Abstract

Haryana remained one of the most backward and underdeveloped regions of Punjab under the British. Regarding women, this region showed a peculiar contradiction at that time. On the one hand, the region accepted high status for women, widow remarriage, full economic participation in all activities with men. On the other hand, the region believes in, paradaha or gunghat custom, against female education, etc. In this connection, this paper takes up a case study of the role of a reformist movement like Arya Samaj in the empowerment of women in Haryana. The selection of this State has been made because the Arya Samaj has made a more significant role in the region during the colonial and post-colonial periods than other religions in the Haryana state after its formation on November 1st, 1966. The paper has been divided into the following parts: The first deals with the profile of Haryana state, the second discusses the genesis and development of Arya Samaj in Haryana and the third describes its role in the empowerment of women and the next deals with the constraints that Arya Samaj have to face in Haryana and the last concludes the extent of its success in the region.

I. INTRODUCTION

The religion has played both empowering and disempowering role in the context of women. The Sanatan Dharma tradition of the Hindi religion in general and Manu Samriti in particular had a negative influence on the status of women in India. The Sikh religion, however, made a positive influence in this context by according them a higher status. The Christian too made a positive impact on women by promoting their education. Among the Hindu sects, the remarriage and by opposing the tradition of Sati. The Arya Samaj of
Swami Dayanand Saraswati too worked hard for the empowerment of women by advocating respect for them and by supporting widow re-marriage. It also supported “Niyog”\(^1\) and “Karewa”\(^2\) for their liberation.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
Historical as well as comparative approach has been used for this work. The data was collected from the primary and the secondary sources.

III. BACKGROUND AND PROBLEMS

A Northern-western state of India, Harayana\(^3\) came into existence as a result of linguistic reorganization of Punjab on the recommendations of the Parliamentary Committee of Punjabi Suba headed by Sardar Hukam Singh. Before the revolt of 1857, Haryana region was a part of the North-Western Province, presently U.P. It was separated from the province in 1858 and tagged with Punjab as a punishment for the participation of the provinces and people of the region in the revolt of 1857. It remained a backward part of Punjab during the colonial period as the British neglected its development due to the reasons already stated. Consequently, it remained socially, culturally, economically and politically under developed\(^4\). Even after independence, this region remained in Punjab but its development was neglected because of the domination of the elite from the Punjabi region in the power structure of the state. Except Gopi Chand Bhargav who remained Chief Minister for a short period, all the Chief Ministers of Punjab namely Bhim Sen Sacher, Partap Singh Kairon and Comrade Ram Krishan hailed from the Punjab region. That is why, the political elite of Haryana demanded the formation of Haryana State. Although, their case was based on the fact that Haryana was linguistically, socially and culturally different from Punjab. The real reason for the demand for Haryana State was the feeling of discrimination in all walks of life. This fact found support in the Report of Haryana Development Committee which had been constituted by the Government of Punjab in 1963. It may be mentioned that the overall backwardness of the region affected the status of women in Haryana during the colonial and the post-colonial periods\(^5\). After the attainment of statehood in 1966 Haryana has been able to become one of the most developed state of Indian Union due to the success of green and white revolutions, rapid industrial development and its emergence as the hub of Information Technology. This happened due to its proximity to the national capital Delhi and owing to the location of a large part of it in the National Capital Region but credit has also able to be given to its dynamic political leadership, competent bureaucracy, dedicated technocracy and the hard working people of Haryana.

IV. GENESIS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF ARYA SAMAJ IN HARYANA

So far as the genesis and development of the Arya Samaj in Haryana region are concerned, its first unit was setup at Rewari in 1879 when Swami Dayanand visited that place during his return journey from Punjab. Gradually, a substantial number of units of...
the Arya Samaj came into existence in various districts of Haryana region. According to an official historian of Arya Samaj, as many as 22 units of the Arya Samaj had been formed in Ambala, 14 in Mahendergarh, 10 in Jind, 86 in Karnal, 44 in Gurgaon, 182 in Rohtak and 20 in Hisar by 1976. This shows that the influence of Arya Samaj movement was more powerful in the Jat dominated Rohtak district than in other districts. It was also quite significant in Karnal district where, in addition to the Jats, a large number of the Rors and the Gujjars joined it. Its relatively greater influence in Rohtak district could be attributed to the proximately of district to Delhi which had emerged as an important centre of Arya Samaj. Besides, its geographical contiguity with Western U.P. also played an important role in this context. Here it may be pointed out that the Arya Samaj was able to attract the relatively more advanced people of Western U.P. particularly those of District Meerut. Another reason for the strength of the Arya Samaj in Rohtak could be the large scale participation of the Jat peasantry of the district in British Army during the First World War (1914-1918). Their deployment in different parts of the world during the War created a great deal of social awakening in the army personnel of this district due to a variety of reasons. This too was instrumental in greater popularity of the Arya Samaj in it.

V. EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN AND ARYA SAMAJ

Arya Samaj played an important role in the empowerment of women in Haryana region by promoting their education. But it remained only partially successful due to the conservative culture of the state and hold of Khap Panchayats. Firstly, it laid emphasis on the respect of women in the propaganda that was carried out for spreading the message of Arya Samaj by the Bhajniks and other pracharaks. They told the people that the God lives at the place where women are worshiped. This was very significant because women were having a very low status in Haryana region. This is evident from the following sayings: Chhori Marey Bhagwan Ki aur Chhora Mary Nirbhag Ka (He is fortune whose daughter dies and he is unfortunate whose son meets the death). Aurat Ki Akal Guddi Key Pachhey Hoye (The brain of women is not in the head but in back part of the neck). Triya Karan Ujad Gaye Bade Bade Gharbar (The women has been responsible for running many illustrious families), Lugai Joot ki Yar Hove Sey (The women will respect only if she gets shoe beating). The advocacy of a higher status for women by the Arya Samaj certainly helped in the improvement of the status of a large number of women of whose families which were follower of Arya Samaj.

Secondly, the Arya Samaj helped in the empowerment of women in the Haryana region by opening of Arya Girls Schools and Kanya Gurukuls in the colonial period. These started the process of education of women. It is pertinent to mention here that the conservative people of Haryana were against co-education. After independence, the Arya Samaj set up separate colleges for women such as F.C. College, Hisar and Arya Girls College, Ambala Cantt. These colleges opened the gates of higher education for women.
This role of Arya Samaj got further boost after the formation of Haryana as a separate state. This is evident from the opening of D.A.V. College at Yamunanagar, D.A.V. College, Kosli (Rohtak) and D.A.V. College, Karnal. Starting of separate Teachers Training Colleges such as D.A.V. College of Education, Karnal and Bhagat Phool Singh College of Education, Khanpur (Sonipat) enabled many women to become beachers. It is pertinent to mention that Bhagat Phool Singh College has now been converted into Bhagat Phool Singh University for Women in Khanpur.

Thirdly, Arya Samaj also worked for the empowerment of women by encouraging them to join politics and contest elections. It is pertinent to mention that first women M.L.A. of Haryana, Smt. Chandravati was inspired by Arya Samaj to join politics, Prasanni Devi and Shanti Rathi who became M.L.A. were also motivated by the Arya Samaj. While chandravati and Prsani Devi were made ministers, the latter also became Lt. Governor of pondichury.

### 5.1 Constrains
But Arya Samaj had to face many constrains in its mission of empowerment of institution have always prevented women from choices in marriage making. In the name of traditions of not permitted marriages in women in Haryana. Firstly, the nature of Haryanvi society was continues to be patachial. The women are not given share in property despite legal provisions. Secondaly, khap panchayat have also been a barrier in the way of empowerment of women in the region. These outdated same Gotra, marriage in same villages & in adjoining villages. The phsool of male members of their families has also been a hurdle. They do not allow even the women office bearers of panchyati Raj Institutions, elected are to reservations by 73rd amendment to perform their role independently. The male political leaders including some of the chief minister had not allow women ministers to act their own and have concentrated all the powers in their own hands.

### 5.2 Success in this Issue
Although Arya Samaj did not succeed too much extent in empowering women in the colonial period despite the fact that it had strange presence in Haryana region during that era. It did succeed to some extent in the post colonial era despite the emergence of factionalism in it. This is evident from it success in promoting higher education and mobilizing women in Hindi Rajsha Andolan in 1957 in which a substation number of women had taken an active part. It also succeeds in motivating as already mention the women like Chandravati and Parsanni Devi to join politics and contest elections. After the formation of Haryana, Arya Samaj has played an important role in promoting higher education among women and been also enabling many of them in becoming teacher. Some of these teachers like Shanti Rathi played an important role in teachers agitation joined politics and became minister. Shanti Devi set up Manav Dharam Mission at Karnal and did appreciable social work. However Arya Samaj could not play a greater role in the empowerment of women because it got weaken due to the increasing influence...
of various dera’s and adoption of religious practices like Jagratas, even by the peasant caste who had earlier been a staunch followers of Arya Samaj.

VI. CONCLUSION

Although the scholars like D.R. Chaudhary have express the view that Arya samaj could not play a significant role in Haryana because it has lost its progressive character by the time. But the facts speak otherwise. Hence it may be concluded that Arya Samaj was able to initiate the process of empowerment of women in the colonial era and excerpted in the post colonial era and continous to make some effects in this direction despite its weakening owing to various factors despite many constrains, it has been making serious efforts. But these could make only limited impact owing to the adverse social, cultural and political milieu of Haryana. But it was partially successful because of the neo feudal character of the society of Haryana and its conservative culture. Thus it may be concluded that the Arya Samaj played an important role in the empowerment of women in Haryana.

VII. REFERENCES

[1] Niyog was a practice of levirate marriage. It came to signify cohabitation by the wife with men other than her husband under certain specific conditions.

[2] Karewa, a white sheet, coloured at the corners is thrown by the man over the widow’s head, signifying his acceptance of her as his wife.


PAPER CITATION