

Paramahansa Mandali, Formation, Principles, Socio-Religious Reforms

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Paramahansa Mandali



The Paramhansa Mandali, a pioneering socio-religious organization, emerged in **19th-century** India as a beacon of progressive thought and social change. Founded in **Bombay** (now Mumbai) in 1849, the Mandali played a pivotal role in challenging the rigid social and religious structures of that time.

Led by visionary thinkers like **Dadoba Pandurang** and **Durgaram Mehtaji**, the Mandali sought to redefine **Hinduism**, emphasizing the principles of equality, rationality, and spiritual enlightenment. It also advocated for women's education, inter-religious harmony, and the eradication of caste discrimination.

Paramahansa Mandali Formation

A group of progressive intellectuals and social reformers led by Durgaram Mehtaji and Dadoba Pandurang established Paramhansa Mandali as a secret society in Bombay in 1849. These individuals were deeply influenced by the earlier reformist group, **Manav Dharma Sabha**, and sought to continue its legacy of promoting humanistic values. However, the Paramhansa Mandali distinguished itself by its more radical approach and its commitment to social reform.

Paramahansa Mandali Principles and Ideologies

Paramhansa Mandali advocated for a monotheistic belief system, emphasizing the worship of a single, formless God. They rejected the elaborate rituals and idol worship that were common in Hinduism at the time. Instead, they promoted rational thinking and scientific reasoning as the basis for understanding the world and spirituality.

- In "**Dharma Vivechan**," Dadoba Pandurang outlines the principles of the **Paramahansa Mandali**, emphasizing that only God should be worshipped, true religion is rooted in love and moral conduct, and everyone deserves equal access to education. He asserts that humanity is one caste, behaviour should be guided by reason, individuals should have freedom of thought, and spirituality should be singular.

Paramahansa Mandali Key Reforms

One of the primary activities of Paramhansa Mandali was to break down caste barriers. They organized inclusive gatherings where people from different castes could come together and share communal meals, a radical practice at the time. These gatherings were aimed at fostering a sense of **unity and equality** among participants.

- Paramhansa Mandali was also a strong advocate for **women’s rights**. They promoted **women’s education** and supported progressive practices such as **widow remarriage** and **opposition to child marriage**.
- These efforts were aimed at improving the status of women in society and providing them with greater opportunities for personal and intellectual growth.

Paramahansa Mandali Impacts

The efforts of Paramhansa Mandali laid the groundwork for subsequent reform movements in Maharashtra and beyond. Their emphasis on rationalism and social equality influenced later groups such as **Prarthana Samaj** and **Satyashodhak Samaj**. These movements continued the work of challenging orthodox practices and promoting progressive values.

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