

Nation-State, Language and Social Consciousness: Swami Dayananda Saraswati's Revolutionary Ideas on Self-Rule and Social Reform

Sukhdev Byadwal

PhD Scholar, University of Rajasthan

ABSTRACT:

The 19th century of Indian history can be called the history of political and social awakening, due to which political awakening was seen in the Indian masses after the First War of Independence of 1857. Particularly, the political awakening was led by the middle class, which had received an English education. At the same time, the social reforms started under Raja Ram Mohan Roy, but Dayanand Saraswati can be called the leader of major social reforms. Under whose leadership, Hindu society developed a consciousness with social and cultural expression, and it was ready to focus on its development with modern Western scientific thinking. Modern western philosophy and science were given place in the society by Dayanand Saraswati, and women's rights in India and equality for Dalits. We can see the effort made by him for unity in religion in the role of the social reform movement, as an understanding of God. The work of political awakening in India was also done indirectly by Dayanand Saraswati. Many reforms were implemented by him through which the society can regain its lost past. By giving the example of the Vedas, he again gave voice to the cultural pride consciousness of India and said that we should return to the Vedic lifestyle. What he meant to say was that Indians should return to the Vedic consciousness, in which we played a major role in the world. Even in the present, the role of Dayanand Saraswati should be seen in the same way, and it is continuously influencing us.

KEY WORDS: Vedic pride, equality, scientific knowledge, empowerment, social consciousness, language debate, Hindi, nationalism, nation-state,

The 18th century, especially after 1850, can be considered the century of the political and social foundation of India, in which talks for political rights began and, along with it, social and cultural awakening also started, on which the mark of the journey of the religious culture of India is visible. Even before the revolution of 1857, social movements were taking place in India. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was prominent among them. After that, Dadabhai Naoroji and Keshav Chandra Sen were working for social reforms at their level, in which social reforms were to be continued by keeping cultural aspects in mind. The credit for taking social reform to the public as a revolutionary idea and making it successful can be given to Swami Dayanand Saraswati.

Dayanand Saraswati was not only an excellent social reformer of his time but in the same social reform, he tried to see society from many aspects and how those social aspects can contribute to the process of building a nation, Swami Dayanand Saraswati understood it better because in the midst of all this, he was aware of the ups and downs happening in the West and the activities related to the formation of nation-states and nationalism. Dayanand Saraswati was also looking at the political and social-cultural mistakes that were made in India. This is the reason why Dayanand Saraswati while mixing modernity and tradition, stressed the mixture of both to achieve the real values of India's Swaraj. India's development will happen by keeping its traditions along with it, but along with that, we will have to keep the modern scientific thinking of the West along with it so that the society can progress in materialism as well. Dayanand

constantly talked about many negative things that have become inert in society, and his focus was indirectly on political awareness but directly on making the society stand on its own feet first so that it can achieve social reform. He believed that until society develops its understanding, the real meaning of Swaraj will not be understood, and the real experience of Swaraj cannot be achieved.

He was the first Mahatma who understood the social fabric of India and gladly accepted the challenges prevailing in it and constantly criticized the wide discrimination gap and the materialism of high and low that arose in the society due to these challenges. And keeping this social reform in mind, Dayanand Saraswati laid the foundation of women's empowerment, language empowerment, religious empowerment and by combining all these, the empowerment of a nation. This must have been the reason that his Swaraj, definition of nation and values were widely adopted by the freedom fighters of India in the 20th century and his contribution in the educational world has always been remembered. Saraswati was one of those prominent thinkers of the nineteenth century who commented on the political plight of India and also saw it closely, whether it was the trend of debauchery of the kings and maharajas or the economic, political, cultural exploitation done by the British government and developing a sense of inferiority among the Indians and its continuous increase among the Indians, distance from their cultural values, especially the upper class constantly promoted the cultural experiences of the West, due to which all the common people were feeling helpless. Dayanand was the great man who first fought against it and again made modern India aware of the ancient journey of India, in which there was a famous line “return to vedas”

Dayanand Saraswati's important and revolutionary work can be said to be that he made a sharp attack on the conservatives regarding women's education, which was important in itself. Saraswati provided a social perspective on the development of society by bringing women's education within the ambit of modern education. He repeatedly gave historical examples and gave examples of the women's educational environment in the Vedic tradition of ancient times and told that in the Vedic period, women were scholars and had equal rights to education. They knew how to read Sanskrit, they used to participate in Yagya Havan, meetings and debates. Mandan Mishra's wife's participation in debates is an example.

Dayanand Saraswati was a supporter of educating women by keeping in mind the Vedic tradition of India along with the educational approach of the West. He advocated women learning Sanskrit and talked about empowerment with many historical examples, such as giving statements on Queen Ahilyabai Holkar, Lakshmibai. Demanding education for women so intensely in those times proves Dayanand's foresight, and many people expressed doubts about his insistence, but Dayanand's It was said that if we cannot educate 50% of the population, then how can we educate the family It will be difficult to lay the foundation of an ideal family if the woman is not educated because the mother is the first teacher of the child, and she needs to be aware of all the information of the world. For example, Shivaji's mother Jijabai gave Shivaji the idea of fighting various adverse circumstances in childhood and gathering courage against them, preparing a great man like Shivaji, for which his mother's contribution was important.

Dayanand Saraswati expressed concern over the increasing cases of female foeticide and demanded the provision of strict punishment for it through a law Along with this, Dayanand Saraswati also started a movement against the purdah system, which was prevalent in both Hindu and Muslim religions and considered an obstacle in the social, cultural and political upliftment of women. Dayanand Saraswati criticized all those social practices which hinder the development of women.

During the time of Dayanand Saraswati's awareness and the foundation of the basics of India, it was also the time when the language of a nation began to be considered as to what should be the medium of the official language of India (in office work and other government works), whether it should be the language associated with external political power or should priority be given to the language arising from the local cultural journey. Dayanand Saraswati was constantly looking at the language by connecting it with the identity of the society, in which he said that language is the mirror of the society and strengthens the society emotionally as well as mentally, so the language and its identity should be kept strong, Saraswati was a strong supporter of the revival of Sanskrit and being an intellectual language of the society and an ancient language, Saraswati was also in favor of conveying the values of the society to the people through Sanskrit. However, Dayanand Saraswati wanted to make Hindi a national language which would become the medium of contact between the people and give India its own identity, the way German language is for Germany, English language for the British, French language for France, in the same way Hindi language is necessary for Hindustan as well. Dayanand Saraswati was a supporter of promoting Hindi in scripts (with Devanagari) and linked it with the original soul of India, which has evolved over hundred of years.

Saraswati was also a supporter of translating traditionally important historical stories and novels into regional languages. Important books were translated from English in his institution so that the modern thinking of the West could be assimilated among the Indian people and they could be strengthened. (1881–Established Paropkarini Sabha in Ajmer to publish Vedic literature) Dayanand Saraswati was a strong supporter of the purity of Vedic language and believed that it is important for the human soul to provide it mental peace and Vedic language is associated with the initial progress of India when we started our development journey before the West and used to take decisions through institutions like democracy like Sabha and Samiti.

Dayanand had already understood that if religious, social and cultural reforms are to be done, then the first condition for that would be to prepare the people of India for political reform and politics because without political power, the pace of social reform will be slow and the people making and running the policy must be Indian because their destiny will not be based on exploitation as the British Empire is doing.

Dayanand Saraswati brought an emotional idea of India in front of the people of the whole of India in which the country was to be strengthened and united through political control and geographical expression.

Dayanand was a strong supporter of Swadeshi and nationalism. Dayanand said that Swadeshi is the only medium through which India can develop and India can regain its ancient glory. In India's freedom struggle, the first slogan of Swadeshi was given by Swami Dayanand Saraswati. He believed that without Swadeshi, the country could not be self-reliant, it would not get respect in the world if it could not be self-reliant for itself, and the expression of nationalism will strengthen Swadeshi, so it is necessary for both to be together.

Dayanand was also a supporter of cultural nationalism, which many times was mixed with religious, and it is seen in his expression through literature that he believed that by creating a Hindu nation, Indian culture will regain its ancient glory where we had a place in the world in economic, political and cultural terms. That is why Dayanand used to talk about Vedic sovereignty. Without Vedic sovereignty, India cannot acquire its knowledge Dayanand was constantly talking about religious reforms. He believed that without reforms in religion, a nation could not be built. Only by following the religious path will India regain its ancient glory. That is why he was constantly propagating the knowledge and religion of India, and through this medium,

he also started the Shuddhi movement. Many historians try to see the Shuddhi movement through criticism, but Dayanand said that Shuddhi is not a means of force; rather, it is up to the conscience whether you want to return to your ancient values, and that is why Dayanand constantly considered the Shuddhi movement important in the whole of North India. He talked about making Shuddhi aggressive to respond to the ever-increasing Christian and Muslim attacks on Hinduism and tried to give a befitting reply to the religious invaders. Saraswati, through Shuddhi, he was thinking of establishing nationalist unity in the country so that India could raise its voice for its pride in a single voice. Dayanand Saraswati was directly or indirectly against foreign rule. He believed that we cannot progress under any foreign rule. For this, India must achieve its Swaraj, in which people take their own decisions. Saraswati was critical of British rule because it was a symbol of exploitation, and it reminded Indians that they were political slaves of a small island. Dayanand Saraswati indirectly worked to awaken the consciousness of Indians against British rule throughout India. However, at that time, the grip of the British government was very strong on the Indian people. Indians were allowed to do public awareness work only to a limited extent. Dayanand Saraswati did not directly challenge the British people but indirectly made people aware, and people also understood that Dayanand Saraswati was not only propagating the ancient glory of India, but he was also laying the foundation of modern India, the basis of which would be Hindi, Hindu and Hindustan. Here, Dayanand Saraswati was not a religious fanatic but the ancient values of Hindustan. He was talking about reestablishing them, that is why he was repeatedly saying to return to the Vedas Without Vedic values, India cannot re-establish the glory of its past in the present

Dayanand Saraswati's legacy and influence on Indian society and the Indian nation-state continued unabated. Even after his death, his ideas continued to have an impact on Indian society, especially in North India. After the establishment of the Arya Samaj in Mumbai in 1875, social work proved important, especially in educational reforms, and the young generation was educated according to the modern education and ideas of the West through Dayanand Anglo Vedic School and Colleges. Many responsible people created a large section of the society based on these values, whose way of thinking was Indian and their education was inspired by the modernity of the West. After the death of Dayanand Saraswati, schools and colleges of education were opened in North India, and there was no discrimination of any kind in these, based on social background, gender or region. The reform movement, which was founded by Dayanand Saraswati, led to rapid changes in society. There was a decrease in female foeticide. There was an increase in women's education. A progressive ideology emerged in the society, challenging the orthodox mentality of the medieval period, which also influenced Indian nationalism. Saraswati's contribution can be seen in many ways in Indian society, and a strong Indian society was created by him. The pace of conversion of Indians, especially Hindus, by Christian missionaries decreased, and the activity of planned conversion to other religions also decreased. People became socially and religiously aware, and somewhere, people got the courage to ask questions. All these activities together also worked to increase political awareness among the people.

Conclusion:

When we look at the ideology of Dayanand Saraswati, from the surface, it appears that it was related to social and cultural reforms, but his real goal was to get political freedom for India and the people of the country to take their own decisions through Swaraj. His main goal was Aryavrat, which also included political freedom. The thoughts of Dayanand Saraswati can also be seen in the Indian Constitution, and along with freedom of religion, protecting religions was also seen as the duty of the Indian national state. Fundamental rights Articles 25, 26, 27, and 28, and 44 all reflect the thoughts of Dayanand Saraswati. Dayanand Saraswati believed that

until India becomes a strong nation, we cannot compete equally with the world's nations. That is why, as a country, society first has to come together and create a strong voice within itself, which will be through language, self-rule, nation-state, gender, and social empowerment.

We can conclude his vision for Bharat with these lines: “The strength of Bharat lies in its people, their education, and their commitment to truth. Only by following Dharma can we rebuild our great nation.”

References

1. Dayanand Saraswati. *Satyarth Prakash (The Light of Truth)*. Translated by Ganga Prasad Upadhyaya. Ajmer: Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, 1970
2. Bhagwan Das. *Swami Dayanand Saraswati: His Life and Ideas*. Delhi: Arya Samaj Publications, 1941
3. Jordens, J. T. F. *Dayananda Sarasvati: His Life and Ideas*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1978
4. Chaudhuri, Nirad C. *Hinduism: A Religion to Live By*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1979
5. Sharma, Arvind. *The Philosophy of Swami Dayananda Saraswati*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1991
6. Mehta, Usha. *Swami Dayanand Saraswati and Nationalism*. Delhi: National Book Trust, 1994
7. Bose, Arun. *Swami Dayanand Saraswati and the Arya Samaj*. Calcutta: Firma KLM, 1982
8. Bharati, Agehananda. *The Tantric Tradition*. Delhi: Rider & Company, 1965