

The Father of Modern India's Renaissance

Raja Ram Mohan Roy was the father of Modern India's Renaissance and a tireless social reformer who inaugurated the age of enlightenment and liberal reformist modernization in India.



Source: Get Bengal

Raja Ram Mohan Roy is regarded as the father of the Modern Indian Renaissance due to the remarkable changes he instituted in 18th and 19th century India. The most noticeable of his actions was the removal of the cruel and barbaric Sati Pratha. His contributions have helped in the abolition of the purdah system and child marriage.

Interesting Fact About Raja Ram Mohan Roy

He was a **Polyglot** with proficiency in Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic, English, Bengali, and Hindi.

Early Life and Education

Raja Ram Mohan Roy was born on August 14, 1774, in Radhanagar village of Hooghly district, Bengal Presidency to Ramakanta Roy and Tarini Devi. His father was a rich Brahmin who was orthodox and strictly adhered to religious duty. At the age of 14, Ram Mohan expressed his desire to become a monk, but his mother vehemently opposed the idea, and he dropped it.

Ram Mohan married as a child at the age of nine, as was common at the time, but his first wife died shortly after the marriage. At the age of ten, he married for the second time and had two

sons from the marriage. Since his second wife died in 1826, he married for the third time, and his third wife outlived him.

"For wise and good men always feel disinclined to hurt those that are of much less strength than themselves"

Despite his father Ramakanto's strict religious beliefs, he encouraged his son to seek higher education. From the village school, he learned Bengali and **Sanskrit**. Ram Mohan was then sent to Patna to learn Persian and Arabic in a Madrasa.

Persian and Arabic were in high demand at that time as it was still the court language of the Mughal Emperors. He read the Quran and other Islamic texts. After finishing his studies in Patna, he went to Benares (Kashi) to study **Sanskrit**. He quickly learned the language and started learning scriptures such as the Vedas and Upanishads. He began learning **English** at the age of 22. He read the works of philosophers such as Euclid and Aristotle, which influenced his spiritual and theological beliefs.

Rammohan joined the East India Company as a clerk after completing his studies. He worked for Mr. John Digby in the Rangpur Collectorate. He was eventually promoted to the rank of Dewan, which denoted a native officer tasked with revenue collection.

Interesting Fact About Raja Ram Mohan Roy

He started India's First English Medium School in 1816 in Kolkata.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy Contribution: Social Reforms

During the late 18th century (known as the Dark Age), Bengali society was burdened with several wicked rituals and regulations. Extensive rituals and rigid moral codes were imposed, which were mostly adapted and translated wrongly from ancient cultures. Child marriage, polygamy, and Sati were common practices that harmed women in society.

The Sati Pratha was the vilest of these traditions. The ritual involved widows self-immolating at their husband's funeral pyre. While the tradition in its original form gave women the option to participate, it eventually developed into a necessary custom, especially for Brahmin and higher caste families.



Source: Culture

Young girls were married to much older men in exchange for a dowry so that these men could gain the karmic rewards of their wives' Sati sacrifice. Much of the time, the women did not volunteer to be exposed to such crimes and had to be forced or even drugged into submission.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy opposed this barbaric practice and spoke out against it. He spoke frankly and presented his ideas to the East India Company's higher-ups.

"The Superstitious Practices which deform the Hindu religion have nothing to do with the pure spirit of its dictates"

Lord Bentinck, the Governor-General, sympathized with Roy's feelings and intentions, and the Bengal Sati Regulation, or Regulation XVII, A. D. 1829 of the Bengal Code, was passed despite much outrage from the orthodox religious community. The act prohibited the art of Sati Daha in Bengal Province, and anybody caught doing so would face punishment.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy's name will be remembered as a great benefactor of women, not only for helping to end the tradition of Sati but also for speaking out against child marriage and polygamy, as well as for urging equal inheritance rights for women. He was also a fierce opponent of his generation's rigid caste distinctions.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy Contribution: Educational Reforms

Ram Mohan Roy received his education in traditional languages such as Sanskrit and Persian. He came across English sometime later in life and decided to master it in order to get a better job with the British. But, **being a great writer**, he gobbled up **English literature** and magazines, soaking in as much information as he could.

Though ancient texts such as the Vedas, Upanishads, and the Quran presented him with a deep respect for philosophy, he realized that his knowledge was lacking in science and logical education. He called for the introduction of an **English Education System** in the region, which would teach scientific subjects such as **Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, and even Botany.**



Source: India Today

He paved the way for **India's education system** to be revolutionized by co-founding Hindu College with David Hare in 1817, which went on to become one of the **finest educational institutions in the world**, creating some of the best minds in the country. In order to mix traditional philosophical teachings with modern rational classes, he founded the Anglo-Vedic School in 1822, followed by the Vedanta College in 1826.

"There is only one God. None equals him. He has no end. He is present in all living beings"

Raja Ram Mohan Roy Contribution: Religious Contributions

Ram Mohan Roy was absolutely opposed to the unnecessary ritualism and idol worship advocated by priests. He had learned holy scriptures from various faiths and argued that Hindu Scriptures such as the Upanishads supported the concept of monotheism.

This sparked his search for a religious revolution to bring the teachings of ancient Vedic scriptures back to their original form. In 1828, he established the Atmiya Sabha, and the first meeting of this new religion was held on August 20 of that year.

The Atmiya Sabha was reorganized as the Brahma Sabha, a precursor organization of the Brahmo Samaj. The core principles of this emerging movement were monotheism, freedom from the scriptures, and rejection of the caste system.

Brahmo worship practices were stripped of Hindu ceremonialism and developed in accordance with Christian or Islamic prayer practices. With time, the Brahma Samaj emerged as a powerful progressive force driving social reforms in Bengal, especially women's education.

Interesting Fact About Raja Ram Mohan Roy

He vowed to oppose Sati after his sister-in-law died by jumping into the pyre of his brother.

Brahmo Samaj: India's first Reform Movement

Another major contribution of Raja Ram Mohn Roy was when he founded Brahmo Samaj in 1828 in Calcutta as a reformist movement. It was the first reform movement in India with the main aim to reform the Indian community and introduce the true teachings of Vedas, Upanishads and other Hindu scriptures to the common man. Many prominent leaders like Debendranath Tagore and Keshub Chunder Sen were active members of the Samaj in the 1840s.



Source: OneIndia

The movement played a significant role in modernising Indian society by challenging the oppressive caste system, dowry system and by introducing educational reforms to educate the masses. As one of the most progressive reformists movements in India, Brahma Samaj supported women empowerment by advocating against child marriages, polygamy practice of Sati and treatment of widows in India. The Samaj also challenged polytheism and idolatry in the Hindu religion while preaching monotheism. They also took inspiration from other religions and prohibited criticism of other religious teachings.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy Contribution: Journalistic Contributions

Ram Mohan Roy was a strong advocate of free expression and free speech. He advocated for the freedom of the vernacular press. He also published a Persian newspaper named 'Mirat Ul-Akhbar' (the Mirror of News) as well as a Bengali weekly called 'Sambad Kaumudi' (the Moon of Intelligence).



Source: Hindustan

Times

Items of news and articles had to be approved by the government before they could be published back then. Ram Mohan argued that the media should be free and that the facts should not be censored simply because the government did not want it.

In 1830, Raja Ram Mohan Roy traveled to England to ask the Imperial Government to increase the royalty payment to the Mughal Emperor and to ensure that Lord Bentick's Sati Act was not overturned. Raja Ram Mohan Roy died of meningitis at Stapleton in Bristol on September 27, 1833, during his visit to the **United Kingdom**. He was buried in Bristol's Arnos Vale Cemetery.

"To abuse and insult, is inconsistent with reason and justice"

Raja Ram Mohan Roy's contribution to India truly made him a Renaissance Man; the social reformer not only challenged the status quo in society, he also contributed towards our culture and literature. Here is a list of literary works by Raja Ram Mohan Roy that continue to inspire people across the world-

- A Gift to Monotheists
- Vedanta Gantha
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Raja Ram Mohan Roy was one of the few people in his day who really understood the importance of the new era. He believed that the goal of human society should not reside in the isolation of independence, but in the brotherhood of interdependence of persons and nations. His attempt was to establish Indian people in the full consciousness of their own cultural personality, to make them comprehend the reality that was unique in their civilizations in the spirit of sympathetic cooperation. In this blog, we will read about his inspiring life and Raja Ram Mohan Roy Contributions to the country.

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Source: Culture Trip

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Credit: Doordarshan National

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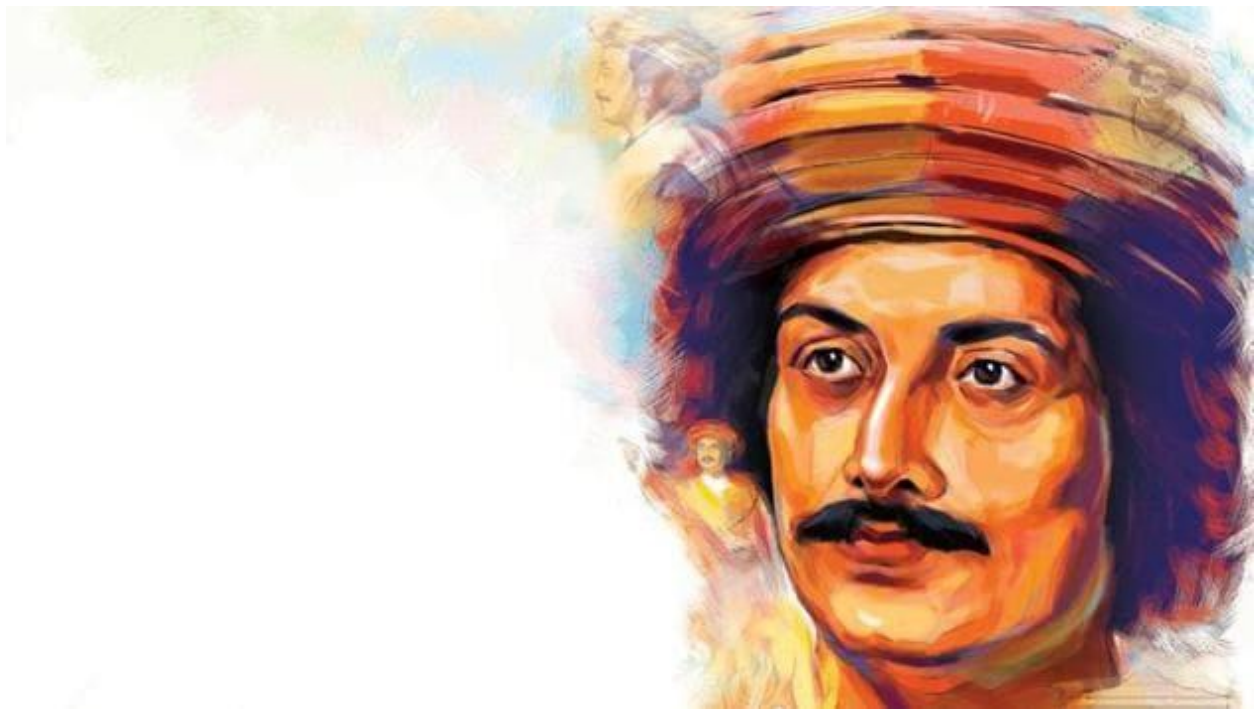
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YouTube: Study IQ

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Questions & Answers

- Who was Raja Ram Mohan Roy?
- Raja Ram Mohan Roy is regarded as the father of the Modern Indian Renaissance due to the remarkable changes he instituted in 18th and 19th century India. The most noticeable of his actions was the removal of the cruel and barbaric Sati Pratha. His contributions have helped in the abolition of the purdah system and child marriage.
- What is the main slogan of Raja Ram Mohan Roy?
- Raja Ram Mohan Roy was a social reformer in India who believed in monotheism and his main slogan was "Ishwar Keval Ek Hai. Uska Koi Aant Nahin, Sabhi Jivit Vastuon

Mein Parmatma Ka Astitva Hai." This means "there is only one God. None equals him. He has no end. He is present in all living beings"

- How did Raja Ram Mohan Roy reform the society?
- Raja Ram Mohan Roy introduced various reforms in India in the social , religious and educational capacity. He fought for equal rights to education, argued against caste caste, practice of sati, widow mistreatment, child marriage and casteism in India.
- Who stopped Sati system in India?
- n 1829, Raja Ram Mohan Roy's efforts led to the abolishment of the Sati System in India. It was Lord William Bentick who officially banned the practice.