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Of *Swadeshi*, Self-Reliance and Self-Help: A Study of the Arya Samaj in Colonial Punjab, 1890–1920s

Abstract

In response to the colonial economic and cultural subjugation, the ideal of *swadeshi* (*swa*: own; *desh*: nation; translated as: of one's own nation) in India had begun to gain ground from 1890s onwards ultimately culminating into the Swadeshi Movement. Fundamentally, it encouraged domestic production in opposition to foreign imports and was characterised by attempts to organise technical education and industrial research, revival of traditional industrial crafts, the starting of new industries based on modern techniques and floating of insurance companies and *swadeshi* banks, and promotion of *swadeshi* sales through exhibitions and shops. Subsequently, the assertion of self-help and self-reliance appeared in the Punjab province, too. In this vast province with a majority Muslim population and Hindus and Sikhs in a minority, *swadeshi* manifested itself in several ways. Through a study of the Arya Samaj, a socio-religious reform movement with firm roots among the Hindus of the province, this article traces how, in colonial Punjab, *swadeshi* soon grew out of its economic basis to encapsulate a larger Hindu nationalistic and cultural paradigm.

Keywords: *swadeshi; Arya Samaj; Punjab; indigenous; education; banking, philanthropy; Hindu*

Arya Samaj and the *Swadeshi* Movement

The Arya Samaj, a socio-religious reform movement for the Hindus, was established by Swami Dayanand Saraswati in 1875 in Bombay, with the aim to reform the Hindu society and rid it of Brahmanical control and superstitions such as idolatry, and evils such as child-marriage, dowry, and the caste system. It looked at the ancient Vedic Age as the glorious past in which, in its own interpretation, the evils of the Hindu society did not exist. In his reforming zeal, Saraswati was equally critical of the dominant orthodox Hindu sect, the Sanatan Dharma, as he was of superstitions within Islam, Christianity, Sikhism and other Indian religions. While the movement found firm roots in Punjab, it negotiated with the idea of 'nationalism', leading to a complex yet significant understanding of the concept in colonial Punjab.

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As per Bipan Chandra, Justice Ranade had delivered a series of lectures at Poona in 1872 on themes related to economy and put forth the idea of *swadeshi*, of preferring consumer goods produced in India over foreign goods.[1] In *Young India*, Lala Lajpat Rai observed that the idea of *swadeshi* had been introduced in the Punjab in 1877 with both "economic and patriotic" motives.[2] Swami Dayanand Saraswati visited Bengal around 1873 when the movement to use indigenous goods (*swadeshi*) was beginning to stir. It is quite possible that he was influenced by these developments and began to emphasise the use of *swadeshi* goods and the opening of schools for technical education.[3] After his demise, his disciples vowed to carry forward the principle of *swadeshi* as one of his important teachings. Several Samaj activists and *updeshak*s (preachers) spread the message of *swadeshi* throughout north India. These included: Lala Lajpat Rai, Hans Raj, Jaisi Ram, Munshi Ram, Mul Raj, Gurudatt Vidyarthi, Lal Chand, Gokal Chand, Sain Das, Parmanand, Rallia Ram, Dev Raj, Hans Raj Sawhney, Rambhaj Dutt, Bakshi Gokal Chand, Lakhpat Rai and Dwarka Das[4], mostly influential men of Punjab belonging to the Hindu middle/commercial castes. These commercial castes were responsible for making *swadeshi* one of the important aspects of the Punjabi discourse, their own material interests merging with the nationalist one. In 1894, the *Swadeshi Vastu Pracharini Sabha* (Society for the Propagation of Swadeshi Goods) was formed by Mul Raj, Jaisi Ram, and Lajpat Rai among others, with the following aims and objectives:[5]

(a) to increase the demand for Indian articles by using them
(b) to spread knowledge of the advantage of using Indian articles; to find methods of improving them, and promoting their sale by means of lectures, newspaper articles, pamphlets etc.
(c) to establish a library at Lahore which would contain literature and detailed information on manufacturers of Indian articles, a show-room for exhibition of Indian articles, and for the collection of information on handicrafts, places from which they can be obtained, etc.
(d) to encourage the introduction of machinery and other facilities in the country for the improvement of handicrafts, and the manufacture of articles.

1 Bipan Chandra: The Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India, New Delhi 1966, p. 123.
2 Lala Lajpat Rai: Young India, Lahore 1927, p. 175.
3 See K. C. Yadav (ed.): The Autobiography of Dayanand Saraswati, Delhi 2003.
4 K. C. Yadav/K. S. Arya: Arya Samaj and the Freedom Movement: 1875–1918, vol. 1, New Delhi 1988, p. 42.
5 R. B. Mulraj: Beginning of Punjabi Nationalism: Autobiography of Mulraj, Hoshiarpur 1975, p. 106.

The focus of the *Sabha* was clearly to facilitate innovation, production and sale of indigenously produced goods through mechanisation. The objectives had a nationalist undertone with the aim to reach out to a vast audience through a bilingual paper (English and Hindi) called the *Swadeshi Vastu Pracharika*, whose publisher and editor, Mul Raj, wrote under the pseudonym of Swami Shankarnath. The paper exposed the evils of free trade and the current system of education while encouraging new education based on technical and industrial expertise for the Indians.[6] The paper continued for three years but stopped after 15 September 1898, mainly because "there were few paying subscribers" and those to whom the paper was sent free of charge "used to return the paper back as they said that they did not approve of what was written in it".[7] The latter mainly comprised the newly emergent English-educated middle class, mostly supporters of free trade. After some time, owing to Bakshi Jaisi Ram's death in 1900, the *Swadeshi Vastu Pracharini Sabha* became defunct.

The vacuum thus caused was filled by the Punjab Swadeshi Association established on 17 October 1905 by Lala Lajpat Rai, one of the significant members of the College Party of the Arya Samaj, in Lahore, coinciding with the rapid spread of the Swadeshi Movement in Bengal. He was the president of this society while his friends from the Arya Samaj were its active members. The chief objectives of this association did not differ from those of the earlier *Swadeshi Vastu Pracharini Sabha*, mainly to make the Swadeshi Movement[8] a success by:[9]

(a) Taking a pledge to go in for *swadeshi*
(b) openings stores and show rooms for *swadeshi* goods
(c) collecting and supplying information about *swadeshi* products, arranging for lectures, publishing papers, distributing literature, and adopting such other means as may be found necessary for making the *swadeshi* ventures a success and
(d) introducing machines, particularly those worked by hands

Lala Lajpat Rai delivered speeches and wrote in several newspapers calling for support of the Swadeshi Movement.[10] He equated *swadeshi* with patriotism:

6 Ibid, p. 109.
7 Ibid, p. 110.
8 The Swadeshi Movement, with its formal proclamation made on 7 August 1905, had its genesis in the anti-partition movement to oppose the British decision to partition Bengal. Boycott of foreign goods, opening of *swadeshi* shops or indigenous enterprises, revival of traditional industrial crafts, the starting of new industries based on modern techniques and floating of insurance companies and *swadeshi* banks and opting for national education were some of the major programmes of the movement. See Bipan Chandra et al.: India's Struggle for Independence, Delhi 1989, pp. 124–34.
9 The Punjabee, 23 October 1905.
10 The Punjabee, 4 December 1905; Indian Review, May 1906; Zamana, August 1906.

> Speaking for myself, I am an out-and-out Swadeshist and have been so for the last twenty-five years, in fact ever since I learnt for the first time the true meaning of the word patriotism. […] I look upon it as the remedy on the right and continued use of which depends the alleviation of the sufferings of our country. I regard it as the salvation of my country. The Swadeshi ought to make us self-respecting, self-reliant, self-supporting, self-sacrificing and last but not least, manly. The Swadeshi ought to teach us how to organise our capital, our resources, our labour, our energies and our talents to the greatest good of all Indians, irrespective of creed, colour or caste. It ought to unite us, our religious and denominational differences notwithstanding.[11]

Thus, an attempt was made to create an Indian "association culture and civil society that was animated by notions of active and patriotic citizenship"[12]. The virtues which would bring "'salvation" of "my country" were "self-respect, self-reliance, self-support, self-sacrifice and manliness" as stated in the indented quote above. These 'civilised' and 'national' values were derived from the current prevailing Victorian norms of the civilised colonial Britain and moulded into an indigenous terrain. As Carey Watt argues, just as it was important for the colonial authority to gain political legitimacy through its "civilising mission" rooted in its Victorian mores, the colonised elite too sought to gain greater legitimacy and moral authority among the rest by translating the Victorian values into 'nationalistic' frameworks.[13] Harald Fischer-Tiné notes in his study of Gurukul Kangri, an educational enterprise by the militant faction of the Arya Samaj, "the project of creating a national identity was also a hybrid phenomenon, or rather a process of 'creative' translation, in which parts of the European cultural repertoire were reformulated in the form of, or moored to, indigenous idioms."[14] It was not a complete appropriation of western concepts but rather a 'creative assimilation'. In many instances, foreign discourses were linked to indigenous traditions leading to the creation of novel concepts and their application in the Indian society. Fischer-Tiné has shown how links established between western ideas of 'racial hygiene' and 'positive eugenics' and the Hindu ideal of chastity as embodied in the concept of *brahmacharya*

11 Indian Review, May 1906.

12 Carey A. Watt: Philanthropy and Civilizing Missions in India c. 1820–1960: States, NGOs and Development, in: Carey A. Watt/Michael Mann (eds.): Civilizing Missions in Colonial and Postcolonial South Asia: From Improvement to Development, London 2011, p. 280, pp. 271–316.

13 See ibid., pp. 271–316.

14 Harald Fischer-Tiné: From Brahmacharya to "Conscious Race Culture": Victorian Discourses of "Science" and Hindu Traditions in Early Indian Nationalism, in: Crispin Bates (ed.): Beyond Representation: Colonial and Postcolonial Constructions of Indian Identity, New Delhi 2006, pp. 241–269, here p. 242.

were an excellent example of this method of "cultural bricolage."[15] Elsewhere, he has also rightly contended that the Gurukul "was among the first Hindu institutions that directly linked *body building* with *character building* which was again seen as a prerequisite for nation building and employed exclusively Hindu symbols in its vision of national virility."[16] In the educational agenda of Gurukul Kangri, moral improvement extended to physical development, which led to an emphasis on sport which embodied the Victorian concept of manliness. Even though signs of open criticism of colonial rule and resistance have been detected, the educational reformers "seem to have shared the colonial assumption that Indians were not ready for political self-rule, that they had to earn independence by undergoing an arduous educational process which would transform them into useful and 'manly' citizens of a future India".[17] This idea of consolidating 'national virility' did not remain confined to the arena of education but spilled to more cogent forms of political activism such as *swadeshi*.

On 3 December 1905, Lala Lajpat Rai held a secret meeting at his house in which 20 Arya Samaj leaders were present. The motive was to establish a secret office for the Arya Samaj and to popularise the Swadeshi Movement. In order to make the movement a success, attempts were made to bring in as many traders as possible. Since the Arya Samaj was able to make its mark on the trading and merchant communities of Punjab,[18] the Swadeshi Movement's spread among the Hindus in Punjab was possible mainly due to the Samaj. In a speech at a meeting held in the compound of Bradlaugh Hall, Lahore, Lala Lajpat Rai suggested that the Punjab Swadeshi Association should invite the representatives of the Cloth Merchants Association of Lahore "to devise measures best suited for the advancement of the Swadeshi cause."[19]

In September 1906, Lala Lajpat Rai made a forceful plea for the use of *swadeshi* goods at the Punjab Provincial Conference held at Ambala. On 27 March 1907, he delivered a lecture on the same subject at Allahabad where he advised people to establish *swadeshi panchayats* for judicial purposes. In his presidential address to the All India Swadeshi Conference at Surat in 1907, he exhorted people to make the Swadeshi Movement a success. On 29 November 1907, he addressed the students

15 Ibid, p. 260.

16 Harald Fischer-Tiné: "The Only Hope for Fallen India": The Gurukul Kangri as an Experiment in National Education (1902–1922), in: Georg Berkemer et al. (eds.): Explorations in the History of South Asia: Essays in Honour of Dietmar Rothermund, New Delhi 2001, pp. 277–299, here p. 299.

17 Harald Fischer-Tiné: National Education, Pulp Fiction and the Contradictions of Colonialism: Perceptions of an Educational Experiment in Early Twentieth Century India, in: Harald Fischer-Tiné/Michael Mann (eds.): Colonialism as Civilizing Mission: Cultural Ideology in British India, London 2004, pp. 229–247, here p. 247.

18 The reasons for this have been enunciated by Kenneth Jones: Arya Dharm: Hindu Consciousness in 19th-century Punjab, New Delhi 1976.

19 Speech published in The Punjabee, 4 December 1905.

of the Dayanand Anglo-Vernacular (DAV) College[20] on 'self-sufficiency': "So long as you go to other doors to beg, so long as you cannot stand on your own legs, you cannot succeed." On 18 January 1908, he delivered another lecture on the subject at Kanpur.[21]

Several meetings were organised by leading Arya Samajis for the propagation of *swadeshi*. For instance, a *swadeshi* meeting was held at Ambala on 21 October 1905 at Hindu Hall under the presidency of Murlidhar. Beni Prasad and Dwarka Das were the chief speakers who exhorted the people to use *swadeshi* goods.[22] Another meeting held at Lahore on 22 October was presided over by Ruchi Ram Sawhney while the speakers included Gokul Chand Narang.[23] Yet another meeting of the Punjab Swadeshi Association was held at Lahore on 7 October 1906 where Lala Lajpat Rai was the chairman and Sudhir Chandra Bannerji, follower of Surendranath Bannerji, was invited to speak on *swadeshi*.[24] The impact can be gauged from the example of a meeting held at Gurdaspur in July 1907 by Bishan Das, Dutta Ram, Karam Chand (retired district judge), *shahukar*s (moneylenders) of Gobindpur and other Aryas where it was decided that the use of English sugar and China vessels should be absolutely prohibited. At their insistence Thakur Hari Kishan Singh, magistrate and proprietor of village Kishankot, directed all the shopkeepers living in his village to discontinue the sale of English sugar. As a result, "no foreign sugar [was] procurable in that and the neighbouring village."[25]

Many members of the Arya Samaj, therefore, actively participated in the Swadeshi Movement, a movement initiated by the Indian National Congress for reasons that can be deduced from the following words of Lala Lajpat Rai: "Because of its propagation of *swadeshi*, national education, patriotism and pride in Indian language and culture which was also what the national movement ascribed to, many members of the Arya Samaj were drawn towards nationalist politics."[26]

20 The college was founded in Lahore in 1886 by the disciples of Swami Dayanand Saraswati, to commemorate him and to provide an alternative form of education to the Indians from the one provided by Christian missionaries, which was seen as corrupting the young Indian minds. The DAV College provided instruction in both English and Hindi to combat the missionary educational curriculum.

21 K. C. Yadav/K. S. Arya: Arya Samaj and the Freedom Movement: 1875–1918, vol. 1, New Delhi 1988, pp. 44–45.

22 The Punjabee, 30 October 1905.

23 The Punjabee, 23 October 1905.

24 The Tribune, 11 October 1906.

25 Government of India, Home Political, B, Nos, 135–45, August 1907.

26 Sri Ram Sharma (ed.): Lajpat Rai: A History of the Arya Samaj, New Delhi 1967, p. 113.

The Punjab National Bank

By the beginning of the 20th century, Punjab witnessed the emergence of a number of local banks, especially in its most famous urban centre, Lahore, which also held the headquarters of the Punjab Banking Company. In addition, the Alliance Bank of Simla, the Commercial Bank of India, the National Bank and the Bank of Bengal had their branches at Lahore.[27] Amiya K. Bagchi believes this number was larger than the number of banks in any other city of India.[28]

The Punjab National Bank was founded in 1895 as the first joint-stock bank in Punjab. It was the product of mutual cooperation between the Arya Samaj and the Brahmo Samaj of Lahore represented by Lala Mul Raj[29] and Lala Harkishen Lal[30] respectively. Sardar Dayal Singh Majithia[31] was the first chairman of the Board of Directors and Harkishen Lal the secretary. The context for establishing this bank can be determined from Lala Lajpat Rai's thoughts on capital inspired by western industrialisation:

> Capital is the second important factor in the development of industries. Individual wealth is powerless before the accumulated wealth of millionaires who have joined together on the joint stock principles. Rich citizens can no doubt do a lot by investing their riches in factories and industries which can be run by them with their own resources. But joint stock enterprise must be met by similar combinations and these combinations, to be successful, must be organized on sound principles and with perfect confidence in those who are at the helm of affairs. This confidence can only be begotten by the promoters themselves being men of substance having

27 Sheena Pall: Lala Lajpat Rai and the Punjab National Bank, in: J.S. Grewal/Indu Banga (eds.): Lala Lajpat Rai in Retrospect: Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Concerns, Chandigarh 2000, p. 41.

28 Amiya K. Bagchi: The Evolution of the State Bank of India: The Era of the Presidency Banks, 1876–1920, New Delhi 1997, pp. 236f.

29 Lala Mulraj, M.A. was Extra-Assistant Commissioner and Vice President of Arya Samaj, Lahore. He was born in Ludhiana.

30 Lala Harkishen Lal was among those Punjabi youth who had received advanced education in England. While attending the Lahore Government College, he had won a scholarship in mathematics to Trinity College, Cambridge. After an honours career at Cambridge, he studied law and economics. He began a career in law after returning to Lahore in 1890, but soon became involved in a series of commercial ventures. Kenneth W. Jones: Arya Dharm: Hindu Consciousness in 19th-century Punjab, p. 178.

31 Founding Trustee of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, Sardar Dayal Singh Majithia established *The Tribune* newspaper in Lahore in 1881. He was one of the progressive leaders of the Punjabi society in the late 19th century.

> substantial risks in the enterprise, and of acknowledged integrity and honesty of purpose.[32]

In his autobiography, Lala Lajpat Rai wrote about how Lala Mul Raj had long cherished the idea of Indians having a national bank of their own. He observed keenly that Indian capital was being used to run English banks and companies, the profits accruing from which went entirely to the British while Indians had to content themselves with a small interest on their capital.[33]

Lala Mulraj also mentioned this in his autobiography:

> In the year 1891, when I was the Judge of the Small Causes Court at Amritsar, I was living in a house in Mohalla Khatikan. I had set apart one room as my study for reading books on Dharma Shastras. There I conceived the idea of organizing a National Bank in the Punjab. It struck me that it was necessary to have a national bank for the development of industries in the country, and that we should have the custody and final say in the investment of our money. To keep this idea foremost in my mind, I wrote "National Bank" on a piece of paper and fixed it on the wall. I used to talk on the subject daily with my friends and acquaintances. It was not easy to convince my friends that it was practicable to have a bank managed and controlled by Punjabis. Gradually I succeeded in making some of them take interest in the subject.[34]

Lala Lajpat Rai, an active member of the Arya Samaj, himself broached the issue by writing on several occasions that political liberation would have to be preceded by liberation in religion, in education and in economic life.[35] The Arya Samaj had already achieved some distinction in the religious and educational spheres. It was now felt by Lala Mul Raj and others that the movement for economic emancipation should also be led by the Arya Samajis. This group belonged mostly to the 'college' faction[36] of the Arya Samaj. Soon after Lala Lajpat Rai came to Lahore in 1892, he issued a cir-

32 First printed in Kayastha Samachar of August 1901 and reprinted in Lala Lajpat Rai: The Man in His Word, Madras 1907, pp. 39–44. Bal Ram Nanda (ed.): The Collected Works of Lala Lajpat Rai, vol. 2, New Delhi 2003, p. 386.

33 V. C. Joshi (ed.): Lajpat Rai: Story of My Life, New Delhi 1987, p. 96.

34 R. B. Mul Raj: Beginning of Punjabi Nationalism, Autobiography of R. B. Mul Raj, Hoshiarpur 1975, p. 98.

35 Lala Lajpat Rai: Giuseppe Mazzini, in: Bal Ram Nanda (ed.): The Collected Works of Lala Lajpat Rai, vol. 1, New Delhi 2003, pp. 290–92.

36 By the late 19th century, a split occurred within the Arya Samaj into the 'college' faction, i. e. supporters of DAV College, and the 'gurukul' faction, the supporters of Gurukul Kangri. The difference was mainly over educational curricula of institutions run by Arya Samaj and the diet to be followed by the members of the Samaj.

cular letter at the insistence of Lala Mul Raj raising the question of whether or not an Indian bank should be started in Punjab. The letter was sent to select friends and the response was encouraging.[37] Meanwhile, Lala Harkishan Lal had imported some ideas regarding commerce and industry from England which he wanted to see materialised in India, especially in Punjab. He began to discuss these ideas with the editor of the *Tribune*, Nagendranath Gupta, Sardar Dyal Singh Majithia and a few others from the Lahore Arya Samaj, including Lala Lajpat Rai. As a result, Lala Lal Chand, Lala Mul Raj, Kali Prosanna Roy, Sardar Dyal Singh Majithia and his *protégé*, Lala Harkishen Lal, joined hands to establish this bank and chose Lala Lajpat Rai's brother, Lala Dalpat Rai, as the manager. Two distinct factions were formed among these Hindu entrepreneurs, one composed of Aryas; the other centred on Lala Harkishen Lal and his supporters, many of whom were either Brahmos[38] or members of the orthodox community.[39] In the words of Prakash Tandon, "The founding Board was broad-based and truly national, drawn from different parts of India, professing different faiths, with no experience in banking but with the common objective of providing the Punjab with the country's first national bank."[40]

The attempt to establish a bank at Lahore, entirely managed by the people of Punjab, and one which would give timely assistance to industrious enterprises, especially the native industries which were seen to be withering for want of capital and guidance, was immensely appreciated by newspapers such as the *Tribune*. The essence of the bank's culture was clear on the first day the bank opened, i. e. 12 April 1895. The 14 original shareholders and seven directors took only a modest number of shares; control of the bank was to lie with the large, dispersed shareholding—a purely professional approach that was not common then.[41]

Even though the bank's commercial success was immediate, dissensions arose among the founding members. Lala Lajpat Rai became the bank's director in 1898 as a result of the growing differences among the previous directors of the bank, i. e. mainly among the Arya Samaj faction and Lala Harkishen Lal who ridiculed the former's social and religious ideas and felt that they possessed a reactionary ideology.[42] After ousting Lala Harkishen Lal from the Board, the Arya Samajis dominated the

37 V. C. Joshi (ed.): Lajpat Rai: Story of My Life, p. 97.

38 Members of the Brahmo Samaj, a Hindu monotheistic social reform movement, founded by Raja Ram Mohan Roy in Bengal in 1828. By the 1870s, it had spread from Bengal to other provinces such as Punjab, the North Western Province and Madras.

39 Kenneth W. Jones: Arya Dharm: Hindu Consciousness in 19th-century Punjab, p. 178.

40 For a detailed study of the Punjab National Bank, see Prakash Tandon: Banking Century: A Short History of Banking in India & The Pioneer—Punjab National Bank, New Delhi 1989, p. 155.

41 Ibid., p. 157.

42 See V. C. Joshi (ed.): Lajpat Rai: Story of My Life, p. 97; Kenneth W. Jones: Arya Dharm: Hindu Consciousness in 19th-century Punjab, p. 178.

Punjab National Bank for many years. The DAV managing committee became deeply involved with the bank. Initially, college funds were deposited in various banks for short periods of three to six months at fixed interest rates. However, now the college held the bulk of its funds in the Punjab National Bank and also did most of its business through this bank. By 1911, they deposited 299,403 Rupees in one fixed deposit with the bank.[43] The Punjab National Bank became what Jones calls the "college bank" as both were tied with mutual interests and overlapping personnel.[44] Prominent members of the Samaj who served as directors on the Board of the bank were Lala Lajpat Rai, Lala Lal Chand, Lala Dwarka Das, Bakshi Jaishi Ram, Lala Mul Raj, Bhagat Ishwar Das and Bakshi Tek Chand.

When a grave banking crisis occurred in 1913, Punjab suffered the worst with 35 bank failures.[45] Lala Lajpat Rai noticed the discriminatory attitude of the government during this crisis:

> While relief was promptly given and freely given to European establishments, every Indian establishment was allowed to go under for want of timely aid. The banking crisis made us realize, as perhaps we had never before realized, the absolute helplessness to which we had been reduced by the present system of government. We felt the situation keenly, which has made it possible for the foreign capitalists to impose upon us not only their system, but also their terms and business, by the use of very moneys that were realized from us by the government in the shape of revenues.[46]

The Punjab National Bank suffered great losses but withstood the crisis and gradually recovered, as affirmed by the *Tribune*: "The Punjab National Bank is one of the few enterprises that have weathered the financial storm and not unnaturally, the trade and industry of the province turn to it for assistance."[47] The *Tribune* brought out a number of articles on how to improve the *swadeshi* banking system as its critics and supporters alike wanted the experiment to succeed. It would not be wrong to suggest that the Punjab National Bank paved the way for the sprouting of a number of *swadeshi* banks in the first decade of the 20th century. These were the People's Bank of India (1901),

43 See Report, Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College, 1910–11, pp. 29, 30, 31, Appendix E.
44 Kenneth Jones: Arya Dharm: Hindu Consciousnesses in 19th- century Punjab, p. 232.
45 Prakash Tandon: Banking Century: A Short History of Banking in India & The Pioneer—Punjab National Bank, p. 192.
46 See Sheena Pall: Lala Lajpat Rai and the Punjab National Bank, in: J. S. Grewal/Indu Banga (eds.): Lala Lajpat Rai in Retrospect: Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Concerns, Chandigarh 2000, p. 47.
47 The Tribune, 7 February 1914.

Amritsar Bank (1904), Lahore Bank (1906), Orient Bank of India (1907) and the Punjab and Sindh Bank (1908).

The self-help principle of the Samaj did not only impinge upon the collaborative *swadeshi* banking enterprise; it was also reflected through the institutions of the Arya Samaj. The managing committee of the DAV College itself acted as a private banker, issuing loans to Samaj organisations and individuals. It granted loans to Arya Samaj branches in Quetta, Rawalpindi, Simla and Dera Ismail Khan for the purchase of land and construction of Samaj temples.[48] An amount as high as 30,000 Rupees was advanced to individuals applying to the committee.[49] No distinction was made between the individuals applying for loans. Sikh aristocrats such as Sardar Dyal Singh Majithia and Sardar Kirpal Singh received large shares of such loans.[50] Muslims and Hindus alike applied for and were granted such loans. One of the foremost principles of the Arya Samaj, self-help in education and enterprise, had found expression in the opening of the Punjab National Bank and the DAV College in Lahore.

Industrial and Technical Education

Disappointment with the colonial system of education and cultural anxiety had led to the realisation among Punjabi Hindus of the importance of industrial and technical education. Quoting Lala Lajpat Rai from his article of 1908, Carey Watt suggests that this realisation came in the wake of a competing global environment.[51] The Hindu nationalists such as Lala Lajpat Rai studied the advance of industrial and technical education in other countries and constantly compared it with the dismal situation of education in colonial India:

48 See for example Proceedings, Investment Sub-Committee, vol. 1, 3 December 1987; Proceedings, DAV College Managing Committee, 25 January 1896; Proceedings, Investment Sub-Committee, vol. 1, 18 June 1896, Proceedings, Investment Sub-Committee, vol. 1, 3 December 1897; Proceedings, Investment Sub-Committee, vol. 4, 29 October 1898; Proceedings, Investment Sub-Committee, vol. 4, 26 June 1899; Proceedings, Investment Sub-Committee, vol. 2, 20 March 1908; Proceedings, Investment Sub-Committee, vol. 2, 9 April 1911; Proceedings, Investment Sub-Committee, vol. 2, 1 October 1913. DAV College Managing Committee Papers, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML), Manuscripts Section.

49 Proceedings, Investment Sub-Committee, vol. 2, 22 December 1913. DAV College Managing Committee Papers, NMML.

50 Kenneth W. Jones: Arya Dharm: Hindu Consciousness in 19th-century Punjab, p. 233.

51 Carey A. Watt: Education for National Efficiency: Constructive Nationalism in North India, 1909–1916, in: Modern Asian Studies 31:2 (1997), pp. 339–374.

> There seems to be a consensus of educated public opinion that not only general education but commercial, professional and technical education also requires to be looked after in the national interest. There is a widespread desire to found educational institutions on national lines and under our own control. People are beginning to learn the absolute duty of making sacrifices for the cause of national education.[52]

The Arya Samaj was one of the first indigenous institutions which placed emphasis on providing an indigenous knowledge system through the creation of the DAV College in Lahore and Gurukul Kangri at Haridwar,[53] focussing on providing industrial and technical education to Indians. The first step in this direction was taken in 1895 by starting the engineering class at the DAV College. Arya Samaj literature claims that the high standard of the work of the class was so well appreciated by the government that it proposed to transfer its own engineering class attached to the Mayo School of Arts to the DAV College.[54] Within 20 years of its existence, several students emerged as engineers from the college. However, in 1914, the Punjab government opened an engineering school at Rasool, which led to the closing of the engineering classes at DAV College.[55] Apart from this, the DAV College managing committee called for opening classes in Ayurveda. By the 1920s, a need was felt by the committee for opening commercial classes as a result of growing demand for the same. While the management of the Gurukuls harboured many differences among themselves regarding the issue, the DAV College took up this challenge more seriously. In January 1921, the managing committee discussed the opening of industrial and commercial departments in the college. As per the resolution of the special sub-committee appointed to look into the matter of an industrial department, the managing committee was asked to start non-university industrial classes in subjects such as (a) dyeing and bleaching, (b) preparation of acids and chemical fertilisers, (c) oil soaps, candles and varnishes, (d) inks and (e) necessary instructions in chemical engineering.[56] Instructions in (c), (d) and (e) were to be started immediately. A draft scheme was prepared by the sub-committee for opening up a non-university commercial college which read:

52 Lajpat Rai: Social Efficiency, in: V.C. Joshi (ed.): Lala Lajpat Rai: Writings and Speeches, vol. 1, 1888–1919, Delhi, Jullundur 1966.

53 See Kenneth Jones: Arya Dharm: Hindu Consciousness in 19th-century Punjab; Also, my Ph.D. dissertation: Social and Political Aspects of the Arya Samaj Movement in Northern India: 1890–1947, Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi 2013.

54 Sri Ram Sharma: The Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College, Lahore (1886–1936): A Brief History, Lahore, 1937, p. 6.

55 Radhey S. Pareek: Contribution of Arya Samaj in the Making of Modern India: 1875–1947, PhD thesis, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur 1965, p. 192.

56 Proceedings, 10 April 1921, File no. 18, p. 42, DAV College Managing Committee Papers, NMML.

> The existing overcrowding in Arts Colleges and the literary character of the prevailing system of education present problems which require solution. The public demand for young men possessing sound commercial education is growing and is bound to increase. The Managing Committee of the DAV College propose, therefore, to start a new institution on non-University lines which should provide openings for young men in Banking and Commercial Houses and encourage them to take to Commercial careers. Arrangements will also be made to provide commercial education to students reading in the existing colleges and to other gentlemen engaged in business. Lectures for their benefits will be arranged in various subjects such as Banking, Auditing, Accountancy, Public Finance, Short-hand, Type-writing, Economics with special reference to India.[57]

The DAV College also opened evening classes for preparing students for the Roorkee Engineering Competition examination.[58] A donation of 1,000 Rupees by R. B. Sir Ganga Ram was made the nucleus for this fund. Though the managing committee resolved that it would not spend any money out of its own funds and the class would have to be self-supporting, it is clear that it was providing opportunities to students to excel in the commercial field, as well. The college was also sending professors abroad for training. In fact, the DAV College managing committee created a separate fund called the Foreign Education Fund under which it sent students abroad for technical education especially. In 1907, the fund collected 9,374 Rupees and it was resolved to send a student to America to receive technical education there.[59] A sub-committee resolution dated 12 May 1924 resolved to send "Professor Goverdhan Lal to Germany for training in pure and applied physics for a period not exceeding two years and that the expenditure for this purpose of Rs 200 p.m. plus passage and contingent expenses be sanctioned out of the interest of the Industrial Fund."[60] Earlier, it was resolved to send Professor Mehar Chand (MSc.) abroad to receive education for two years.[61] Swami Shraddhanand, in the editorial of *Saddharm Pracharak*, defended the teaching of crafts/industrial knowledge by saying acerbically that the Vedas too contained industrial knowledge, and consequently teaching this subject in an educational institution known for Vedic learning was only natural.[62]

57 The Draft Scheme for a Non-University Commercial College, 10 April 1921, File no. 18, p. 43, DAV College Managing Committee Papers, NMML.

58 Proceedings of a Meeting of the DAV College Managing Committee, 27 May 1923, File no. 19, p. 170, DAV College Managing Committee Papers, NMML.

59 Proceedings, 30 March 1907, File no. 8, p. 101, DAV College Managing Committee Papers, NMML.

60 Proceedings, 25 May 1924, File no. 19, p. 210, DAV College Managing Committee Papers, NMML.

61 Proceedings, 10 April 1921, File no. 18, p. 43, DAV College Managing Committee Papers, NMML.

62 Swami Shraddhanand: Editorial, Saddharm Pracharak, 15 November 1911.

Famine Relief, Orphanages and Widow Homes: Philanthropy through 'Self-Help'

In his excellent study of the social service activities undertaken by certain indigenous socio-religious groups such as the Arya Samaj, the Allahabad Seva Samiti, the Theosophical Society and the Servants of India Society in North India, Carey A. Watt makes certain insightful conclusions.[63] One, in the decade between 1908 and 1918, there was an establishment of important networks of indigenous philanthropic associations and educational institutions that created communication channels between the educated urban middle class and the population in rural hinterlands thus preparing the ground for political mobilisation and creating an intermediate space "that could be used to control important areas of Indian public life" beyond the reach of the colonial state.[64] Second, he focuses on the impact of wider global processes of expansion of social service and charity acts, for example, in Europe in the second half of the 19th century, and also in east and south-east Asia by the beginning of the 20th century, on the Indian mind. Public discourses on 'national efficiency', 'national character', and civic responsibility that were rampant in late Victorian and Edwardian Britain were read and discussed by an Indian educated elite who began to channel these ideas into domains that remained outside the control of the colonial state, namely social service and education. Thus, the result was a transmutation of pre-existing Hindu concepts related to philanthropy by indigenous social service and philanthropic organisations, exemplified by how an older form of Indian charity such as '*dana*' (giving) was slowly transformed from an individual act into an organised voluntary service for the benefit of the larger community. They favoured organised and institutionalised philanthropy for national development over what they considered to be wasteful forms of personal charity, and the elite leadership of these organisations consciously or unconsciously enforced their own caste, class, ethnic and gender values as normative 'civilised' and 'national' values.[65] But the transformation was not wholly derived from western concepts; there was, in fact, a process of selective and creative assimilation of traditional concepts of *seva* (service), *sannyas* (asceticism), and *brahmacharya* (celibacy)[66] to create hybrid modernised social service organisations.

63 Carey A. Watt: Serving the Nation: Cultures of Service, Association, and Citizenship in Colonial India, New Delhi 2005.

64 Ibid., p. 175.

65 Carey A. Watt: Philanthropy and Civilizing Missions in India c. 1820–1960: States, NGOs and Development, p. 280.

66 While these concepts have deeper philosophical underpinnings, the words in brackets convey nearest possible meanings.

Leadership of such organised voluntary associations was legitimised not only through discursive and action-oriented domains, but also through seeking the 'other' as competitors in social service acts, as the following paragraphs will elaborate. In northern India, the Arya Samaj was one of the first indigenous associations to organise orphanages and widow homes, the first orphanage being established at Ferozepur, in Punjab, during the life-time of Dayanand Saraswati[67] with schools and workshops for training boys and girls through private charity. Later, owing to the famines of 1897–98, 1899–1900, 1908 and the Kangra valley earthquake of 1905, many orphanages run by Arya Samajis sprung up all over north India. For instance, the Hindu Orphanages at Lahore and Amritsar were established by the Arya Samaj in 1897 for the relief of Hindu children left destitute and homeless by the famine.

These famines were caused by the failure of the monsoons and by the inability of the Indian peasants and labourers to purchase food at increased prices. In order to get better prices, food grain was largely being exported every year, even in the famine years. In his book, Lala Lajpat Rai expressed regret that in 1899–1900, when the country was suffering from one of the severest famines of the century, "millions of hundredweights of wheat were exported to foreign countries; in 1877–78, when 5,220,000 persons died of hunger, 16,000,000 cwt. of rice were exported from the Calcutta port only."[68] In this dismal situation, the Arya Samaj became the first non-Christian agency to start a non-official movement for relief. Lala Lajpat Rai was among the first organisers and a pioneer in establishing Arya Samaj as well as other Hindu orphanages.[69] During the first two famines mentioned, the movement was confined to orphan relief and was called the Hindu Orphan Relief Movement. Started in 1897, this was mainly for the relief of Hindu children left destitute in the famine of 1897–98. The Arya Samaj issued appeals for help which were liberally responded to by the Hindu community generally and by the members and sympathisers of the Arya Samaj. About 250 Hindu children were rescued by agents deputed by the movement and were brought into Punjab, where four new orphanages were founded to accommodate them.[70]

In response to the famine of 1899 which affected large parts of Punjab, Rajputana, Kathiawar, Bombay and the Central Provinces, the Lahore Arya Samaj deputed Lala Dewan Chand Chaddha, a senior student of the DAV College and secretary of the local Young Men's Arya Samaj, "to go to Rajputana and ascertain on the spot in what

67 Lala Lajpat Rai: The Arya Samaj: An Account of its Aims, Doctrine and Activities, with a Biographical Sketch of the Founder, New Delhi n. d., p. 143. This orphanage was the first one established by the Arya Samaj, in 1880. In 1897, Lala Lajpat Rai became its general secretary.

68 Ibid., p. 144.

69 Lajpat Rai: Evidence before the Indian Famine Commission, in: Report of the Indian Famine Commission, 1901, Calcutta 1908, pp. 377–80. National Archives of India (NAI).

70 Ibid., p. 144.

way and to what extent they could render help, and whether it was possible to enlist local sympathy in their cause in the famine-stricken parts themselves."[71] Lala Dewan Chand spent almost a month in Rajputana, and came back with a graphic and touching account of his experiences, which, in the words of Lala Lajpat Rai, "moved almost the whole of Lahore to immediate and vigorous action for the help of the unfortunate Hindu waifs and orphans of Rajputana."[72]

Apart from the misery inflicted on the people by the famines, there was another cause of concern among leading Arya Samajis to which Lala Lajpat Rai gave expression frequently at various platforms. While appealing to rich Hindus for famine relief and help for orphans, he often referred to the efforts of the Christian missionaries in providing aid to the famine-stricken Hindus and subsequently converting them to Christianity. For instance, in a letter to the editor of *The Tribune*, he wrote:

> Now, although it is exceedingly good of the Christian missionary to take interest in the Hindu orphan, and to help the latter, in these days of starvation, still it must be remembered that the Hindu gets this help at the sacrifice of what is, and ought to be, dearer to him than life itself—his religion. It must be admitted that the charity of the missionary is not altogether *disinterested* charity. […] although from the Christian point of view the work of the missionary in these days of famine is nothing but noble, it is from the Hindu point of view an elixir mixed with a deadly poison which permeates through the system of those to whom it is administered and makes them non-Hindus forever.[73]

It was this cultural anxiety against religious conversion that led the Arya Samajis to make assertive attempts to rescue destitute children and widows not only from poverty and misery but also from Christian missionaries. Lala Lajpat Rai invoked the glorious past of the Hindus and exhorted the Hindus to prevent the decline of their community:

> Perhaps the Hindus think that numbers do not matter at all, and that those who cannot earn for themselves in days of scarcity are not worth caring for. If that is the conclusion, which the enlightened Hindus have come to, the sooner they discontinue talking of their glorious past, of their admirable philosophy, of their wonderful literature, of their *Shastras* and sciences, the better it will be for all concerned. Where is the good of your taking pride in your past and glibly talking of it,

71 Ibid.
72 Ibid.
73 Lala Lajpat Rai: Letter to the Editor, in: The Tribune, 22 March 1900. Italics as in the original.

> in season and out of season, if you are not prepared to lift a finger to make yourself worthy of your past?[74]

Invoking the ideal of patriotic and active citizenship became a significant cry to exhort the Hindus to "become worthy of their past". Such exhortations ultimately prepared the ground for the rise of cultural nationalism[75] and their own perception of 'the nation' among certain sections of the Hindu elite. Arya Samajis all over north India, particularly in the Punjab, opened up several orphanages and poor houses. The Arya Samaj at Hisar, led by its president Lala Chandu Lal,[76] took the lead in opening a poor house with the capacity of feeding and sheltering 150 people for a year.[77] A few months later, an orphanage was established there for the relief of famine-stricken destitute children. Another orphanage was opened on 10 November 1899 at Bhiwani by Lala Churamani, pleader of Hisar and secretary of Hisar Arya Samaj. By 7 April 1900, 349 children were admitted to this asylum of which 214 were returned to their parents and guardians who had either lost them or deserted them, being unable to give them food, but were afterwards willing to take over their charge.[78] Apart from providing asylum to the distressed, the orphanages indulged in educating and training the children for prospective employment, as well. The Bhiwani Hindu orphanage, for instance, taught Hindi to the inmates and introduced to them the industry of *dari* and *nawar* making. These *daris* and *nawars* were advertised in his writings[79] as "fine, uniform and durable" by Lala Lajpat Rai, who urged the public to send orders for these articles. A superintendent was appointed to look after the orphans' needs and for general management.

The orphanages mostly functioned with the support of donations by rich individuals, as well as rich families. For instance, the Hisar orphanage of the Arya Samaj was supported by the town's well-known *khazanchi* (cashier/banker) family which provided food for more than a 100 daily.[80]

74 Ibid.

75 Nationalism in Indian history is mainly associated with anti-imperialism which was essentially secular and sought to incorporate all sections of the Indian society. Cultural Nationalism, on the other hand, is a certain strand that emerged in the late-19th-century, rooted in a certain socio-religious ethic that directly or indirectly created a conducive ground for the emergence of communalism in India.

76 A member of the Hisar Arya Samaj and a close associate of Lala Lajpat Rai; associated with DAV College movement; president of Hisar Arya Samaj and Bhiwani Hindu Orphanage, 1899.

77 Lala Lajpat Rai: Letter to the Editor, in: The Tribune, 24 October 1899.

78 See Lala Lajpat Rai: Letter to the Editor, in: The Tribune, 19 April 1900.

79 Ibid.

80 Lala Lajpat Rai: Letter to the Editor, in: The Tribune, 9 January 1900.

In the famine of 1897–98, the oldest orphanage at Ferozepur took charge of girls who were brought to Lahore from Jabalpur in the Central Provinces by the agents of the Hindu Orphans' Relief Association, Lahore. On 31 October 1899, it had 81 orphans (49 boys and 32 girls) on its rolls.[81] Until 8 May 1900, 323 new orphans were admitted to the institution, out of which 50 were transferred to the Hindu Orphanage, Rawalpindi, 75 to the Hindu Orphanage, Amritsar and the remaining received relief either in the main asylum at Ferozepur or in its newly-opened branch at Amritsar. During the same famine, Amritsar was also alerted to the necessity and desirability of rescuing some of the Hindu orphans of the Central Provinces. Accordingly, a relief association was formed and Pandit Shib Datt Ram[82] was sent to the Central Provinces to bring the orphans. Lala Sunder Das of Amritsar Arya Samaj gave his spacious *tawela* (stable) for the orphans' use .[83] Lala Harjas Rai and Ralia Ram had a well dug in the *tawela*. The Recreation Club made a handsome donation of 185 Rupees. It was also thought necessary to find a suitable employment for the orphans. Lala Raghunath Das offered to employ the orphans in his carpet factory. Thenceforward, the wages formed the principle item in the income of the institution which was under control of the Hindu Orphans Relief Association, Amritsar with Magistrate Lala Dholan Das as its president and Pandit Shib Datt Ram as its secretary. Having found a suitable employment for the orphans, the asylum was able to extend its sphere of usefulness by receiving 75 orphans for employment from the Ferozepur orphanage, eight from Gorakhpur and four from the neighbourhood. These Arya Samajis acted as custodians of the Hindu community, in a way similar to how the controversial *shuddhi* movement[84] was resorted to not as a direct outcome of a militant and anti-Islamic stand, but as an outcome of the role of what Fischer-Tiné describes as "watchdogs of Hinduism". The Arya Samaj gradually internalised a self-perception as paternal guides of the backward Hindu majority, steeped in ritualism and irrationality, and (even though it advocated reform against such social evils) took every opportunity to act as its defender.[85]

The destitute included girls engaged by the Arya Samaj orphanages in employments such as making lace and hosiery under female supervision. In his evidence before the Indian Famine Commission in 1901, Lala Lajpat Rai said that these girls were

81 Lala Lajpat Rai: Letter to the Editor, in: The Tribune, 8 May 1900.

82 A member of the Amritsar Arya Samaj and secretary of the Hindu Orphans Relief Association, Amritsar, 1896.

83 See Lala Lajpat Rai: Letter to the Editor, in: The Tribune, 10 May 1900.

84 *Shuddhi* was started by Swami Dayanand Saraswati and taken forward by his Arya Samajist followers. It was a ritual of purification to bring back into the Hindu fold those (mostly lower-caste) who had converted to Christianity or Islam.

85 Harald Fischer-Tiné, "Kindly Elders of the Hindu Biradari": The Arya Samaj's Struggle for Influence and it's Effect on Hindu-Muslim Relations, 1880–1925, in: Antony Copley (ed.): Gurus and Their Followers: New Religious Reform Movements in Colonial India, New Delhi 2000, pp. 120–121.

"purely waifs and strays" collected by the emissaries from the villages near the famine relief works at the Hisar district, Central Provinces and Rajputana.[86] The Ferozepur orphanage brought 62 married girls because they were allegedly being sold for want of food and to guard them against conversion: " […] the idea was that if we were not to protect them they would be taken away by others."[87] Agents were sent by the orphanages in search of their husbands. As for unmarried girls, many Arya Samaj orphanages arranged for them to be married to "people who were able to look after them"; some married in "superior castes" without any dowry and in the case of marriage in "low castes" the man had to "pay something for his wife."[88]

Cassie Adcock in her exhaustive study of *shuddhi* seeks to rescue the phenomenon from being understood as a "self-evidently religious practice" as per the Tolerance narratives, by asking "what practices this classification might exclude."[89] Reconsidering the conventional understanding of *shuddhi* as a religious category, she demonstrates how:

> Persons deemed untouchable by caste-Hindu society (including some Muslims) appropriated *shuddhi* for their own ends, selectively incorporating Arya Samaj reformed ceremonial, discursive resignifications of caste, and educational opportunities into their own strategies of resistance against the practices that regulated caste hierarchy and deprivation.[90]

She states that *shuddhi* was not defended by the Arya Samajis by reference to religious freedom or represented as religious proselytising until 1907 (first government action against Lala Lajpat Rai followed by suspicion of the colonial government against the Arya Samaj as being a seditious body), when the Arya Press began to translate *shuddhi* in religious terms as 'conversion' or 'reconversion' in order to portray Arya Samaj as a *universal religion* rather than a *national one*, and to frame the Arya Samajis as internationalist rather than nationalist. Thus, *universal religion* was used strategically and at different times by the Arya Samaj elites, deriving their sources from European scholarship on religion, society and politics. The European scientific discourse of universal religion (Herbert Spencer and C. P. Tiele, for example), therefore, provided Gurukul Party leaders with a potent antidote to the College Party discourse of national religion and its […] dangerous overtones of entanglement in the politics of sedition.[91]

86 Published in the Report of the Indian Famine Commission, 1901, Calcutta 1908, pp. 377–80. NAI.
87 Lala Lajpat Rai: Evidence before the Indian Famine Commission. Ibid.
88 Ibid.
89 C. S. Adcock: The Limits of Tolerance: Indian Secularism and the Politics of Religious Freedom, New York 2014, p. 16
90 Ibid.
91 Ibid., p. 107.

The political strategies of these translations as brought out by Adcock have a degree of merit, but it is also important to bear in mind that the Arya Samaj, in the presence of proselytising religions such as Christianity and Islam, was undergoing a phase of unsurpassed 'cultural anxiety' in late 19th and early 20th centuries. They saw the proselytising missions of these religions as a threat to their numerical strength as revealed by the colonial census data. Even though, from 1927 onwards, there were attempts made by the Arya Samaj to convince the census officials to allow them to write 'Vedic' for religion and 'Arya' for caste, as opposed to writing 'Hindu' for religion, and the name of the caste to which they originally belonged, they saw themselves as part of the unifying Hindu category, albeit a radically reformed one. Thus, to seek the 'other' was an imperative, even in philanthropic works as famine relief.

The Arya Samaj faction involved in famine relief led by Lala Lajpat Rai were particularly worried at the orphans being taken to distant places by Christian missionaries which "resulted in the complete loss of those children to their families and homes, at least of such who have parents or other relatives willing to take them back" and so this system of orphan relief was a "standing menace to Hinduism."[92] According to Lala Lajpat Rai, in 1898, Antony Patrick MacDonnell, president of the Indian Famine Commission, had allowed Christian missions to remove Hindu orphans of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh to distant parts of India, while he (MacDonnell) had "practically refused the same privilege to the Arya Samajists of the Punjab, a few months before."[93] However, agreeing with the views expressed by Lala Lajpat Rai in his evidence before the commission, the latter recommended that deserted children and orphans "should not be made over to persons or institutions of a different religion until all efforts to find persons and institutions of their own religions willing to take charge of them have failed" and that "no unclaimed child be removed from the district in which it is found until a period of three months has elapsed after the close of relief operations in the district."[94] The recommendations of the commission, particularly its unambiguous and clear language, were hailed with delight by the Arya Samaj leaders involved in famine relief.

Relief work was also extended during the earthquake in Kangra district in Punjab (now in Himachal Pradesh) that had rocked the place on 4 April 1905 resulting in large-scale damage. Of private relief parties, the first to reach Dharamsala and Kangra was that of Bakhshi Sohan Lal, a prominent Arya Samaji, social worker and philanthropist of Lahore.[95] Lala Lajpat Rai visited the affected areas on 8 April 1905 and,

92 Bal Ram Nanda (ed.): The Collected Works of Lala Lajpat Rai, vol. 2, New Delhi 2003, p. 278.

93 Ibid.

94 Ibid.

95 See Lala Lajpat Rai: Ruin and Devastation in Kangra district, in: The Panjabee, 15 May 1905.

on behalf of the Arya Samaj and as secretary of the Kangra Valley Relief Committee, Lahore, organised relief work there. Later, he went to Amritsar to deliver a speech at a meeting presided over by Judge Rai Diwan Chand, Small Cause Court, after which a subscription list for the cause of the victims of the earthquake was opened. Subscription lists were also opened by the Arya Samaj in the rural localities.[96] A Kangra Valley Relief Committee was formed with Bakhshi Siban Lal as secretary and Bakshi Tek Chand as assistant secretary, both influential Arya Samajis of Lahore.[97] The relief party of the Arya Samaj consisted of hospital assistants, '*chhouldaries*' with stocks of medicines, blankets, clothes and so on.[98]

This emergence of social consciousness was, no doubt, due to the impact of western ideas of organised civic activities, comparable particularly "to the orderly and disciplined behaviour of British Christians preoccupied with public duty."[99] Bob van der Linden argues that even though rational criticisms had been practised in South Asia long before the coming of the British, the elite reformers now felt "impelled to reinterpret their sacred texts and cast them in modern scientific language".[100] Thus western idioms were used and appropriated to accomplish one's own ends, while the old thought remained ingrained, creating a moral language which was "more an explanation than a precise reproduction."[101] Thus, partly in the footsteps of the Christian missionaries, many Indians devoted themselves to the service of their community (called *seva* by Hindus and Sikhs), while being conscious of the fact that the community was also supporting them.[102] He adds that practices such as orphan and famine relief were connected with the desire to contest the conversion activities of other communities, especially of the Christian missionaries.

Yet, the philanthropic activities were fraught with tensions within the Hindu community. Not many Hindu elites preferred to give donations to the Arya Samaj. Lala Lajpat Rai received many donations in his own individual capacity. There were in fact two accounts that were under his supervision initially.[103] One was in his name and the other account known as the Arya Samaj Famine Relief Account in the Punjab National Bank, was operated by him and R. B. Bakshi Sohan Lal as secretaries of the

96 Lala Lajpat Rai: The Kangra Valley Relief Committee, in: Letter to the Editor, The Tribune, 15 April 1905.

97 Lajpat Rai: Donations to Kangra Valley Relief Fund, in: Letter to the Editor, The Tribune, 11 May 1905.

98 Lajpat Rai: The Kangra Valley Relief Committee, in: Letter to the Editor, The Tribune, 15 April 1905.

99 Bob van der Linden: Moral Languages from Colonial Punjab: The Singh Sabha, Arya Samaj and Ahmadiyas, New Delhi 2008, p. 131.

100 Ibid.

101 Ibid., p. 133.

102 Ibid., p. 191.

103 The two accounts got mixed up over the course of time.

Arya Samaj Famine Relief Committee, Lahore. The grounds for opening an account in his name were a promise made by Lala Lajpat Rai to a Marwari friend at Calcutta that relief would be administered on *non-sectarian lines*.[104] Being an Arya Samaji, Lala Lajpat Rai asserted the work done by the Arya Samaj:

> It is they who supplied men reliable and willing to serve as volunteers in trying weather. It was in the name of their committee that I received concession from the different railways and it is in their name that I issued instructions to volunteers. It is to the President, Arya Samaj, Lahore, that I appealed for men when I was hard up for want of workers. Consequently it is plain that while all India supplied funds, the Arya Samajists too have worked hard wherever they were in the Punjab, in Sindh, in Bombay, in Balochistan, in the UP, in the CP, in Bengal, in Burma and also outside India.[105]

One of the contributions of the Arya Samaj to Indian society, particularly to Hindu society, therefore, was to impart a spirit of self-respect and self-confidence given the context of imperial subjugation. By referring to the past glory of Hinduism and by issuing a plea to restore it, the Samaj attempted to arouse the consciousness of its people and instil in them a certain strand of nationalism, also referred to as cultural nationalism. The Arya Samaj, as a radical reform organisation, effectively employed the rhetoric of the ancient glory of India to rid the Hindu society of its various social evils and to incorporate the nationalist ideal of *swadeshi*. This resulted in the organisation of a number of indigenous enterprises articulating the doctrine of self-help such as its educational institutions and the Punjab National Bank in cooperation with members of the Brahmo Samaj.[106] These activities of the Samaj helped in building up native confidence, supplied with the ideals of self-reliance and self-help, at a time when the Indian national movement was at its formative stage.

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104 Lajpat Rai: The Kangra Valley Relief Committee, in: Letter to the Editor, The Tribune, 15 April 1905.

105 Ibid.

106 Kenneth W. Jones: Arya Dharm: Hindu Consciousness in 19th-century Punjab, p. 239.