



Notes

Atmiya Sabha, founded in 1814, discussed important social and political questions of the time. In 1828, its enlarged edition was called the **Brahmo Sabha** which was renamed Brahmo Samaj later on. Soon he started touching upon many burning social issues of the time including the widely-prevalent practice of becoming *sati*. He rallied support to the efforts of William Bentinck (Governor General) for abolition of this custom and wrote extensively for the cause. In 1829, the custom of sati was formally abolished. He also condemned polygamy and many other forms of subjugation of women. Roy was also an advocate of modern education. He opened an English school as well as a Vedanta college (1825). He was a firm believer in the concept of one God. He was opposed to idolatry and found Upanishads as the basis of true Hinduism. He wished to purify Hinduism by removing all kinds of evils that had crept into it over centuries. He was not opposed to English education and spread of western knowledge.



Fig 18.1 Raja Ram Mohan Roy

After Roy's death in 1833, the Brahmo Samaj started getting disorganized. It was given a definite shape and popularized beyond the city of Calcutta under the leadership of **Debendranath Tagore** who joined in 1842. A year later, he wrote Brahmo Covenant. This Covenant was a statement of the creed of the Samaj and made a list of the duties and obligations of its members.

Keshab Chandra Sen (1838–84) who joined the Samaj in 1858 was a very eloquent and persuasive leader. He took the activities of the Samaj beyond Bengal and into UP, Punjab, Madras and Bombay. He radicalized the Samaj by attacking caste system, underlining women's rights, promoting widow remarriage and raising the issue of caste status of Brahmo preachers which was earlier reserved for Brahmans. He laid stress on universalism in religion. His radicalism brought him into opposition with