drain.

Rammohun Roy's thinking on contemporary economic problems clustered around strategy of modernization of the Indian economic in the perspective of the economic distortions and mass poverty which were as much the consequences of socio-economic backwardness as the outcome of the lapses of the administrative system. While fighting for the removed of specific grievances rational grounds. Rammohun Roy never lost sight of the broader perspective of the requisite conditions of economic progress a suitable economic infrastructure needed for the development of a modern economy.

Rajarammohun Roy worked incessantly for a amelioration of the miserable economic plight of the Indian people. In his evidence before the parliamentary committee in 1832, he said.

‘The condition of the cultivator is very miserable: they are place at the mercy of the zamindar's avarice and ambition the land lords have met with indulgences from Government in the assessment of their revenue while no part of it is extended towards the poor cultivator’

The economic limit of India under east Indian company was not conducive enough to any progressive pursuits for the Indian population. The foreign traders were interested in suitable plunder and tempted to join, the rural area was neglected and the skilled laborers became poorer and ultimately landed themselves in Calcutta to seek employment. Although Rajarammohun Roy himself belonged to the wealthy expense of collecting the rents. But the rent was increasing day by day and the condition of cultivators were decreasing at the worse way. When lord W.Bentick came to India as Governor-General, he was confronted by deficits in the exchequer. He tried all means to retrench expenditure and to increase revenue⁷. One of the measures he adopted was to give instruction to examine right enjoy rent free lands in Bengal. The regulation was a violation of the promise given by the previous Government - Generals like lord Comwall is and lord hastings. Rajarammohun Roy felt that this was an act of executive tyranny. On behalf of the land lords of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa he drew up a petition to the Government. The caser was put in with all possible arguments. In the regulation XIX of 1793 a solemn assurance was given that the holders of rent free lands would not be subjected to payment of revenue until their title were declared invalid by a judicial decree⁸. But these assurance were withdrawn by the regulation of 1828, which gave full authority to the collectors to enquiry into the title and to attach and assess the land. A special commissioner was appointed for a number of districts to hear appeals, but this gave hardly any relief to the aggrieved parties. The petition was rejection by the Government. But as a staunch fighter Rajaram mohun Roy carried the petition along with him to England.

As appeal was made to the court of directors in the name of his attendant Ramurttan Mukherjee. But this met with no better result. The result of this attitude of the Government

to increase its own income was a deep discontent in India, which contributed to the great upheaval in 1857. It was this measure against which Rajarammohun Roy both in India and England raised his Powerful warning on behalf of his countrymen and to rose up their interests in social and political affairs. The whole questionnaire which was issued to him by a select committee of British parliament and which he replied shows that his whole idea was such that conditions should be created in which British technology and capital could work to bring about economic transformation in India.

One of the questions of the select committee was “would it be injurious or beneficial to allow Europeans of capital to purchase estates and settle on them?” Rajarammohun Roy answered that if Europeans of character and capital were allowed to settle this country, with permission of India board or the courts of Directors or the local Government, it would greatly improve the resources of the country, and also the condition of the native inhabitants by showing them superior methods of cultivation and the proper mode of greeting their labors and dependents.

He believed that if European were allowed to settle in India, their skill and firmness in agriculture would improve the condition of Indian cultivators also. So he was infamous of Europeans of all descriptions to become settlers?” Rajarammohun Roy’s reply was that such a measure could only be regarded as adopted for the purpose of entirely supplanting the native inhabitants and expelling them from the country. because it was obvious that there was no resemblance between the higher and educated classes of Europeans, and the lower and uneducated classes. He said that the difference in character, opinions and sentiments between Europeans and Indians and Indians races, particularly in social and religious matters, was so great that the two races could not peacefully exist together. So a police force was needed to compromise them.

In opposing the lessee fairs theory of contemporary England, Rajarammohun Roy held that it was the duty of Government to protect the helpless cultivators, against the powerful zamindars. He condemned that the Government that declared by Regulation. First of 1793 section 8, Article I that it was its right and its duty to protect the cultivators. But the Government afforded very little legal protection to the cultivators⁹.

In order to a meliorate a the condition of the peasants he suggested that the alleged right of the zamindars to increase the rent of rent of the ryot would be all together abolished. He further appealed to the Government to lower its demand upon the zaminbdars and asked the latter to make a proportionate reduction in the rent of the cultivators.

It was obvious that which the reeducation of land revenue, if the land revenue be reduced, there would be fall in the income of the Government. Hence in order to make good the loss Raja suggested three methods. The first was the taxation on luxuries and on such articles of use and consumption as were not necessities of life. the second was the reeducation of expenses of the revenue establishment. He suggested that Indians might be appointed collectors on a salary of about three or four hundred rupees per month, in place of Europeans collectors drawing a salary of thousand of fifteen hundred rupees per month.

In order to reduce the cost of administration. Raja suggested another reform of far reaching consequences.

He maintained that permanent settlement with the cultivators, would make them so much attached to the British Government that it would be necessary to maintain a standing army. This consideration is of great importance observed Raja in respect to the native of the upper and western provinces, who were distinguished by their superior bravery and from the greater part of the British Indian army.

Rajarammohun Roy suggested for the betterment of the revenue and judicial system for cultivators, that no further increase in rent should be introduced, public notice in the current language of the people, should take care that these notices were followed. The judge or magistrate should be directed to make a tour of his district once a year, to see that laws and regulations for the protection of poor peasantry were properly maintained or not. The collector of the district should maintain a register of all cultivators, containing their names, their respective portion of land, rent as fixed etc.

Then the committee asked him has the Government sustained any loss by concluding the permanent settlement of 1793 without taking more time to ascertain the net produce of the land, or waiting for further increase of revenue? Rajarammohun Roy replied that the amount of assessment fixed. On lands of Bengal, Bihar and part of Orissa, at the time of the permanent settlement, was as high as had ever been assessed, and in many instances higher than ever before been realized by the exertion of any Government. Mohammedan or British¹⁰. Rajarammohun Roy boldly replied that therefore, the Government sacrificed nothing in concluding that Settlement. Rajarammohun Roy was much grieved by the condition of the cultivators that on reply to the question have the cultivators any means of accumulating capital under the present system? He replied with sorrow that when grain is abundant and therefore, cheap, they are obliged as already observed, to sell their whole produce to satisfy the demands of their land holders and to subsist themselves by their own labor. In scarce and dear years they may be able to retain some portion of the crop to form a part of their subsistence, but by no means, enough for the whole. In short, such is the melancholy condition of the agricultural laborers, that it always gives me the greatest pain to allude to it.

He also answered regarding the improvement which might secure the revenue to the Government and protection to the people, that the regulation which was already in force were fully adequate to secure the Government revenue. To secure the people from revenue officer's unjust exactions, the collector should not be given the power of armed magistrate and any change against the revenue officers should be once investigated by the judicial courts. He however, did not fail to see that when Cornwallis made his plan, he had probably not anticipated all those evils. In an attempt to remove some of these evils. Bentinck passed several Regulations.

Sometimes earlier in 1828, when Bentinck was the Governor General, a regulation known as Regulation III or "Lakheraj Regulation" had been passed and Rajarammohun Roy

had an occasion to protect against the form of the Governments land resumption proceedings. Since he felt that under the Regulation the promise given by previous Governor General was being dishonored. Regulation XIX of 1793 had assured that land lords of rent free lands that they would not be subjected to payment of revenue unless, their titles were found defective by courts¹¹. The regulation of 1828 with draw this above assurance enabling the Government, to confiscate a large number of revenue free lands. Rajarammohun Roy criticized is as a betrayal on the part of the Government and he drew up a petition on behalf of the land holders of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, but the petition was rejected. RajarammohunRoy took this petition to England with him, but this met with no better result. But among the many petitions submitted the most weight was that of Rajrammohun Roy's in whose praise the court of Directors felt impelled to write the following few lines dated February 1830.

“Among the petitions against Regulation III, 1828, there is one which we have stated to be anonymous, we have now to notice”

Free Trade

The Charter Act, Under which the East India company was formed, not only conferred upon it the monopoly to carry on trade in India but also empowered it to prevent any British national from coming to India to engage in trade and agriculture. Armed with these, powers, the company perused a policy of naked despoliation and straight forward loot. The dual objectives of the company's programmed of ruthless exploitation were to keep India in a tight grip as a supplier in England and use India s a dumping ground for the finished products from English factories. This enabled the company its servants to enrich themselves beyond the dream of overseas.

Towards the end of the 18th Century, quite an animated controversy had been sparked off between the supporters of monopoly and free-trade in England, a great tussle was going on between the Free Traders and the Monopolists. In 1788, the Governor General, himself thought it necessary to write to the court of Directors¹².

Though the strangle hold of the monopolists remained in fact in India, it had beenbroken is Ceylon at the turn of the 19th Century. The East India company took up the reins of the Governance Ceylon whgen the British ousted the Dutch from Power. The company placed a an ban on individual Europeans setting upbusiness or farm on the island. In 1801, the British Government itself assumed the responsibility of Governing. Ceylon and five years later entrusted sir Alexander John stone with a task of drawing up a report on the ways and means of promoting trade and agricultural in Ceylon. Being itself on sir Alexander's report in which Europe Capital, scientific Technology and machine - production were shown as pre-requisite to economic growth. The British Government announced all the restrictive measures enforced by the East India company. Free trade was introduced in Ceylon, marking the birth of the industrial revolution in the century¹³.

In India the situation remained unchanged except for minor relaxation made by the Government to entice Europeans to grow coffee in Bengal supporters of free trade called a

meeting in 1827. It was the first public meeting in which the demand for European settlement was voiced.

The opponents of free trade, including many Indian land lords, at once launched a whispering campaign, claiming that if Europeans were allowed to own land, they would dispossess India Zamindars on their parts.

The share-out in the loot was well-defined with the East India company monopolizing the trading and the zamindars the rural sector. So encouraged by the company, the zamindars planned to submit a petition to the British parliament opposing free trade and the proposal for European settlers. The paper to the unrelenting propaganda barrage that the zamindars and the company kept up.

Rajammohun Roy with Dwarkanath Tagore. Supported Britishers, because he thought that in this way, they would be linked together and India would gain her lost property¹⁴. Therefore, he brought out an article in his paper *Sambad Kaumudi* in which he held up to public gaze the real reasons that lay behind the virulent opposition to free trade. Rajammohun Roy's Labour was not in vain. The new charter granted to the East India company in 1833, laid down that Europeans would be allowed to settle freely in areas which had passed under the company's jurisdiction already but would require to obtain special permission for settling in other areas. They were also free to make any trade or business, suited to them. So a new phase in the economic development in India began. Thus Rajammohun Roy's suggestions for economic reforms had direct effect on vital economic problems of that period. He supported Britishers for Indian's progress and development only. He saw clearly that free trade and its agency, the European settlers could serve as a dynamite to blast away the mill stone of the company's monopoly that hung around India's neck. Unlike the company which was only interested in encouraging such agricultural products which could be utilized in British factories at that time.

So in supporting free trade and European settlers Rajammohun Roy's interest was to press in to service the Europeans capital and technology for the economic development of India. Up to that stage, the presence of the west had manifested itself only in naked exploitations. Thus Rajammohun Roy wanted to utilize western capital and technology as an aid to Indian's economic development.

Salt Monopoly of East India Company

During the days of Plessey and Hastings, individual officers were allowed to participate in the salt trade. There were more than 1 ½ lakhs of native labourers called *molunges* engaged in salt production on marshy lands under the most tiring conditions and in the midst of all kinds of disease. The Government imposed very heavy import duty on Salt, and protected by this percent above its tariff wall, the company and its servants arbitrarily fixed the price of salt 1000 percent above its natural price. From the actual manufacturer of Salt, the Government employed agents and the latter appointed workers who were called virtual slavery.

Rajarammohun Roy emphasized that the entire people suffered as a result of this man made salt famine. Since this import of salt would mean loss of employment for the mouths, they should be provided alternative employment in agriculture. When he was in England, the select committee of the House of commons also prepared some questions regarding salt trade.

When Rajarammohun Roy went England he wanted to draw the attention British authority towards on it. Pamphlets concerning the product were brought out to draw the attention. Crawford and Richards had already started agitation in England against company's attempts to defend its position. Rajarammohun Roy as a consumer knew that the short supply of salt in the market was man made to keep the prices up. The accumulated grievance moved the court of Directors to refer the matter to Bengal Government for an inquiry to report on the reasonableness of price and other aspects of the matter on 3rd April 1832. Bengal Government replied but this reply did not give satisfaction to Rajarammohun Roy¹⁴. He carried on the agitation against salt monopoly and salt tax. They expected that by import of salt the home the free import of salt under a custom duty, the Government sanctioning the manufacture in such districts only where it could them be profitable. The report from the Board of customs was based on the report from the revenue officers and native land holders.

But the Charter of 1833 came out from parliament with the salt monopoly in spite of the best efforts of its opponents. They insisted that there was no real shortage of salt, and that the price was not too high. It was the Labor of Rajarammohun Roy that permission was, however, granted to the Indian authorities to do away with the salt tax gradually, imported salt was being allowed to be sold in the market. The parliament select committee fully tense finally trade the country from the monstrous salt monopoly of the East India company.

Indigo Trade and Land Ownership by Europeans

Indigo cultivation and cultivation and trade in India played a substantial role in the activities carried on by Europeans particular those of the East India company. The foreign traders were interest in subtle plunder and commercial profits to which the elite were tempted to join. It is said that the Europeans carried on indigo cultivation with certain inherent advantages and therefore, the Indian cultivators were put to a serious disadvantage, the European cultivators were all together in a much favorable position belonging to the ruling class. Beside, they had a superior technical skill which gave them distinct advantage both in quality and in quantity¹⁵. On the other hand the Indian cultivators were not much disliked by the Indian farmers because of the helpful attitude of them, the native zamindars thoroughly disliked the planters as their formidable rivals and the zamindars were never popular due to their general apathy to the riots. When the complain became severe Rajarammohun Roy watched the situation and found that the grievance of the Indian cultivators were genuine, because different treatment by the local authorities was pronounced.

The indigenous farmers produced much less than the European farmers and this again was due to lack of technical skill and stamina on the part of Indian farmers. But assessing the entire performance, the Indian farmers improved a lot by competitions.

Dwarkanath Tagore was in favor of planters. Enquiries were made about the agitation of the riots engaged in indigo plantation specially by a committee of the house of lords in 1830. Rajarammohun Roy wrote in favor of planters¹⁶. He wrote that he was positively of opinion that on the whole indigo planters had done more essential good to the natives of Bengal than any other class of persons.

It is well known fact that the peasants had been carrying on indigo cultivation from a long time past in different places specially in Bengal Bihar and U.P. etc.,

The Portuguese, after they discovered the sea route to India, began to import indigo. This monopoly was destroyed by Dutch who were followed closely on their heels by the Britishers. The East India company became its chief importer for Europe. In 1783, it was Charles Grant who established a big plantation to produce good quality of indigo. In 1823, Lord Amherst, enabled planters to recover, advances made to riots. Amherst first opened the doors to the leasing of lands to Europeans, in 1824 when he authorized coffee growers, and soon afterwards cotton and sugarcane planters also to take lease of lands in the interior of India.

The British planters made a petition in parliament in 1827, to throw open the indigo plantations by removing restrictions open upon them in the matter of owning lands in the country. So the orthodox Hindus also presented a petition in 1829 against European settlers.

Rajarammohun Roy and Dwarkanath Tagore were among the leading participants in a meeting in 1829 called to protest against the rejection by the court of directors of the company for permission to own land in Bengal. Dwarkanath moved a resolution in favor of planters.

A powerful rejoinder against the insidious propaganda came out in *Sambad Kaumudi*. The articles brought clearly that the excesses of the indigo planters notwithstanding the economic condition of the lower and the middle classes had improved in areas where the European had set up indigo plantations. From the dispersion of money, employment opportunities had expanded¹⁷. And what was most important those peasants who were, in former times, forced by their zamindars to labor for them without any remuneration or for the payment of small quantities of rice were being paid salaries for their labors. This could give farmers a sign of happiness.

Rajarammohun Roy had favored the trade, because the economic condition of that time favored it. And as a reformer, he was always interested in the goodness of the masses.

Foot Notes

1. Minni Thakur Rajarammohun Roy – His Social, Political and Economic ideas Ch. -IV 1987, p. 122.
2. Dr. Sarjo Mohan Mishra Collected works of Rajarammohun Roy Vol I, 2003 p. 193.

3. Dr.Gaurav Pradhan Rabindranath Tagore Literary concepts 2002, pp.39-16.
4. Dr.Gaunar Pradhar Rabindranath Tagore literary concepts 2002, p. 38
5. Bankar Tiwari Rajarammohun Roy – Prophet of modern India 2003 p.144
6. Government of Tamil Nadu Higher Secondary year History Book p.33
7. Ideas & Ideal of great personalities of India p. 6
8. Rajarammohun Roy – His social, Political and Economics ideas p.147
9. Igbal Sign Rajarammohun Roy – A biographical inquiry in to the making of moder India 2002, p. 24
10. Sarak Kanti Majundor Ideas & Ideas of great personalities of India 2002, p.6
11. Bakthi SR Rajarammohun Roy- Pathmaker of India 2001, p.39
12. S.R.Shrma Life and works of Rammohun Roy 2003, p. 152
13. Pr.Sarojmohan mitra The Golden books of Rajarammohun Roy 1997, p.226
14. Ibid
15. Mini Thakur Rajarammohun Roy – His social, Political and Economic ideas 1987, p. 153
16. Dr. Saroj Mohan Mitra The golden book of Rajarammohun Roy 1997, p. 550
17. Saraj Knathi Majundar – Ideas * Ideals of great personalities of India 2000, p. 10