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## Contribution of Raja Rammohan Roy as a Pioneer of Modern Indian Education

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### **Abstract:**

*The great educational reformer, social reformer, political activist, father of modern India, and father of Bengal Renaissance Raja Rammohan Roy's immense contribution in various fields made him eminent worldwide. Present study purposes were to study the various activities and reforms taken by Rammohan and its present day's relevance. The study was used a document based qualitative approach. For data gathering, the researcher has taken different primary and secondary sources. From analyses of data the researcher was pointed some findings: Rammohan Roy was the first Indian educationist who synthesizes eastern spirituality with western modernity. He personally put in a lot of effort to advance the vernacular while also promoting English language proficiency among his country's people. With the collaboration of David Hare the Rammohan was set up Hindoo College at Calcutta in 1817. He also founded Anglo-Hindu school in 1822, followed four years latter (1826) by the Vedanta College. He equally gave importance on women education like men. The Brahma Samaj done a lot of good by dispelling societal stigmas against women's education that were common things in Hindu society, and Rammohan deserves the most of the credit for this. In the new system of education he introduced the subjects of practical use like Mathematics, Botany, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Physics, and Anatomy etc. In addition to Bengali, he also wrote books in other languages like Hindi, English, Sanskrit, Persian, and other. Rammohan provided a style and standard that aided in the growth of Bengali prose as a form for stories, novels, and polemical literature. As present relevance the researcher identified that: Rammohan sowed the seeds of nationalism and reassurance of independent thought among the Indian people; his 'Hindoo College' is now known as the Presidency University; he first introduced Indian civilization, culture, and ideals to outsiders through education; the NEP 2020 places special emphasis on establishing a link between Eastern and Western education by opening foreign university campus in India; he supported the implementation of an English curriculum which is highlighted in NEP 2020 as practice of multilingualism; every current educational commission and policy in India adheres to his ideas of women's liberation and equal dignity.*

**Keywords:** Raja Rammohan Roy, Modern Indian Education, Educational Reforms, Relevance.

### **Introduction:**

Raja Rammohan Roy, one of Bengal's most notable citizens in the nineteenth century, was

the driving force behind all of those transformations. Raja Rammohan Roy was born in Radhanagar, Bengal, on May 22, 1772, into a distinguished and venerable Brahmin family. He is a significant historical person who made admirable efforts to change India's appearance and dared to challenge long-standing Hindu norms. Being a modernist by nature, he strived to improve the status of women in India and launched numerous social and educational reforms to transform society. He was a famous scholar who also translated several novels, religious texts, and philosophical writings into Bengali and English, as well as Vedic texts.

In India, notable figures such as Vivekananda, Rabindranath, Gandhiji, Netaji, Vidyasagar, and many others were born. Raja Rammohan Roy was one of them. Without Rammohan Roy, we cannot think of modern India. He was not only a brilliant thinker or reformer in terms of social and religious reform, but also in terms of education. Raja Rammohan Roy was a great scholar, a free thinker, and a multilingual individual. For the upliftment of Indian society, he saw education as a crucial requirement. He pushed for the introduction of Western education into the Indian educational system. He encouraged Indians to study Western medicine, technology, English, and other sciences. He invested his own money in welfare of education system in India. Raja Rammohan Roy is regarded as one of the most significant figures in the Bengal Renaissance. His participation in the British government to defend Hinduism and Indian rights won him the titles "The Father of the Bengal Renaissance" or "Father of Modern India." His significant contributions to numerous sectors have made him famous worldwide. One of the most important historical events in the last 200 years has been the Renaissance or Rebirth of modern Asia. There is no doubt that Asia's intellect and soul have awakened since the middle of the 19th century. The growth of contemporary modern Indian nationalism has been greatly influenced by India's intellectual Renaissance. The Raja Rammohan Roy-founded Brahma Samaj is one of the most important factors in India's revival. Throughout the middle of the 19th century, the Brahma Samaj performed significant cultural, humanitarian, and social activity in north India. (Sadanandan, G., 2013).

#### Literary works of Raja Rammohan Roy

- Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhidin (1804)
- Vedanta Gantha (1815)
- Translation of an abridgment of the Vedanta Sara (1816)
- Kenopanishads (1816)
- Ishopanishad (1816)
- Kathopanishad (1817)
- A Conference between the Advocate for, and an Opponent of Practice of Burning Widows Alive (Bengali and English) (1818)
- Mundaka Upanishad (1819)

- A Defence of Hindu Theism (1820)
- The Precepts of Jesus- The Guide to Peace and Happiness (1820)
- Bengali Grammar (1826)
- The Universal Religion (1829)
- History of Indian Philosophy (1829)
- Gaudiya Vyakaran (1833)

### **Objectives:**

- 1) To study the various activities and reforms brought by Raja Rammohan Roy in Indian Education.
- 2) To study the present day's relevance of educational ideas of Raja Rammohan Roy.

### **Methodology:**

The study has been carried out to follow historical research method; most of the information for this investigation has been derived from primary and secondary sources. The information gathering process has been started with the goal of making it simpler to conduct research on Raja Rammohan Roy's involvement in the reforms and advancement of modern education in India throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century and its relevance in the present day. The use of documentary and qualitative analytical methodologies allowed for the development of the study's framework and the ability to arrive at an objective conclusion. Books, research papers, doctoral theses, national and international magazines, state reports, newspapers, websites, etc, has been used as source of data.

### **Various Activities and Reforms in Education:**

Raja Rammohan Roy possessed enormous knowledge in many different fields of study. He wrote in numerous languages, including Bengali, Persian, Hindi, Sanskrit, and English, on a variety of topics related to social and educational issues. He was proficient in around half a dozen oriental and equal numbers of western languages. He entered journalism and edited publications in three languages: The Brahummical Magazine in English, Sambad Kaumudi in Bengali, and Mirat-ul-Akhbar in Persian. He organised a protest as a newspaper editor, promoting natural rights.

### **Aims of Education:**

Raja Rammohan Roy had a strong theological background. Despite the fact that he did not specifically state the goals and purposes of education, it can be inferred from his intellectual life and teaching that this is the major goal of education—to unite Eastern and Western education. His life's purpose and the purposes of education are inseparable. Some of the aims of education are mentioned as follows:

- Protecting the best aspects of Indian education, culture, values, customs, traditions, etc.
- To know about western education, society, and culture and to accept the good aspects.
- To make arrangements for moral and spiritual development among the Indian people.



- To develop the students as good citizens for the future society and to prepare them for real life.
- Society is formed with the individual. Therefore, one of the aims of education is to involve the individual in the welfare of society and to make him rational and sophisticated in society.

*(Baugh, 2021, p.391)*

Raja Rammohan Roy understood the need for modern western education. So, he wanted to combine modern Western education with the traditional Indian education system.

#### **Activities for Promotion of Western Education in India:**

His schooling included the goal of modernizing Oriental education in light of the superiority of Western education. In the area of education, there is a new philosophy that has given rise to numerous groups. Young Bengal's Derozio led a group that aimed to build Western culture by eradicating Eastern culture. On the other hand, they wished to preserve the old conventional eastern education, led by Radhakanta Dev, Ramkamal Sen, Vidyabagish, Mrityunjaya Vidyalkar, etc. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Raja Rammohan Roy founded a new third party. This third group placed an emphasis on combining education from the East and the West. His life's work was mostly focused on helping Indians grow through a blend of Eastern and Western education and culture. Examples of educational institutions that combine Eastern and Western approaches to teaching are "Vedanta College" and "Anglo-Hindu School". However, Shivnath Shastri stated that Lord Macaulay "sowed his seeds in the prepared soil and received an abundant crop as India profited from the advent of English education" in his Bengali essay "Ramtanu Laheri O Tatkalin Bangasamaj" (1904) on Rammohan's English education.

Raja Rammohan Roy, who studied the nation's civil, political, and economic liberty and was much influenced by their conception of freedom, social happiness, and rationalism, believed in the development of modern, liberal English education in the West. He actually advocated strongly for English education. He had never embraced the traditional oriental system of instruction using Sanskrit for the sake of his countrymen's future.

#### **Establishment of Educational Institutions:**

He made outstanding contributions to India's educational system. Many English-language schools were established by Raja Rammohan Roy to reform the educational system. He sought the spread of the English language to introduce his people to the western educational system and to modern, progressive civilization. Hindoo College, which he founded in Calcutta with David Hare in 1817 and which later rose to become one of the top educational institutions in the nation, changed the Indian educational system. He eventually formed the "Anglo Hindoo School", afterwards known as "Indian Academy", in 1822 after leaving the committee of the "Hindoo College." English instruction and western education for Bengali Hindu boys were the primary goal of this school. In 1826, he also

founded the Vedanta College, which provided courses that combined Western and Indian knowledge.

### **Development of Bengali Literature:**

He wasn't just confined to starting libraries and schools. He has also written novels, books that are appropriate for classroom use. Between 1815 and 1830, he produced roughly 30 books. Vedanta Granth (1815), Vedantasar (1817), translations of several Upanishads (1815–19), Kathaponishad (1818), Mandak Upanishad (1819), etc. are some of his translated works. His jurisprudential works include Utsavananda Vidyabagisher Sahid Bichar (1817–18), Bhattacharya Sahid Bichar (1818), Goswami's Sahid Bichar (1818), Kabitakarer Sahid Bichar (1820), Brahmansevadhi (1821), Tuhafat-Ul-Mu'ahhidin (1905), and others. In addition, he wrote Kathyapradan, Sahamaran Visayak, Brahma Sangeet, Gauriya Bayakaran, Parthanapatra, etc. (Baugh 2021, p. 293).

### **Women Education and their Empowerment:**

Rammohan Roy believed that Indian women needed to be educated. He thought that one of the most effective tools for empowering Indian women was education. It was the only way to educate them about their rights and equip them with the skills necessary to combat strict patriarchy. According to Raja Rammohan Roy, women's education is just as important as men's education. Therefore, he believed that encouraging boys' education alone would not be beneficial as a true reformer. He supported universal access to education. A progressive society required progressive education for both boys and girls. The Brahmo Samaj significantly contributed to the eradication of prejudices against women's education that were pervasive in Indian society.

### **Spreading Scientific and Technical Education:**

Rammohan showed long-range vision by integrating science into the educational system of nation. He was adamant that without scientific education, no nation could advance in the future. The subsequent Bentick's award and the Macaulay's Minute of 1835 is the result of his indirect influence. Rammohan's tenacious support for liberal and scientific education tore into deeply ingrained orientalism and cleared the path for modern educational practises in India.

Raja Rammohan Roy took a great interest in learning science and modern technology. According to him, learning should be practical and scientific. So, his thought is more emphasized on inclusion of applied science in Indian education. Rammohan Roy, however, was the leading proponent of a modern educational approach and scientific learning. His main goal was to improve the native population. As a result, he assisted the British government in promoting a more liberal and progressive educational system. He introduced and promoted the practical use of subjects like mathematics, philosophy, chemistry and anatomy, physics, chemistry, and even botany along with other useful sciences in the new educational system. He advocated for the teaching of technology, western medicine, and English in Indian schools.

### **Relevance of Rammohan Roy's Ideas in Present Day's Education:**

- His socio-educational philosophy, which was founded on a scientific outlook, a liberal mentality, and a brought outlook, led Indian society down a magnificent path of equality and humanism that was lost to modern India.
- Raja Rammohan Roy encouraged nationalism and independent thought in Indian students that helps to make them good citizen of Indian. This concept of Rammohan has found particular utility in Indian education today to make students ideal citizens.
- Raja Rammohan Roy took the initiative to establish the “Hindoo College”, which is now known as the “Presidency University” (from 7th July of 2010). The university is situated in West Bengal's Kolkata.
- Alexander Duff and Raja Rammohan Roy collaborated to found the Scottish Church College in West Bengal, which is currently a separate college under the University of Calcutta. This institution of higher learning was established in 1830. The college currently offers a B.Ed. course, a master's in science, and a bachelor's in arts and sciences.
- He gave birth Bengali prose a unique dimension. It is clear that he made a unique addition to Indian literature and language.
- Raja Rammohan Roy used his publications and the media to spread his beliefs. Additionally, he significantly aided Bengal's development. There were works written in English, Urdu, Persian, Aramaic, Sanskrit, and other languages.
- He supported the implementation of an English education. He founded the “Anglo Hindu School” to include English into education, or to make English as a “Living Language”, after realising the importance of the language. Multilingualism is a practice that has been highlighted in NEP 2020. The English language has therefore gained a special significance.
- He was the one who first shared Indian culture, civilization, and ideas with outsiders. According to the NEP 2020, reputable foreign universities will be able to establish campuses in India and provide students with a high-quality education. It is obvious that the NEP 2020 recommends connecting Eastern and Western education a major attention.
- Roy's ideas of religious and political universalism reflect on his ideas of secular education. Secular education is still very relevant for today's education of India.
- The current age is particularly concerned about women's emancipation and girls' education; however Raja Rammohan Roy said many years ago that women's education was just as important as that of males. Following India's independence, a number of committees, commissions, and national education policies were established with a focus on women's education and empowerment. In eradicating the prejudices against women's education that were pervasive in then-Hindu culture, his Brahma Samaj rendered a major service.



## Conclusion:

The study came to the conclusion that Raja Rammohan Roy worked tirelessly in the realm of education to ensure press freedom, the growth of the Bengali language, and the dissemination of practical scientific knowledge among his people. He desired a combination of western modernism and eastern mysticism. He affected the then-official policy to give directives in favour of western knowledge because of his sharp intellect and long-range vision. When Sanskrit was still regarded as one of India's routed languages, Raja Rammohan Roy bravely aired his scepticism about the language's practicality. He favored promoting English language proficiency among his countrymen so that they might learn about western culture and ideals and then incorporate them into their own. He gave individuals who had a passion for spreading western knowledge his essential assistance, and he also started schools and universities to provide modern, liberal western education. Raja Rammohan Roy was able to advance an ancient civilization toward modernity thanks to his liberal viewpoints. He made significant contributions to improving educational conditions and, as a result, his people now have a new awareness and consciousness that is helpful for reforming and regenerating educational settings.

One of the few individuals in his day who completely appreciated the significance of the modern period was Raja Rammohan Roy. He has been dubbed India's first modern man. He was known as "Bharat Pathik" by Rabindranath Tagore. According to Bipin Chandra Pal, Raja Rammohan's fight against medievalism, for which he is hailed as "The Father of Indian Renaissance," was the precious value of his efforts. He was aware that the goal of human civilization is not individualism but rather kinship and interdependence between people and nations. In the spirit of cooperative cooperation, he aimed to help Indians develop a deep grasp of their own cultural identities as well as an appreciation for the reality that was particular to their cultures.

Rammohan may be considered a pioneer of modern education in India in light of all these services he provided. Even though there were many other notable individuals who contributed to the area, Raja Rammohan Roy can rightfully be considered one of those who first allowed Indians to pursue an education grounded in science and logic.

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