

CONCLUSION

The later half of the 19th century witnessed in India the emergence of several socio-religious movements. Despite some regional differences, these country wide movements were more or less identical in character, pursuing the same objective-amelioration of socio-economic conditions of the masses and revival of India's ancient spiritual glory. These movements aimed at cleansing society of its numerous ills which were the result of ignorance, illiteracy, poverty, unemployment gender discrimination and exploitation. Although religion was the basic guiding force behind most of these movements, yet the endeavour was also to eradicate bigotry and irrational beliefs.

The foundation of the Arya Samaj by Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati (1824-83) (Bombay on April 14, 1875) was a remarkable development in the fight against social evils spawned by irrational religious beliefs and by the exploitative, oppressive and divisive policies of alien rulers. The Arya Samaj's contributions to fighting social evils in the Haryana region is significant. In this patriarchal society women were relegated to a very pathetic and inferior position. Child marriage, female infanticide, Sati system, Purdah (Veil) system, illiteracy among girls, denial of education and equal rights, domestic violence, the dowry system etc. were some of the major issues.

Dayanand Saraswati was among the first to react and reject the educational system prevalent in the 19th century under the British. This system was based mainly on the educational template envisioned by Lord Macauley. The quintessence of this educational system was to perpetuate British rule in India by

providing the Indian youth such education as would enable them to become supporting elements to run the administration. Moreover, education was too expensive for the masses to afford it. As such the majority of the youth particularly women had no access to education. There was no provision for or encouragement, for girls education under this system. Swami Dayanand wanted to devise a kind of education system which was in sync with India's socio-cultural needs. Infusion of a spirit of piety and religiousness, formation of character, development of personality, inculcation and spread of national culture were to be the objectives of this educational system.

Dayanand as such conceived the Gurukula system of education to bring about the desired changes in the society by doing away with the evils and vices of the prevalent system of education. Swami Dayanand's keenness to spread education, especially among girls infact led to the birth of the Gurukula system of education. His followers embarked on an ambitious plan to spread education in the country. It was on Nov. 8, 1883 that they established a Dayanand Anglo-vedic (DAV) school in the memory of Swami Dayanand.

Differences arose in respect of syllabus and the type of training that was to be imparted, among the members of the DAV Managing Committee. Consequently, the Committee got divided into two groups – Gurukula party and The college party. The Gurukula party headed by Pt. Gurudutt and Lala Munshi Ram insisted on providing for example knowledge of Sanskrit and the Vedas and the performance of the vedic ceremonies such as the Havan, recitation of the Gayatri Mantra etc. so as to make the youth culture conscious, patriotic, laborious and courageous. The

College party headed by Mahatma Hansraj and Lala Lajpat Rai stressed on the need for modern, scientific and technical education, apart from the knowledge of English language and literature. Later the issue of non-vegetarian food also became an issue of contention. By the end of 1893 the two groups broke away from each other and followed their different paths of education in their respective educational institutions.

The College party devoted its attention to D.A.V. schools, while the members of the Gurukula party devoted themselves to the Gurukula system of education. The first to be opened was Gurukula Kangri in 1902. The strength of the students in the Gurukulas started picking up. It rose to 187 by 1907.

The impact of the Gurukula system of education in the Haryana region was very significant, particularly in the Rohtak district. The Gurukulas drew the majority of their strength of students from rural areas and from middle class families. Followers of Lala Munshi Ram and Guru Dutta contributed enthusiastically to the fund raising campaign for the establishment of various Gurukulas in North India. The Gurukula movement in South East Punjab was led mainly by the peasant class.

Alongwith religious education, another important feature of the Gurukulas was that the medium of education was Hindi. The traditional Gurukula party of the Arya Samaj rejected what it termed colonial modernity and laid emphasis on the re-establishment of the Vedic system of instructions.

The history of the Gurukula movement can be divided into two parts – period before independence and period after

independence. Before independence Gurukulas were considered important centres of national awareness and awakening since in the Gurukulas, main thrust was laid on inculcating the feeling of nationalism and love for heritage and culture among the students. Infact Gurukulas were considered to be a part of the National education movement. That was why Bramcharis of Gurukulas participated in the freedom struggle in large numbers. But after independence, Gurukulas also joined the other institutions in imparting career oriented conventional education. So the rigid rules of the Gurukula system in relation to cultural values were followed no doubt, but with a lesser degree of rigidity.

After the establishment of Gurukula Kangri in 1902, the establishment of Gurukulas also started in Haryana. Based on the content of courses, there are five main Gurukula traditions in the Haryana/region.

1. Gurukula Kangri Tradition
2. Gurukula Jhajjar Tradition
3. Independent Literature Study and Research Institute
4. Other Gurukulas
5. Kanya Gurukula

In the Haryana region the education of women was not given much importance before the appearance of Maharishi Dayanand. The Arya Samaj for the first time made a concerted, ceaseless and earnest effort to encourage female education. By overcoming all obstacles the Samaj succeeded in driving home the importance of female education. The Arya Samaj established that education was the most powerful tool for the empowerment of women.

It is also surprising that the Gurukula party which was considered conservative and dogmatic as compared to the College party was more in favour of female education than the College party though subsequently the College party also realized its importance and made efforts for opening women schools and colleges. The odds were against women as Punjab's society was steeped in old traditions and was historically opposed to girls education. A lot of credit goes to the Arya Samaj for breaking down the resistance to female education in the region. The contribution of the Gurukula type of education in this regard is all the more praiseworthy.

The Arya Samaj had many reasons for emphasizing on women education. The first reason was to reform society by educating women particularly in the context of customs such as infanticide, early marriage, negation of widow remarriage, 'purdah' system, dowry system etc. Owing to these customs the status of women in society was very low. The second reason was to restore the significance of the Vedic age. Maharishi Dayanand in the '*Satyarth Parkash*' emphasized repeatedly that the Vedic Age was an ideal, golden period in Indian history. Our society he said was caught in social evils due to the neglect of the knowledge of the Vedas. The position and equal rights which women enjoyed in the society during the Vedic period, could be restored through spread of women education in the present age.

The Arya Samaj created a network of schools, colleges and Gurukulas across the region to change the mindset of the people vis-a-vis female education. The role of the Gurukulas in promoting and nurturing female education is undeniably very significant and remarkable. But for the role played by the

Gurukulas in motivating the reluctant parents to send their daughters to Gurukulas for education, women's education would not have come to be imparted as normally and naturally as it is being done today. Gurukulas thus played a very creditable role in dismantling the barriers that hampered the spread of female education. Apart from other social reforms, the role of the Arya Samaj in the field of education in general and female education is extremely commendable.

The Haryana region being predominantly an agrarian society, female education was considered a sheer waste of money, time and energy. But the Arya Samaj through its Gurukula system of education surmounted all the obstacles, changed the mindset of the people and popularized female education. The first Kanya Gurukula was established in Haryana at Khanpur Kalan (Sonapat) in 1936 by Bhagat Phool Singh. After that many Kanya Gurukulas came to be established in Haryana. Gurukulas' role in social reform was critical. From time to time these Gurukulas participated in the movements against many social evils. Both wings of the Arya Samaj – the College party and the Gurukula party played a vital role in the dissemination of education for women in the whole of the Punjab. The Kanya Mahavidyalya Jullandar (1891) very soon became an ideal institution in the field of women education.

Girls in the Gurukulas in Haryana came not only from Haryana but also from UP, Rajasthan, Punjab and many others provinces. There are some girls today even from countries like Nepal, Bhutan etc. What is extremely important is that the education imparted in the Kanya Gurukulas is virtually free and is supported by resources raised by society. A very nominal

boarding and lodging fee is charged.

The Gurukulas encouraged Hindi and Sanskrit and laid emphasis on discipline, decorum, character formation, the study of the Vedas and Vedic culture, patriotism and life of austerity and sincerity.

The Gurukula system of education in the initial years was not designed to meet the routine needs of society because it produced only teachers, priests and preachers. In fact prior to 1947 Gurukulas were also not recognized by the government. So, students passing out from Gurukulas did not get government jobs. Not surprisingly D.A.V. institutions became popular because they have followed the modern education system. On the other hand Gurukulas could not become as popular because of their form of education.

Yet despite some shortcomings in the Gurukula system of education, their contribution in the field of social reforms can not be underestimated. The graduates from Gurukulas have been contributing in the development of the country as well as society in various ways. Gurukulas of Haryana have played a vital role in uplifting the status of women. For example scheduled caste girls in particular have greatly benefited. There is no caste based discrimination in Kanya Gurukulas. This spirit was fostered among the people at different Gurukula festivals and functions and was promoted by preachers in the villages. The tight grip of casteism has somewhat loosened in Haryana due to the Gurukula system of education. No doubt there is much more that remains to be done in this field.

Despite all the good work done by the Gurukulas today in

Haryana the Gurukula system of education, especially Kanya Gurukulas are facing a number of challenges. Dearth of financial resources, obsolescence of syllabuses being taught in Gurukulas, the declining number of students in Gurukulas and the growing trend of seeking admission to modern schools and colleges are some of the challenges that the Gurukulas are having to contend with. The popularity of the D.A.V. schools and colleges, as a rival or alternative system has also weakened the Gurukula system. Today only those Gurukulas have perhaps sustained themselves which have adapted themselves to modern conditions and have gradually veered round to providing education on modern lines. Though the education of the Vedas and other shastras is still provided, yet the emphasis on such instructions has reduced. A religious atmosphere still prevails no doubt but it is not as all pervasive as in the early part of this century. The best example is that of Gurukula University of Kangri which does not differ much from other colleges and Universities except in nomenclature of degrees and the use of Sanskrit. Their limited appeal, paucity of funds, lack of teachers suitable for Gurukula life and teaching, failure of the pass outs to find jobs and to adjust themselves are major problems, facing the Gurukulas way of education.

Continuity with change can offer the solution to the declining system of Gurukula education. It must also be admitted that the Gurukula institutions did satisfy a keenly felt social need at a time of crisis, and have been instrumental in protecting India's Vedic legacy. They would have been even more useful had they been broad based and suited to the needs of the present time. This system of education has benefitted the society in a number

of ways and must be preserved by doing a way with its deficiencies.

Finally it can be said that The Gurukulas played a monumental role during the years when India sought to seek an alternate road to educating its masses. The Gurukulas that have adapted to modern means of education along with the tradition of the Gurukulas, like the Kurukshetra Gurukula (Boys) have done exceedingly well. It is important to understand that in regions like Haryana, with huge problems on issues like equality for women the Kanya Gurukulas are playing an important role. Haryana's social fabric is deeply patriarchal and caste ridden, The Kanya Gurukulas are outstanding examples of a system of education that has made efforts to reform society by taking up the most important aspect of societal reform – educating women.

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GLOSSARY

Sanskrit Words	English Equivalent
Arsh Literature	Literature composed by Rishis
Ashima	Non-Violence
Asteya	No greed for wealth
Brahmacharya	Celibacy
Dakshina	Gift made to priests
Dharm	Religion
Granthas	Holy Books
Grihastha	Householder
Gurukula	House of Guru
Kirtan, Bhajan	Recitation
Mandals	Parts
Moksha	Salvation
Rashtravad	Nationalism
Rishis	Those who have seen truth face to face
Sabhasad	Member
Sandhyopasana	Evening Prayer
Satya	Truth
Shastrarth	Religious debates
Shraddha	Ovation to living parent
Sucha	Cleanliness of Body, Purity of Mind and Soul

Swadhyaya	Reading of the sacred books
Upasna	Prayer
Upnayan	Vedic initiation
Vanaprastha	Sylvan retirement
Varna Vyavastha	System of classes
Varnas	Classes Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra
Vedangas	Parts of the Vedas
Yamas and Niyamas	Restraint of Passions