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**The Social Context of Education in Colonial India**  
*—a Study of Elementary Education in the*  
*North Western Provinces between*  
**1850-1880**

*Dissertation Submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University in partial*  
*fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of*  
**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

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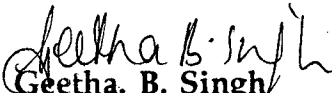
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## CERTIFICATE

*Certified that the dissertation entitled 'The Social Context of Education in Colonial India—a Study of Elementary Education in the North Western Provinces between 1850-1880', submitted by Miss Indu Dwivedi in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of degree of MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY, has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or, any other university and is her own work.*

*We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiner for evaluation.*

  
Dr. Geetha. B. Singh  
Supervisor

  
Prof. Suresh Chandra Ghosh  
Chairperson

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## Introduction

The Colonial experience has been analysed in a number of ways, however, three broad interpretations can be identified. The first sees colonialism as favorable and necessary for the development of colonized countries. For instance, many western historians emphasize the benevolent influence of western culture on the development of Indian intellectual ideas. They look upon colonialism as a process through which, "the colonizer, taking on the socio-economic and political responsibility of colonized enlightened the ignorant, immoral and backward masses by filtering down to them superior cultures and ideas."

Modern Indian historians in contrast, look upon the colonial system as extremely repressive and highlight the emancipation of the masses on the lines of nationalism—a reductionist approach, where development was seen in context of nationhood. The contemporary reformists and nationalists can be placed in this group.

The third approach, very close to that of nationalists is the Marxist interpretation. Marxists look upon colonialism as an equally exploitative system where the relation between the ruler and ruled highlights a constant struggle, and emphasise the need for dialectical approach in studying this system.

Some social scientists look at colonialism from a wider perspective. Colonization according to Paulo Frreire is a 'Culture of science'.<sup>1</sup> Fanon, Memmi and Mannoni describe it as a 'psychological relationship between human beings, caste in various roles'.<sup>2</sup> The essence of colonialism in literature is much more profound than military occupation of one by another. Once colonization is defined in this way, we move far from the definition of "a nation seeking to extend its authority over other people and territory."<sup>3</sup> It is thus seen more as a phenomenon projecting relationships among people rather than nations. Since,

human relations are shaped and expressed through institutional structures, an understanding of their operation, is important. These institutions like family, peer group, factory, schools, hospitals, etc together constitute the societal contexts, which influence, direct, and define, human relationships in a crucial manner.

A close observation of the spread of colonialism indicates a complex but close-nit relationship between various social institutions and the consolidation of the colonial system. The colonial institutions, particularly education were seen to reflect the power and political needs of colonizer. "Education was considered the most important ideological State apparatus devised by the ruling classes to insure that society largely conforms to these ideas and interest.<sup>4</sup>" As Gramsci has observed in a different context, "the intellectuals, i.e. upper sections of the product of education system are officers of ruling classes for the exercise of subordinate functions of social hegemony and political government.<sup>5</sup>"

### **Features of Colonial Education**

Throughout the colonial empire there was special emphasis on the spread of educational institutions. The colonial Schools were looked upon as significant instruments to further the social and economic interests of the colonizer. These school were largely age-based, hierarchical and unevenly spread. These were detached from indigenous culture in terms of language of instruction and the social values they taught. Altbach and Kelly observed, "Emphasis was laid on the devaluation of indigenous culture. If precolonial history was touched on, it usually emphasized chronology, civil wars, tribal conflicts, famines and barbarism, in order to contrast them with the peaceful and orderly progress under colonial administration. It was the basic denial of the colonized past."<sup>6</sup> At the same time it was kept aloof from the colonizer's culture and ideas. "This accounted for the 'marginality' of those educated in colonial institutions where a new culture was created among the few who went to schools.<sup>7</sup>" In America for instance, traditional indigenous institutions were replaced or discouraged by the English and French values imparted by European school, or in Indonesia where traditional 'peasantren' education was replaced by the Dutch educational

institutions. In India one could see the transformation from an indigenous country-based educational system to the westernized English education. The colonial educational institutions carefully selected the subjects, content and mode of instruction to diffuse the colonial supremacy and encourage the colonized dependency.

An uneven spread of education was another important feature of colonial institution. The emphasis varied from primary to higher and university education or to merely training, to enhance proficiency in different skills. For instance, in African colonies, the local people were trained as artisans to ensure that they might not compete with Europeans. Apart from the colonial strategies, the local conditions and response of the natives played an important role in the spread of educational institution. "The colonial situation varied and no one educational model can fit all."<sup>8</sup> The motives for introducing education were not identical. In India, administrative considerations were predominant, but in Vietnam manpower needs were more important, similarly the French interest in education sprang mainly from political motives. In every case the colonial educational policies reflected the needs of colonial powers.

As colonial education progressed in most of the colonies it enjoyed the support of indigenous elites, who in turn received favours to retain their status quo. In many colonies we find the development of 'dual education system'. It simply meant different kinds of education for different classes. Philippines, for instance, had private schools serving the urban elites and public schools for the masses. The farm and craft schools were meant only for the latter, who kept increasingly pressing for an academic curricula.<sup>9</sup> With the growth of colonialism, the indigenous education systems in the colonies tended to decay either by deliberate competition or due to sheer neglect. There was also the fear of the subversive influence of indigenous education and this led to it being subjected to close scrutiny. "...if traditional education had not been the major mobility link in the anti-French resistance, and had it not retained, despite its failure, a potential to mobilize villages against colonial rule, education might not have become such a serious government concern."<sup>10</sup>

Colonial education was put forward as an alternative system and not complementary to the traditional system of learning. According to A.R. Desai, "The colonial education neither held out the prospect of integration into indigenous culture to those who attended them nor did it prepare the colonized for leadership in their own society.<sup>11</sup>"

"While colonial educational policies had certain common characteristics these differed from one colonial power to another and the same power had often different policies in the same colony at different time.<sup>12</sup>" Where some region responded positively to colonial schools other remained hostile to them. Apathy was probably a more pervasive response than any thing else in certain colonies. Thus, when looked at in a broad spectrum the colonial system of education appears to be complex. While the colonial policies appear significant in determining the nature of education, the socio-cultural contexts in which these are implemented appear equally important and need careful study. Thus, the colonial policies can not be studied in isolation. The study of educational development in colonial India, for instance, clearly suggests the above aspect.

### **Education in Colonial India**

Initially, the British colonial interest was confined to the trade and commerce. The British traders and merchants received many privileges and enjoyed a monopolistic control over Indian overseas trade routes. Gradually, the mercantilistic interest was transformed into imperialistic and colonial interests. They adopted an aggressive policy and conquered the territories. They established, forts factories and company offices. This was followed by political and economic control over the Indian people. A change in the British policies was resulted from larger economic interest in India. The earlier activities of traders had given them a significant knowledge about Indian economic wealth. The rise of industrialism in England resulted in the search of raw materials and markets outside Europe. England could see the future prospects in India as it had both, the raw materials and the markets. As a result the policies were changed from mercantilistic to imperialist interest in the country. To maintain



long term economic gains, political control was considered important and it was followed by administrative supremacy.

In order to consolidate the colonial system, the colonial values were enhanced leading to socio-psychological dependence. "In order for the colonizer to be complete master, it is not enough for him to be so in actual fact, but he must also believe in its legitimacy. In order for that legitimacy to be complete, it is not enough for the colonized to be a slave, he must also accept his role."<sup>13</sup>

Education was seen as the most significant socializing institution. A uniform pattern of educational development was created by the colonialists, based on the 'downward filtration theory'. Mukherjee in emphasising on the British colonial interest in India noted that 'the rulers were not interested in reforming Indian society.' Education was to serve a predetermined economic and political purpose, namely creating colonial tastes and diffusing colonial values. However, 'the system worked with inherent social bias favouring the dominant strata of society'.<sup>14</sup>

The emphasis was mainly on the spread of higher and vocational education, which was seen as essential for the administrative needs of the ruler. As also stated by Basil A. Flikher, "colonial administrators, when they took education at all were concerned with training literate clerks who could staff the lower offices of the civil services."<sup>15</sup> Elementary education on the other hand remained relatively stagnant.

Throughout the colonial period the elementary education lacked serious official support except in certain specific regions. But there was already in existence 'a widespread network of elementary education, carried out by indigenous and private institutions.'<sup>16</sup> The indigenous educational institutions were of two kinds—religious and secular. These schools were not communal though education was not for the most discriminated groups like the untouchables. By the late 18th century, the religious educational institutions almost disintegrated whereas the secular education continued to flourish. Most of the religious educational institutions, Pathshala for Hindus and Madrasas for

the muslim were included in the secular educational institutions, leading to the rise of a comprehensive and widespread secular institution. These were—the village schools, the language schools and the private domestic institutions.

The private educational enterprise, enjoyed the social and financial support of indigenous elites, local chieftains, business classes and Zamindars. The attitude of colonial power towards elementary schooling was that of indifference. It was not before 1854 i.e. with Wood's Despatch, that an official attention was directed towards mass education. In specific socio-economic contexts however, it received official attention even prior to 1854. As stated by Carnoy, 'to emancipate the Rayyatwari revenue system in Maharashtra and the Zamindari system in United Provinces, the educational institutions were used to impart the necessary skills in literacy and accounting.'<sup>17</sup> On the other hand in Bengal, the administrative requirement resulted in focus on higher education. English education developed first in Bengal, where an emphasis was made to provide education to certain selective groups who could be used as "intelligent and zealous co-operators in British exploitation of India."<sup>18</sup>

In Bombay, the emphasis was on the higher education. Circumstance played no minor part in determining the difference, for in Bombay as in Bengal, European influence were far more potent. As commercial activities on the west coast expanded, the European colony in Bombay grew larger, mercantile offices increased, banking facilities were extended, European bar was established and the institutional life of the city assumed a pattern not very different from Calcutta.

Unlike Bengal, the region showed a little advancement in the elementary education, particularly in the rural areas. Due to the implementation of "Royyatwari revenue settlement" the elementary schools were used to inculcate necessary skills.<sup>19</sup> A change through the local educational institutions, based on the indigenous system was expected to be more effective than a direct intervention. Thus, the commercial and agricultural needs, witnessed at the same time the growth of higher and elementary educational institutions in Bombay.

In North Western Provinces the situation was drastically different. Unlike Bengal and Bombay, the provinces protraited a continuity of the indigenous system whereas the higher education was a later development.

With the growth of colonialism the indigenous educational institutions lost their popular patronage and by the third quarter of 19th century declined. The colonial institution were often built upon the traditional system of education but the emphasis was on English education. Though the system was universally applicable it marked and uneven spread. There were also differences in the response of different castes, classes and communities towards education. Thus, there is a need to understand the dynamics of colonialism in specific socio-historical contexts.

## **The Study**

The present study seeks to analyse the growth of elementary education within a specific socio-historical context in colonial India. This follows the understanding that given the overall colonial policies in education and the dynamics of social political and economic frame work in which these are implemented, the analysis of a specific context is still crucial to understand why there were variations in the educational practices.

We focus on the North Western provinces which comprised the present day Uttar Pradesh, educationally one of the most backward state in the country. The North Western Provinces have been chosen for the following reasons:

- (1) The North Western provinces were one of the first region where the vernacular scheme of elementary education for the masses was implemented in contrast to the downward filtration policy carried out in other region. This requires explanation.
- (2) Unlike other provinces, the North Western Provinces witnessed a widespread network of private educational institutions despite the growth of colonial institutions.

- (3) Finally, the North Western Provinces are also one of the provinces that have received inadequate attention of scholars engaged in socio-historical study of education in colonial India.

All these factors are note worthy and require a careful examination to understand the actual picture of the educational development in the North Western Provinces.

### **Education in North Western Provinces—a brief over view.**

The North Western Provinces comprised the present state of Uttar Pradesh, Oudh, a few districts of Haryana and some territories of Madhya Pradesh. Statistics suggest that prior to 1854 there was a widespread network of both, indigenous and private educational institutions. In 1850-51 there were on the whole 3,127 schools with 27,736 scholars. By 1852-53 the number rose to 3,469 and 36,884 respectively. Macauley in 1844 observed that in the beginning the Britishers extended the downward filtration policy of education in the North Western provinces. English education was promoted by opening English educational institutions in Banaras, Agra and Delhi.

While the new learning made rapid progress in lower provinces of Bengal under the triple drive of government, missionaries and native influence, a markedly different pattern took place in the North Western Provinces. Even in the early days of the Committee of Public Instructions there had been a faint tendency for English education to spill over into this region. As marked by Peter Smith, "Certain fundamental realities in the life of upper gangetic plains posed a barrier to these cultural inroads which no amount of official action could altogether overcome."<sup>20</sup>

As a result of these developments, the downward filtration theory was abandoned. It was followed by various educational experiments. Under Thomason a new scheme of education called 'the vernacular scheme for the elementary education' was initiated in some areas of the provinces. The success of the scheme was analytically examined and with the 1854 despatch it was implemented throughout North Western Provinces.

Though the scheme was carried out with the local assistance of feudatories, zamindars and chieftains, it was under the direct control of state. Awasthi maintains that the scheme was an effort to impress upon the local people, the benevolent nature of government and to facilitate the new revenue system which needed an elementary level educational qualification among the peasantry.<sup>21</sup>

The educational despatch of 1854 was a significant landmark in the growth of primary education. The review of secondary data indicates that the period witnessed a widespread growth of government institutions in the early second half of the 19th century. New educational institutions were introduced like Halakabandi, Taluqa schools, Popular schools etc. These were developed on the traditional education system. In spite of a serious official effort to encourage only government institutions, the private indigenous institutions showed remarkable progress. The regular scheme of 'grant-in-aid', which was implemented to inspect and financially assist the private schools was fully exploited to meet the growing desire for education.

By the latter half of the 19th century however, we find another shift in the educational policies of the provinces. The government again reverted to its earlier policy of encouragement to higher education, whereas the elementary education was left entirely to private organisation.

The spread of education in the province had important social implications. It resulted in the development of complex relations between education, wealth and social mobility. Schooling often instilled a desire for upward mobility and participation in the small 'modern sector of economy'. This gave the less privileged an opportunity to receive education. During the late 19th century, with the growth of nationalist sentiments in the region, the indigenous educational institutions became the focus of reform and national activities leading to the development of a traditional, still alternative system of education against the colonial system.

## The Objective

The main objective of our study is to analyse the development of elementary education in the North Western Provinces in the second half of the 19th century. The underlying assumption as maintained earlier is that the developments in education should be seen in the changing context of the colonial policies, economic and political institutions as well as the indigenous social structure and institutions critical to educational development.

The study will be socio-historical in nature, divided into three periods:

- (a) The state of primary education prior to 1854, (i.e. the Wood's despatch) where we will focus on the nature and the growth of indigenous and traditional education, as well as early British efforts in the North Western Provinces.
- (b) The period between 1854 to 1870 has been identified as the second period. It was a period of British experiments in primary education and the growth of vernacular elementary educational scheme. This period was also characterised by various socio-political developments in the region.
- (c) The period from 1870-1880 was crucial in the spread of primary education with of focus on Indianisation and mass education by the nationalists. This will be the third period and requires special focus.

Some of the important questions that will be raised during the study are as follows:

- (1) What were the trends in the development of various kinds of elementary educational institutions in the North Western Provinces? This will be examined in terms of the growth of various educational institutions in the region at different periods, the level of schools, the medium of instruction, the region i.e. urban \rural, these flourished or declined, and so on.

- (2) What was the relation between the indigenous and the private elementary educational institutions? To what extent was the English educational system a break from the traditional system? One would like to look into the mode of instruction, syllabus, the objectives, the spread of educational institutions, the patronage these received, the management and the control, and so on.
- (3) What was the response of different castes and communities towards these system of education in the region? This will be studied in relation to the accessibility of education by different social groups—Hindu, Muslim, Christian, etc., the kind of support these received from private and official organisations, the 'grant-in-aid' received by them and the number of enrollments of males and females in these schools.
- (4) To what extent can we relate the spread of elementary education with land tenure system? To understand the actual situation we will be looking into the government documents on the land reform and its influence on education.

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## Colonialism and Indigenous Education in the Early 19th Century

Eighteenth century marked the beginning of colonial interest in educational development in India. This interest had varying objectives behind it and was moulded by colonial policies from time to time. The period is of significant importance as it suggest considerable change from indigenous to western education in India. To understand the nature of this change, it is important to analysis the objectives of colonial rule in India, the role of education in the attainment of these objectives and the basic differences between the indigenous and colonial modern education system.

### **British Colonialism in India—from Trading to Political Administration**

The history of colonial administration of India began around 1756, with the battle of Plassey, when for the first time the East India Company captured the Bengal, Bihar and Orissa territories of 'Bengal Subah' and established its hegemony over politico-economic affairs.<sup>1</sup> India had rich trade links with the European and West Asian countries as early as 7th-8th century. AD. During the Crusade wars and the decline of Constantinople the major trade routes were captured by the West Asians and the trade between India and the West was severely affected. In the 15th century, the European countries encouraged the discovery of new sea and land routes. The discoveries of Columbus and Vasco da Gama proved revolutionary as these opened new avenues for the spread of trade and commerce. The fabulous wealth of India attracted many European mercantilists, who received royal farmans and decrees to trade within Indian territories. Few of them established factories, and fortified their commercial complexes.<sup>2</sup>

European imperialism ended the peaceful commercial relation among various European merchantalists in India. The trade differences and stiff competition resulted in mutual conflicts and wars. The famous Carnatic wars between the

English and the French were fought to acquire monopoly trade position in India.

Industrial revolution in England further enhanced the need to capture and monopolise the regions having rich sources of raw material. The struggle for markets, for the consumption of western products resulted in the rise of military subjugation and colonialistic designs. In the early colonial period the British interests were confined to the drain of wealth. The revenue was transferred from India to the metropolis which was then invested in various other colonial satellites (in Africa and East Asia). With an increase in the pace of industrial revolution and the growing need of markets, the colonial attitude towards India changed. An emphasis was made to transform unexploited Indian markets into the biggest commercial nucleus. There was also the need to develop a taste for British goods, utilities, life-style and products. Without socio-political interference, such a change was difficult. As a result policy of neutrality was abandoned. This was realised by colonial social institutions like schools, college, universities, clubs, restaurants, administrative official environment etc. The educational institutions were given considerable emphasis. It was encouraged to transmit an alternative culture based on western life-style.

The objective was purely economic and not socio-cultural reformation of colony. Though the developments in the educational sphere were biased these influenced the indigenous social conditions in a crucial manner. Initially the impact of 'New Education' remained confined to certain areas, mostly in trading and commercial centers, but gradually it spread throughout India in a comprehensive manner.

### **Early British efforts in the Sphere of Education in India**

The missionaries were the pioneers of the 'New Education' system in India. These were accompanied by the trading communities. The missionary organisations—schools, churches, etc spread Christianity and diffused the English cultural and religious ideas among the natives. Most of these missionary schools were established in South India. 'Schwartz's schools in Tanjore, Ramnand and Shivaganga schools, established in the 1770's and 1780's in Cuddalore, etc. were among the first few missionary schools. The Baptist missionaries Carey, Marshman and Ward at Serampore, the London missionary society, the American Methodist in Bombay, all did pioneering work', but their influence was gradual. "It is

doubtful," maintained Kichter, "whether in 1800 more than 1000 children were being educated in mission schools throughout India<sup>3</sup>" These institutes were indirectly supported by the East India Company members who often feared its adverse effect on their colonial designs.

The British official effort in the sphere of education was a relatively late development. Not before late 18th century do we find any official emphasis on education. Further, there was a marked difference in the educational policies from region to region and over time. Robert Clive, for instance, emphasized least interference with the existing educational system therefore Oriental education was encouraged. In 1781, Warren Hastings founded Calcutta Madrasa to provide customary pattern of Islamic studies. In 1792 Jonathan Duncan, established the Banaras Sanskrit college. The Commissioner of deccan, Mountstuart Elphinston, established a college for learning at Poona. Similarly in Delhi, Fraser founded schools for the instruction of children of Zamindars. These institutions were to a large extent aided and patronized by the English administrators. But even at the beginning of 19th century a serious official effort had yet to take place.

As a result of these benevolent policies the stagnating Indian Oriental literature was revived. It encouraged indigenous efforts also and an all-round development was noted in the sphere of Oriental literature. However, due to growing economic and social pressures in Britain this attitude was not encouraged. In 1792, Charles Grant in his historic observation, on the state of society among the Asiatic subjects of great Britain noted that, "The true cure of darkness is the introduction of light. The Hindus err because they are ignorant and their errors have never fairly been laid before them. The communication of our light and knowledge to them would prove the best remedy for their disorders, and this remedy is proposed from a full conviction that if judiciously and patiently applied it would have great and happy effect on them, effects honorable and advantageous for us.<sup>4</sup>"

Basu highlighting the economic objectives of the East India Company maintains, "It has been no part of the East India Company's original policy to impose a westernized system of education on its Indian subjects. Its lack of interest in education is not surprising since, its primary motive was trade and it did not in any way wish to tamper with social and religious institutions.<sup>5</sup>"

In 1813 thus, a clause was added in the Company Charter which made it 'not obligatory but lawful' for the Governor General in council 'to set apart a sum of not less than 1 Lakh of rupees'. This was to be spent on the "revival and improvement of literature and the encouragement of the learned natives of India and the introduction and promotion of knowledge of science among the inhabitants."<sup>6</sup>

Till 1823 however, the company could do little for the New Education. In 1823, the government appointed a general committee of public instructions. On the basis of its discussion in 1835 in Macaulay's minutes, English was chosen to be the medium of instruction. Macaulay castigated the oriental education by saying that, 'a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia'. He highlighted the political significance of introducing western education for the growing Empire of Britain in India. "We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and millions whom we govern, a class of people Indian in blood and colour but English in tastes and opinion."<sup>7</sup> The policy of downward filtration was adopted by the company. The "theory" was simply an elaborate rationalization for the fact that at this stage education involved very little in the way of financial expenditures and was confined almost exclusively to the instruction of a tiny elite group of future civil servants.<sup>8</sup> 'Emphasis was laid on the need to encourage western knowledge in schools through English as a medium of instruction, in the conquered territories of Bengal, Madras, Bombay, North Western Provinces and Central Provinces.

### **The Indigenous Learning in India**

In the early 18th century there was a fairly widespread network of indigenous institutions of learning throughout the country. In order to analysis the manner in which the institutions evolved, it is important to understand the nature of pre colonial social and economic structures.

Indian society presents a picture of a very complex social organisation based on cultural diversity along with pervasive socio-religious institutions.

Caste system was one of the dominant feature of Indian society. The concept of caste changed considerably from Vedic to non-Vedic society. Unlike a purely

profession based social division of labour, caste divisions during non vedic period were based upon the socio-religious hierarchy of different kingroups in a given socio-cultural organization. The social positioning was either defined by birth or varna (social groups). There was a caste based social division of labour which had significant implications on the economic and occupational developments as well. Since these divisions were strictly adhered to by the society, social mobility was generally discouraged." However the society was relatively flexible to allow a mutual interaction except the socially disadvantaged, like untouchable were concerned.

According to the varna system, the Brahmins had the highest 'ritual' status, followed by the kshatriyas, the Varnias, the trading community and the Shudras or labouring castes. The caste based social division was accompanied by unequal distribution of power and wealth. 'To maintain their position the higher strata controlled the mechanism of coercion.'<sup>9</sup> It seems that the control of mechanism of coercion was fully sanctioned by the socio-religious institutions. However, the idea of collectivity encouraged and enhanced socio-economic self-sufficiency. Due to well-knit social ties, self dependency and self-sufficiency, there emerged a relatively 'closed' and stratified social system which continued until the 18th century.

Right from the Vedic period to the coming of English colonialists, India has been the home of many religions. The most ancient among them is Hinduism. The other religious faiths like Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism etc. are derived from Hinduism. The all pervasive influence of the Hindu religion in the Indian society for over 3000 years has been noted by many historians. Indeed both, Muslim rulers and particularly colonial administrators and rulers developed their policies keeping in mind the socio-religious context of Indian society.

A relatively late development of the 'State' in India further empowered the religious institutions, particularly temple, giving them unquestioned authority and privileges. The priestly classes, like Brahmins, emerged as dominant social groups, administering and monitoring important socio-political institutions.

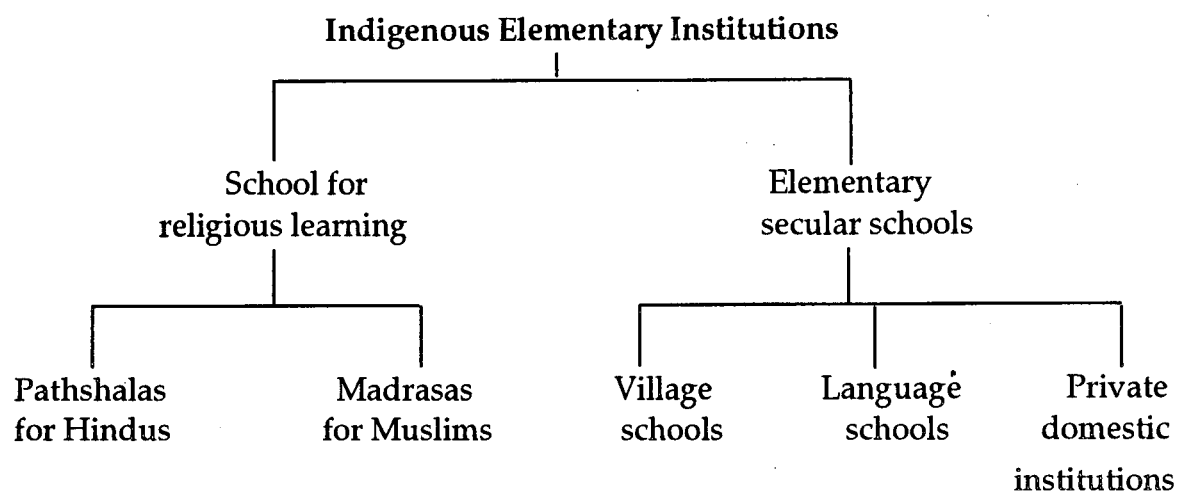
Pre-colonial India was feudal in character. Its economy was rural and agrarian with significantly developed traditional crafts and widespread network

of inland and overseas commerce. The villages were relatively self sufficient and production was primarily for self consumption. Throughout the Medieval period, there were various kinds of agrarian Land settlement systems, prevalent in different regions. 'Zamindari' remained one of the popular system among them, others, for instance, Ijaredari, Eqtadari, Mansabdari, Mahalwari, Royyatwari, etc were developed on the traditional system. The land tenure relation in India evolved in many phases. Nearly all the castes and communities were involved in cultivation. Land was cultivated on lease given on 'patta', whereas, usually the acquisition right belonged to the Zamindars. With the increased socio-economic stratification these agrarian practices multiplied. Many new elite and prosperous groups emerged, belonging to various caste groups, particularly Vaishya's. To attain social hegemony, these acquired land and emerged as new Zamindari classes. Land thus, played a significant role leading to social mobility during the later Mughal period.

Along with agriculture one also notices a well established domestic market for traditional crafts and skills. Unlike Europe, we do not find the rise of merchant capital in India despite a well developed trade and commercial network. It was primarily because the State did not play an active role in patronizing or supporting trade in India. It was mostly a private enterprise.<sup>10</sup> During 16th-17th century, we find Indians having trade links with Arab, Asia, East Asia and Europe but it was generally one sided as india did not show much demand for foreign goods. All these factors contributed to the growth of a relatively 'closed economy', lacking the modern characteristic of industrialism, market economy, surplus production and open door system.

One of the significant features of Indian society is a marked continuity of traditional values and customs. Changes were only marginal and these could not influence the traditional social system in a significant manner. As a result the traditional values and social structure continued with little alterations. The traditional learning for instance, remained one of the popular social institutions as late as 18th century. Indigenous educational institutions can be divided broadly into two categories, religious and secular. The religious institutions imparted education based on knowledge of the scriptures. There were also institutions which imparted secular knowledge and later were more widespread.

The following chart indicates the kinds of indigenous educational institutions prevalent in India.



### Indigenous Religious Learning

The earliest known institutions for learning were the 'gurukulas' and the 'ashrams'. These were established and carried out by religious and learned Saints, Rishies and Acharyas. Most of these institutions were established at the outskirts, so that the course of education could not be disturbed by the political interference, warfare and other activities.<sup>11</sup> Each gurukula and ashram had a specifically developed school of thought. Generally the local languages were considered the best Medium of instruction. However, later with the development of Sanskrit, the instructions were restrictively given in Sanskrit language.

At the end of the course the students did not receive degree or certificate of any kind.<sup>12</sup> The evaluation of students educational attainment was rather an open and spontaneous act. These were examined in the religious seminaries and assemblies, where they participated in religious debates and discourses. Chaturvedi in this context marked, "The relations between the teacher and the taught were generally so intimate, and consequently the former knew about the later so much that he felt no need of confirming his opinion by a test."<sup>13</sup> These institutions catered mainly to the Brahmins and gradually to the kshatriyas. After a formal religious ceremony, 'Upnayana Sanskar', educational practice was started. The assemblies and academies granted various titles to the successful scholars like acharya, upadhyaya, shastri, maharshi, etc.<sup>14</sup>

The State played a relatively passive role in the spread of these ancient gurukul

institutions. Most of these were either carried out by the saints or were patronized by the temples. These were significantly influenced by socio-political developments in around 5th-6th century. The rise of new religious movements, like Buddhism and Jainism led to their stagnation.

Under these new religious movements, particularly Buddhist there emerged a new kind of religious educational institutions. These were called monasteries. Though religious in nature these were relatively autonomous and better organized than the earlier institutions. One of the significant feature of monastery education was that it included people from all the caste and classes. For instance, the shudras could also receive education in Buddhist monasteries. There are references suggesting that even girls could attend these educational institutions.

To a great extent the monasteries were set up on the line of gurukulas. The students lived in monasteries for a given period and completed their education. These were not age based. The language used for instruction was local and simple. Emphasis was made to encourage monastery education making it more wide spread. The state took significant interest in popularizing and patronizing monasterial education. The Buddhist period also marked the rise of various universities and institutions for higher learning. Most important among these were Taxila, Vikramshila, Nalanda, etc. Certain centers became popular as educational center like Taxila, Kashi, Patliputra etc.

One of the important factor for the growth of higher educational institutions and centers for educational studies was that education was chosen as a significant medium to propogate popular religious faiths in 9th 10th century. With the decline of Buddhism however, these institutions stagnated. These were replaced by Hindu religious institutions. The revival of Hinduism in the 10th century had a crucial influence on education. Educational institutions were controlled by the temples and were relatively less autonomous and flexible. By patronizing the cause of education, an emphasis was made to spread these institutions country-wide. A marked change was noted in the content and the medium of instruction. A drive was made towards secular education along with the religious learning. The new institutions were significantly influenced by Buddhist educational institutions. The maths, academies, vidyapeeths, etc. were built upon the concept of monasteries.<sup>15</sup>



## Indigenous Secular Learning

The decline of Hinduism during 11th-12th centuries and the rise of Muslim rule in India resulted in the social turmoil. The educational system in the absence of proper patronage and due to inherent conflicts stagnated. At the same time due to socio-economic changes there was felt a need for a more practical educational system imparting training of popular skills. Thus there emerged a relatively novel system of education. Unlike the religious education, the desire for new kind of learning was secular a movement from below which was locally administered and handled. It was based on the socio-economic needs of the local people and imparted knowledge about various crafts, skills and professions. In other words the new education system was relatively more practical and realistic.

Our knowledge about the traditional secular education is based upon the colonial survey reports and records. Around 1830's the English East India Company undertook a survey of existing indigenous education to examine to nature and extent of its growth. Though the reports are seen as biased and incomplete but these contain crucial knowledge about indigenous educational institutions.<sup>16</sup>

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The reports indicated that institutions imparting secular learning were relatively uniform and widespread throughout India. It was imparted through Pathshalas, Maqtabs and Domestic institutions. The most elementary kind of education was imparted through the pathshalas, a rural organization. It was followed by advanced language institutions where a more specialized education, for relatively higher groups was imparted. The third and equally widespread educational institutes were the domestic instruction institutions. These were popular in rural as well as in the urban areas.<sup>17</sup>

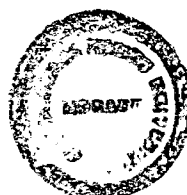
**The Pathshalas and Maqtabs:** The rural village schools were the basic educational institutions. The Hindu schools were called pathshalas whereas for the Muslims there were maqtabs. Both pathshalas and maqtabs transmitted the elementary level of education. As compared to other indigenous educational institutions, these village schools were most widespread.<sup>18</sup> Unlike the religious institutes the indigenous village schools were locally administered by the village councils and communities collectively. It is surprising to note that despite caste-based, these institutions were significantly flexible and democratic in nature.<sup>19</sup>

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There are many examples quoted by the English officials of different region where maqtab was also attended by Hindu students and pathshalas by Muslims.

Though unorganized and relatively loose nit, these schools were popular among all the castes, classes and groups. A successful continuation of these schools depended on many things such as the harvest season, the nature of produce, the natural calamities, the patronage received from the Zamindars etc. Unfavourable circumstances drastically affected the working of schools.

Most of these schools lacked proper resources, and building. In Bengal, for instance, "in many places schools met in chandi mandaps, belonging to one of the principal families in the village, where the religious festivals and worship took place or in private house of local benefactors.<sup>20</sup>" Students assembled in the open during the dry season and in a shed when it rained. In the district of South Konkan, 'of the 86 schools 28 were held in temples and the rest in private houses and sheds, belonging to potters, barbers, or oilmen.<sup>21</sup>'

**Content:** Unlike the religious institutions education in the secular village schools was based on the local needs. It was elementary and simple in nature. The content included reading, writing and arithmetic, imparted within a period of 4 to 6 years. The early lessons were learned orally by rote. It was in the upper division that pupils were taught history, geography, arithmetic, geometry, accounting and vernacular languages, like Persian, Sanskrit along with regional languages. Often the higher schools were but the upper part of elementary schools.<sup>22</sup> The subjects were well framed to suit the need of various professions and skills like agriculture, trade, commerce, money lending etc.

The education was based on the vernacular. The students were taught from elementary literature, the personal experience, and knowledge of the teacher. Subjects like geography of the region in which they lived, language and intricacies of the accounting system were emphasized. Once the students learned to decipher and read they were introduced to writing.

Most of the local schools were seasonal i.e., during the harvest period these remind suspended. These schools were mostly unorganized. The instructions in these schools was relatively rudimentary. Reid while commenting on these schools stated that, "everyone who has examined village schools must have been surprised

at the astonishingly small amount of knowledge of any kind communicated by the teacher to his scholars.<sup>23</sup>'' secular education system was the democratic nature of the latter. Students from almost all the castes, classes, communities and social groups attended secular schools. Still the most significant number of students came from the Brahmin, Kshatriyas Baniya, Prabhu, Maratha, Bhandaries, Sonar and Kunbis communities. ''A majority of these students were from the upper castes. In South Konkan the higher castes claimed about 70% of scholars from the Hindu communities, although they formed hardly 10% of Hindus.<sup>24</sup>'' There are many instances of relatively lower social castes attending village schools. These castes and communities like, dhobies, ahir, lohar, weaver, cobbler etc., were among the regular students attending village schools. However, the discriminated social groups and untouchables had no access to formal education of any kind.

Most of these schools were boys schools. The girls sometimes attended few schools. Since there were no separate girls schools nor women teachers, the girls were withdrawn from school earlier or generally taught at home. There are references to domestic institutions imparting some knowledge to the girls. The nature of education and the language of instruction for girls was considerably different from the one given to boys. The girls were given religious education. They could read religious scriptures and do a little writing. Few Zamindar families allowed instruction in Sanskrit and Persian for the girls in the family. They were given little knowledge about arithmetic and accounting as well. Adams remarked that, ''There were 50 or 60 Zamindars in the district and over half of them women. Two of these were the Ranee Suryamani and Kamal Mani Dasi well known for their knowledge of Bengali and accounts.''

However, during late 18th century, with the rise of few religious movements (as Chaitanya's movement) many new avenues for girls education were opened. The women followers were taught to read and write. ''In Nattor itself'', stated Adams, ''there were 1400-1500 literate women. But they were held in low repute. Their education was more an anachronism than a progressive harbinger of change.<sup>25</sup>''

The number of pupil in each schools varied from region to region. There were 15 to 35 students, in average, in most of the schools. The average stay in schools similarly varied from 2 to 6 years. The economic factor was the most significant factor determining the stay of the student in schools. Though the students paid a

minimal school fee either in cash or kind, the poorer were generally exempted, but during the harvest season most of the pupils left the schools to assist their parents on the fields.

Most of these schools were single teachers schools.<sup>26</sup> The salary given to the teachers varied from Rs. 2 to 5 a month. They were also looked after by the village communities, who provided them with food and other requirements. The teachers were generally local community members. They were respected and included in all the socio-religious ceremonies within the villages. There are instances when the teachers were given land grants in charity by the Zamindars and village authorities.

On the whole the indigenous Village schools were the basic, and most popular educational institutions. These were substantially widespread and locally controlled. The state seldom interfered in the working of these schools.

**The Language Schools:** The village schools were followed by the language schools which were relatively superior. Since most of these schools were patronized by the aristocratic and business classes, these were clustered in the urban areas. These were known as language-schools, as these imparted specialization courses in the court languages along with vernacular and other subjects. A knowledge of the court language was important to rise in the state services as well as to undertake trade and commercial activities. Thus, most of the aristocratic and business families wanted an education system which could impart necessary skills among their children. A Variety of such schools were opened in different region. According to an annual educational report, there were not less than 26 kind of such schools where two or more languages were taught.<sup>27</sup> These languages were Persian, Arabic, Urdu, Sanskrit and Hindi. Along with vernacular these presented a varied combination of languages.

Since education in these schools was relatively costlier people from the upper economic classes dominated the scene. Along with languages the pupils learned other subjects, like arithmetic, geometry, philosophy, logic, law, medicine, accounting, etc. The 'shalvashastra' and the 'shilpa shastra' were among the common books taught. Unlike the village schools the students, specialized in one specific sphere in the language schools. The choices were made according to the professions.

The teachers in these schools were relatively better trained than the village schools. They received proper salaries. Most of the teachers were from higher castes but there was no religious bias. Many Kasyasthas, for instance, were teaching Persian and Arabic.

**The Private Domestic Institutions:** Along with formal educational institutions, one also notices an equally widespread growth of informal educational institutions. The private domestic institutions were one among them. Though most of the private domestic institutions flourished in the rural areas, a substantial number of these were also found in the urban areas. Patronized by the village Zamindars, aristocratic and elite families, the private domestic institutions emerged as parallel to the village schools. These institutions were generally run at the residence of the patronizers. The children of patronizers along with the children of acquainted as well as village officials like, patwari, munims, etc were taught exclusively in these schools.<sup>28</sup> The continuity of such institutions depended upon the will of the patronizers.

These schools were a mixture of both, the village and the language schools, as the students were instructed important subjects, like accounting arithmetic, geometry and logic along with the languages. Generally, the lessons were imparted by learned persons. For instance, patwari gave lessons on accounting and book keeping, similarly the temple priests gave discourses in Sanskrit and so on. There are references to educated and learned people giving voluntary services by teaching certain pupils at their own residence.

One of the most significant feature of domestic instructions was that it made education accessible to girls. Mostly in the zamindars and elite families the girls were given little education of religious kind. With the growing economic complexities and struggle for possession, a demand for land increased. 'The girls were thus taught to read and write little arithmetic, so that these could look after the Zamindar matters in the absence of their husbands due to death or illness.'<sup>29</sup> But the number of girls educated formally was relatively negligible in 18th century.

Both, the historical literature and British survey records are unclear about the extent of the growth of domestic instruction institutions. The British official records have almost neglected the acknowledgment of domestic institutions at many places. Still the officials hold that 'these were around five times more than

the village schools.<sup>30</sup> "A much larger number of children were educated at home than at schools in Nattor, While the total number of children in elementary schools was 659, there were 2,382 children being taught at home", marked William Adam in his survey reports. Thus, the extent and nature of domestic private institutions is controversial. We could see the existence of domestic institutions till as late as 19th century. Few historians have called these 'the backbone of the indigenous system'. Its significance in the traditional education system of India could not be denied.

### **The Spread of Indigenous Education before 1850**

Prior to the recent attention given to indigenous education, the general understanding was that the indigenous education system was unevenly spread, backward and stagnated by around 17th century. Most of the British records pointed out that "Not only is learning in India low but it is retrograding" Macaulay in his minutes in 1835 castigated the Oriental education and indicated the political significance of introducing western Education for the growing empire of the British in India.

It was on the basis of these relatively biased reports and opinions that colonial policy of education was framed. An emphasis was made in the new education system to filter down the English education among the native Indians. The Britishers under took the educational reforms to prepare Indian natives for a long lasting colonial regime. Charles Grant in his observation, clearly remarked that, "To raise the decadent society of Hindu India to the level of European's civilization, English education should be propagated throughout India. The Hindu would see the great use made of reason on all subjects and in all affairs", marked Grant, "They too would learn to reason, they would become acquainted with the history of their own race, the past and present state of the world. Their affection would gradually become interested by various engaging works, composed to recommend virtue and to deter from vice; the general character of their opinion would be ratified, and above all they would see a better system of principles and morals."<sup>31</sup>

One of the important limitations in the study of the growth of indigenous education in India is the lack of adequate literature on the subject. Most of our sources are either religious literature or British survey reports. There is almost no

statistical description of any significant kind which allows to analyse the growth of education during pre-colonial times.

Though the British records throw significant light on the indigenous education system they fail to acknowledge diversity of indigenous institutions. Nevertheless, these sources suggest that the indigenous educational system was fairly well developed in India and was considerably widespread. Prendergast, a member of the Bombay Governor's Council in his minutes of 1821 remarked that "There is hardly a village, great or small throughout our territories, in which there is not at least one (indigenous) school, and in large villages more, many in every town and in higher cities in every division, where young natives are taught reading, writing and arithmetic, upon a system so economical—from a handful or two, of grains, to perhaps a rupee per month to the school master according to the ability of parents and at the same time so simple and effective that there is hardly a cultivator or petty dealer who is not competent to keep his own account with a degree of accuracy beyond what we meet with amongst the lower order in our own country; while the more splendid dealers and bankers keep their books with a degree of care, consistence and classness."<sup>32</sup>

That the indigenous education was widespread and based upon the socio-economic needs of the society is also revealed by William Adams in his reports on Bengal. He stated that "India had an indigenous system of literacy and learning connected with a widespread system of agriculture, commerce and administration. The indigenous system of education could have helped India to grow into National States and industrial societies."<sup>33</sup>

One of the major emphasis of indigenous education was on the quantitative development of education. Qualitatively the system was relatively inferior and rudimentary in nature. These were more like training-institutions. Unlike English education there was relatively less emphasis on logical and philosophical education. The system was more or less based on socio-economic needs at the village level.

Apart from being quantitative in their approach these schools were unevenly spread. It was significantly marked during the British colonial interference within the Indian territories. In Bengal and Bombay it was on the verge of stagnation as early as 18th century in the North Western Province however, it existed and

flourished till late 19th century. The indigenous system of Education highlighted tremendous variations. There were variety of institutions imparting education which shows that education was flexible and easily moulded according to the local requirements.

The following figures, taken from Adams report on indigenous institution, indicate towards different kinds of schools existing in different territories of Bengal province during 1838-39. Some of these variations were locally created by the mutual concent of village headmen and local Zamindars but mostly these evolved traditionally.

**TABLE 1**  
**Different kinds of indigenous school in the province of Bengal.**

<i>Types of school</i>	<i>No. of schools in different territories</i>					<i>Total No. of schools</i>	<i>Total % of schools</i>
	<i>S. Bihar</i>	<i>Tirhut</i>	<i>Murshidabad</i>	<i>Birbhum</i>	<i>Burdwan</i>		
Bengali	–	–	65	407	629	1101	41.9
Hindi	286	80	5	5	–	376	14.3
Sanskrit	27	56	24	56	190	353	13.4
Persian	279	234	17	71	93	694	26.4
Arabic	12	4	2	2	11	31	1.1
English	1	–	2	2	3	8	3.3
<b>Total</b>	605	374	115	543	926	2623	—

*Source:* Adam's third report on indigenous education in the province of Bengal. Di Bona, 1983, Delhi.

### **The Response of Natives towards Indigenous Education**

There was marked difference between the percentage of Hindus and Muslim communities attending indigenous schools. Despite the democratic nature of schools, there were less number of Muslim schools and scholars. Even in the Muslim dominated territories the number of Muslim students receiving education was relatively inferior. For instance, in Nattor, a thana of Rajshahi district, there were 485 villages having 27 elementary schools—11 Hindu schools and 16 Muslim schools. In addition there were 38 advanced language schools, all Hindu, using Sanskrit as the medium of instruction.'

However, the Muslim schools though less in number, were much better than the Hindu schools. Popular among these were Arabic, Persian and Urdu schools. Arabic and Persian schools were attended by a relatively small number of people aspiring State services.



These schools received a regular support of the local elite classes, Zamindars, the local landlords etc. In spite of being autonomous, indigenous institutions appear to be significantly influenced by these local administrators.

During late 18th century, Lord Minto observed that "the principal cause of the present neglected state of literature in India is to be traced to the want of that encouragement which was formerly afforded to it by princes, chieftains and opulent individuals under native government. Such encouragement was specially important in India where the learned professions had little other support. Due to economic pressure in the absence of these support by early 19th century, Banaras, Tirhoot and Nadia had all declined as seats of learning.<sup>34</sup>"

Indigenous schools were considered one of the important social institutions. The school teachers received due respect and communal attention. In many villages of Bengal and North Western Provinces, social and religious ceremonies were fulfilled only in the presence of school teachers. The villages made offerings to the teachers to seek their blessings. There are many references of teachers being absorbed in administrative and official activities of Zamindars.

### **Impact of British Policies on Indigenous Education**

"The political upheaval of 1757, the disastrous famine of 1770-72, the annual, quinquennial and the permanent settlement all contributed to a half century's social and economic distress which was reflected in cultural decay. The war which had harassed India in the later half of the 18th century left their mark on education. The East India Company took no interest in education to begin with. In these years of indecision, indigenous education suffered. Vernacular instruction was lost sight of and over shadowed by the almost exclusive patronage given to English. The Cornwallis policy of excluding Indians from responsible government posts drastically affected the educated classes and many of them remained unemployed. Students withdrew from the old institutions as they had little to do in the new society. Bentinck's government took the decision of by passing indigenous schools and concentrating on English. As a result elementary village schools suffered and pupils who had patronized the school of higher learning particularly the higher caste Hindus in the provinces, switched over to the new schools and collages.<sup>31</sup>"

"In the transitional phase between the decline of the old system and the funding of the new, it appears that there was an increase of illiteracy.<sup>35</sup>"

In spite of disintegration and decline of indigenous learning it could not be replaced by the English education. In few provinces it remained the dominant educational system. The Committee for Public Instructions, on the basis of such response towards English education advised the government to develop new education on the indigenous framework. It stated in a letter of 18 August 1824 to the governor general that, "The Hindus and Muslims still had 'vigorous prejudices' against European learning, that Oriental literature was not to be summarily condemned and that it had a utility of its own."<sup>36</sup>

## Conclusion

On the basis of above observation thus, it appears that even prior to the coming of Europeans, India witnessed a relatively widespread growth of indigenous educational institutions. Despite being hierarchical, these were secular and catered to the local needs of people. As stated by Basu the chief function of traditional learning appears to have been, "to conserve custom, to organise and sanction the existing political and economic order and to provide philosophical and religious enlightenment to the ruling classes". Most significant basis of indigenous institutions was the system of 'local patronage' received by aristocratic and elite classes.

The system of indigenous education was of little interest to the imperialistic British colonizer in India. In order to legitimize their political control over Indian territories and later to develop a liking for western commodities, the colonizer showed significant interest in education. Initially the Oriental learning was encouraged. A direct official effort in the sphere of education was a relatively late development. It marked a spread of English education, based on the downward filtration policy. The annual educational records indicate that unlike the indigenous education system, the new education was confined to urban areas. It was enhanced as an 'alternative system' of education to substitute the indigenous learning, maintains Basu. The objective behind the new system of education was purely political. Despite being unevenly spread the new system significantly affected the indigenous learning, leading to its decline. However, in few provinces, as in the North Western Provinces, it remained underdeveloped.

In order to understand the intricacies to the development of English education in specific social contexts it is important to analysis the colonial objective behind English education and its relationship with indigenous learning.

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## Elementary Education in the North Western Provinces 1850-1870

The North Western Provinces were known as the United Provinces up to 1834, the Agra Presidency from 1834-1836, and the North Western Provinces after 1836. It comprised the present state of Uttar Pradesh, a few districts of Haryana, and some territories of Madhya Pradesh. These provinces were one of the few regions where indigenous education continued to receive support in the mid 19th century. It also experienced official efforts in the spread of elementary education. The chapter attempts to analyse educational developments in the North Western Provinces in the context of the specificity of the social and economic structure of the region, colonial policy in the education and the existing indigenous educational institutions.

### North Western Provinces—Social and Economic Structure

Like the other provinces North Western Provinces highlighted a traditionally caste-based, hierarchical and feudal society. However, there was considerable diversity in tradition, languages and life style. The village was the basic unit of society and these were relatively self sufficient. Caste was the basis of social hierarchy. According to Chaturvedi, society in the provinces was subdivided into many caste groups. Brahmins were ritually the superior caste responsible for regulating social life according to that prescribed in the scriptures. Land grants further enhanced their position and they emerged as 'Zamindars'. They also held important position in the bureaucracy and enjoyed many privileges.

The kshatriyas were close to the Brahmins in social positioning but they were less rigid in their social composition. They were the warrior classes, and held important positions in the state bureaucracy. These classes were socially

active, and enjoyed many privileges. The Vaishyas along with the farming communities were the main producing classes undertaking occupations such as cultivation and commerce. Most of these Vaishyas were shopkeepers, 'sahukars', 'mahajans' and moneylenders. They gave loans to almost all the classes and communities. Gradually these money lenders usurped and acquired land, and emerged as 'new landlords' or zamindars. Their commercial background and possessions of land encouraged investment in cultivation, leading to the commercialization of agriculture.

The shudras comprised the artisans classes along with socially discriminated groups such as untouchables. These were the lowest in social hierarchy. Traditionally they carried out many crafts and skills, promoting indigenous and external market. Commodities such as carpets, wood-work, cloths, medicines, perfumes, metallurgy etc. were in demand in foreign markets. With the decline of trade and commerce their economic condition deteriorated. Mostly patronized by the elite groups, they supplemented their livelihood taking up cultivation during the harvest seasons.

As in other presidencies, religion played a leading role in the North Western society. It influenced the social structure in a considerable manner, determining social hierarchies. Hinduism being the most ancient and widespread religion, dominated in society. It was followed by Islam. Religion defined the laws and codes of conduct for social and political activities. The higher castes often manipulated religious positions to attain required ends. Customs and social evils like charm and spells, magic, child marriage, female infanticide, purdha system had religious sanction. At many a time the religious leaders acted as the king makers, influencing the political and social institutions. Religious reform movement in the form of Bhakti and sufi challenged religious orthodoxy.

The North Western Provinces were one of the significant economic subah of the Mughals. It was called 'the vegetable garden' of the country.<sup>1</sup> The region was fertile and watered by various rivers. During the Mughal Empire the region

witnessed remarkable progress. The presence of the Mughal court in Agra made the United Provinces, the center for social political and economic activities. The growth in trade and commerce gave rise to new cities which gave a boost to the prosperity of the region.<sup>2</sup>

Trade and commerce were mainly for exports, carried out by the Baniyas and few Muslim communities. The economy was relatively self sufficient in nature and catered to the local demands.

Agriculture was the major occupation and the basis of economy. There were various kinds of agrarian settlements in practice. Zamindari was however the most common. The land owing classes utilized the landless peasantry to cultivate the land. Bonded labour or 'Begar' was not uncommon. Cultivation was generally for local consumption. The feudal system discouraged open market economy and thus the economic system, like the social system was relatively 'closed' in nature.

Land assessment was the major source of revenue. During the Mughal period, efforts were made to evolve a uniform system of land assessment. The Britishers noted that "Under the Government which preceded ours the revenue was collected, either in kind or in cash, at rates, greatly varying but perfectly well known and undisputed. These recognized revenue rates constituted the revenue for the state."<sup>3</sup>

The village patwaries, the taluqdars and quanungos, undertook all the assessment activities, based on their intense knowledge of the geography, the nature of fields, the soil and productivity of the fields. They played an important role in calculating the revenue rates and in the collection of revenue. The most favorable revenue assessment settlement was the 'Zabti' system based on the measurement of land and the estimation of its productivity during rotation cropping. But, the commonly applied revenue assessment systems were that of kankut, nask and batai or gallah-bakshi, where the produce and not the land was taken into account.<sup>4</sup>

## Colonization and Economic Resettlement

The British conquest of the province proved significant as it brought about various economic changes in the region. Though the North Western Provinces were a region that had insufficient mineral resources, and relatively small volume of trade, and the markets were relatively undeveloped, but, as stated by Peter Smith, the region was politically important and hence considered crucial by the colonialists.<sup>5</sup> With the conquest of the North Western Provinces, the British rulers became the masters of a significant revenue yielding region and it was then that the economic importance of the region was realized. The statistical memoir for the year 1830 indicates a collection of revenue amounting to Rs. 4,05,29,921 which constituted the annual land revenue.<sup>6</sup>

They found the North Western Provincial agrarian economy relatively unique in many ways. The locally managed and maintained agricultural practices were enhanced by fertility of soil, regular irrigation facilities, the surplus supply of labour due to vast population undisputed revenue settlements, well planned and properly maintained records indicating the produce and rate of revenue for the previous years.<sup>7</sup>

The detailed memoirs and minutes ever since 1819 till around 1830 based on the economic surveys, observation and settlements gave the Britishers a clear idea about the existing indigenous agrarian system and the revenue settlement practices in the provinces. They realized that 'with the gross produce of the land as the basis of assessment the settlement officers was left with very little or practically no work to do. He could not intervene with the existing system to reform or remodel it for a maximum usage. Moreover the system was so stratified that it was very difficult to handle it on there own.

To continue entirely with the existing system where assessment was made on gross produce, was found impractical. Consequently, on the basis of the information collected and the settlement records prevalent during Mughal period, the Britishers devised and imaginative agricultural revenue assessment



and collection system, keeping in view the socio-cultural constraints and the economic potentiality of the region.<sup>8</sup>

The British realized the significance of the middle men who, where on one hand were attached to the cultivating classes and on the other assisted the Mughal revenue officials in assessment and collection of the revenue. They were given the right to enhance or diminish the rates, which earlier were strictly the revenue rates. These revenue rates were now made the rent-rates, levied on the revenue collectors having the proprietorship rights. It then became the business of the settlement officers to see how far the old revenue rates were being modified by the new agency which had been introduced-as the proprietary body. To aid the revenue officers in this work the Revenue Board issued orders from time to time.

'The settlement officers visited every village before they assessed the revenue, and made notes of the appearance of soil and quantity of the crop. Their personal observation, aided by the knowledge acquired by the proprietors, enabled them to estimate the average rent per bigah with a very close approximation to the true value. The assessment was done taking into account the earlier system of cultivation, produce of land and its demand in the market, the nature of tract of land, the irrigation facilities, the social position of the zamindars, developments effecting the growth of cultivation and so on. A thorough knowledge of the past settlement and collections along with the developments bearing on the condition of the village was hence essential'.<sup>9</sup>

Since most records were kept by the local people, a careful understanding of accounts and the improved knowledge of book keeping would have assisted the administration of the settlement in a significant manner. By conferring the proprietorship right the British Government encouraged the local people to keep their own accounts so that the government could collect increased revenue. They divided the large land holding into small estates and tried to attain a uniform pattern of revenue assessment within individual provinces. As a result traditional cultivation in certain provinces tended to decline and there was noted a gradual commercialization of agriculture.

Thus, the North Western Provinces emerged as one of the unique territories of the colony where traditional economic institution continued to prevail with necessary modifications. The impact of British mercantilism was not directly felt in the region. Despite the gradual commercialization of cultivation and surplus production, the Britishers did relatively little to facilitate the development of a market economy, to encourage industrialization or to boost commerce. At the same time due to the decline of traditional cultivation, traditional crafts were significantly affected, giving way to general poverty and dislocation.<sup>10</sup>

Unlike the developments in Bengal or Bombay, the nature of economic development could not result in the rise of a powerful aristocracy and middle class. Though it added to the socio-economic stratification, it was unable to effect the deep-rooted feudal values within the society.

### **Indigenous Education Prior to 1854**

An indigenous network of schools imparting secular education had emerged in the North West Province. Though it was caste-based but was relatively democratic in nature. There were various agencies imparting secular education. Broadly these could be divided into village educational institutions, vernacular language institutions, and the private domestic institutions. These were further divided according to various castes and communities. For instance, there were separate language schools for Muslims and Hindus. Chaturvedi while discussing his own experience with the indigenous elementary schools stated that, "shortly after finishing add the 'Pundit's school' I was sent to my father at Allahabad. Here I was sent to a 'Mahajani Pathshala' in which Indian book-keeping, arithmetic and Mahajani (banker's script) was taught."<sup>11</sup>

**The Village Schools:** There is relatively little literature on the nature and extent of educational development prior to the observation recorded by the British officials around 1820's and 30s in the province. But, it appears that the village schools were the most elementary, and basic educational unit. The system appeared to be relatively 'democratic' and autonomous in nature, since it was maintained by the village community, according to local needs. There was no

direct interference by the state. On the contrary, the state favoured and financed the village communities for the establishment of schools. The most significant role was however, played by the aristocratic families, like zamindars and taluqdars. They patronized the village education giving land grants and financial assistance to the village communities.<sup>12</sup>

These schools charged a minimum amount as tuition fee from the students, which could be made optional for destitute children. Schools required very meagre resources and could be opened any where by any one, capable of instructing the community. For instance, the school situated in 'Mahajani tola' was run on dalan and chabutra of Mahajans house.<sup>13</sup> Most of these schools were seasonal.<sup>14</sup> During the harvest period these remained closed as the pupils worked along with their family members on the fields. After the harvest was over, these schools were revitalized.

The students in these schools generally belonged to the age-group between 6 to 14 but these were not age-based. The percentage of students coming from upper castes was relatively more than the people from the lower castes. The Brahmans and the Kayasthas constituted the most dominant educational group. However, Kshatriyas showed little interest in education. The British surveyors in the region stated that, "the Kshatriyas are indifferent to schools. That sword comes naturally to them than pen is a general opinion among Kshatriyas."<sup>15</sup> Education was most popular among the Vaishyas who included farmers, traders, shopkeepers, merchant and money lenders.

**The Content of Education:** The content was one of the significant feature of indigenous schools which distinguished them from other educational institutions. Schools emphasized a very simple but relatively practical kind of education. One of the essential objectives of education was to introduce various caste groups to the existing occupations and professions so that the students could be trained for specific occupations, that were usually caste-based.<sup>16</sup> As a result, education differed according to various occupational needs. Cultivation being the most popular occupations in the village, skills associated with it were

a necessary feature of village schools. Apart from initial reading and writing skills, the pupils were taught various subjects like geography, history, arithmetic, geometry, mensuration, trigonometry, algebra and accounting. This was to enable the students to understand the existing agricultural system and to provide them with necessary skills for day to day agricultural activities. It was more of a training institutions than a proper educational or theological institutions. The nature of Indian villages being autonomous and independent further encouraged the knowledge of these skills.

Apart from agriculture, the schools gave an elaborate and thorough knowledge of accounting, generally, preferred by the baniya communities. These schools were relatively superior and attended by the communities belonging to the business families. Accounting was accompanied by the vernacular languages like Persian, Hindi and Sanskrit.

The general stay of pupils in these schools varied from 2 to 6 years. Pupils belonging to Baniya families were withdrawn as soon as they acquired sufficient skills to sit on the shop. Majority however, left the schools due to economic factors. Raja Siva Prashad, C.S.I gave several concrete examples of the poverty of the people and added: Men must be fed first and then instructed. It is poverty which keeps back the people from many things which are good and desirable. Little boys keep off birds from the fields, pick up cow-dung for fuel, take out cattle for grazing and watering, bring grass for fodder, and in fact help their parents in many ways in their rural life. They cannot spare the service of their children.<sup>17</sup> Thus there was no uniform reason for the uneven stay of students in the schools.

**The Language Schools:** The village schools were followed by the language schools generally established in the urban areas. These schools were also secular and relatively democratic in nature. Most of these schools were opened by the private agencies. The state sometimes financed but seldom controlled these institutions. These were relatively autonomous, and superior institutions. As compared to village schools they were well maintained, having proper buildings

and resources. They prepared students for the state bureaucracy and imperial services. "Those who had to move in 'higher' and 'polished' society were trained in etiquette, which was a speciality of these schools. For these reasons, the Persian schools were patronized even in villages and were frequented by the Hindus also, specially Kayasthas, who often outnumbered the Muhammadan students.<sup>18</sup>" The languages taught were both vernacular and the imperial state language. Persian, Urdu, Arabic, Sanskrit and Hindi were among the common languages taught. Most of these schools taught not less than two to three languages. Macauley noted around 26 kinds of language schools giving instructions in different languages.<sup>19</sup>

These schools were mostly attended by all the communities except the most discriminated. There were different schools set up for Hindu and Muslim groups. However, since the knowledge of Urdu, Persian and Sanskrit was the necessary qualification for the state bureaucracy, these were attended by both without a communal differentiation.

**Private Domestic Institutions:** The private domestic institutions were the backbone of the indigenous educational system as they functioned parallel to the village schools. According to official reports these were of four kinds:

- Those maintained entirely by the masters of the house in which the schools were held.
- Where the scholars defray the teachers salary by tuition fee, whether in money or in kind.
- Those in which teachers received regular wages.
- Free schools where the teacher was a man of comfortable circumstances, or deriving means of livelihood from other sources.

The domestic private institutions were an exclusive educational arrangement for children of the economically affluent families. These were generally patronized institutions, where the aristocratic families, or the rich business families exclusively trained their children. These institutions were

either run by the elites or rich gentleman who wanted to do voluntary service for the community. These were informal institutions where there was no definite plan regarding the functioning, the timing or the content to be taught. Being privately governed they were at the mercy of the patronizers. Generally, these were relatively superior to the village schools as the teaching staff was relatively better trained. Moreover these schools taught only a very selective groups of students. One of their significant features was that these were probably the only kind of institutions which imparted education to the girls along with the boys.

Indigenous education from all accounts appears relatively widespread throughout the region and significantly contributed to the growth of education. Non availability of adequate statistical data makes it difficult to estimate the actual spread of indigenous education. Reports given by British surveyors on the spread of indigenous education in the region make some mention in this regard. One of the report by Thornton in 1850 notes that of the total 1,900,000 males of school going age 68200 received some kind of formal instructions. There is however, no reference to the variety of institutions that found part of the indigenous system of education but may not be classed as 'formal' schools. The reports of the surveyors show an increase in the number of schools between 1849 to 1853 as can be seen from the table below. However, these figures should be treated with caution as the surveyors were probably unacquainted with the traditional educational system. They have not taken into account the variety of schools, nor those which were abolished or shut down temporarily due to economic reasons.<sup>20</sup> Their knowledge of private institutions seems relatively unclear as they have taken a negligible account of these institutions. Moreover it appears that these reports were submitted in haste which raises many problems. The reports also mention that within the span of 10 years i.e. between 1843-1853, there was a 72% increase in the number of schools. Another figure which indicates the spread of popular private institutions (probably domestic institutes) i.e. from 3237 in 1851-52 to 3446 in 1852-53, shows a parallel increase in the institution throughout the region.

**TABLE 1**  
**Number of Indigenous schools and scholars in the North Western Provinces before 1854 Educational Despatch.**

<i>Years</i>	<i>No. of Schools</i>	<i>No. of Scholars</i>
1849-50	2014	16520
1850-51	3127	27736
1851-52	3329	31843
1852-53	3469	36884

*Source:* Reports on progress of education in the North Western Provinces in the years 1852-53.

### **Western Education in North Western Provinces**

The earliest attempts at introducing western education in the North Western Provinces was by the missionaries. However, the powerful religious sentiments, that prevailed in the provinces, made the missionaries task problematic. "It was looked upon as a forceful attempt to deviate the local people from their religion, tradition and culture."<sup>21</sup> The parliamentary papers presented in 1852-53 clearly noted that "the fear of religious conversions among the agricultural classes acted as a formidable deterrent to the growth of missionary and government schools."<sup>22</sup> By 1851-52 there were 27 missionary schools with 1326 scholars which increased to 32 and 1934 respectively during 1852-53. Most of these schools were established in the urban areas where the Euro-Asian and Anglo-Indian population clustered in larger number. For instance, in the town of Farrukhabad and Agra there were 650 and 832 boys studying in the missionary schools respectively.<sup>23</sup> These schools initially had no direct support of the government. These were managed by the missionaries affiliated by church. Euro-Asian families at times gave funds and charity to these institutions. Later however, they received government grant in aid facilities. These were carefully monitored by the government as excessive missionary efforts in education was feared to raise anti-British sentiments among the people.

The general response towards missionary schools was that of indifference. The local people did not show much interest in these schools. The superior castes and higher social classes were apathetic to them. The schools were generally attended by the depressed classes, able to effort the education and the

Anglo-Indian communities. Missionary schools were well maintained and relatively organized with systematic instruction given in the English language and with an emphasis on religious education.

The British were late entrance in the region as the lack of commercial and trading possibilities did not generate their immediate interest. Hence compared to other provinces, British efforts in education were also delayed in the North Western Provinces. For instance, in Bengal, as early as 1780's we find the establishment of English colleges and schools.

Initially an all Indian policy of downward filtration of English Education was adopted in the North Western Provinces as well. "The Committee saw no reason why it could not be applied in the region of the Upper Ganges and Jumuna.<sup>24</sup>" The government attempted to encourage English Education by establishing English institutions. However there were also attempts at transforming the existing Oriental institutions. The annual reports clearly indicates a preference for the latter, as, "it was found that people sent their children in an existing schools than in the newly established one."<sup>25</sup>

Simultaneously, at other centers, local committees came into being. Funds were raised by subscriptions, and an array of Anglo vernacular schools arose under the guiding hands of the General Committee in Calcutta. This development reached a high water mark in 1839 when a total of 14 institutions were in operation, extending in a chain from Gorakhpur to Bareilly and Ajmer.<sup>26</sup> "So intent were the authorities upon winning over the inhabitants to the new educational dispensation that in several instances, no provision for vernacular classes was made until several years after the founding of the school in question."

Most of these efforts were confined to urban areas. Despite a policy of encouragement to education the Government did not directly control these institutions. It funded and supported the private efforts by giving grants and financial aids, as per the charter act of 1813.



The emphasis was made on the spread of higher education. The efforts of this policy became plainly visible. In the former Oriental colleges such as Banaras Sanskrit college, the students enrolled in the English department increased at the expense of Sanskrit and Persian, partly because transfers were permitted to retain the stipends, formerly awarded only to students in the Oriental department. The record of both Agra and Delhi college revealed a similar trend. An immediate fall in the Oriental department followed the order of march 1835. Interest in Persian waned while correspondingly the desire to learn English grew with the realization of its importance as the language of the governing classes. Elementary education was initially neglected by the East India Company. All the instructions were given in the English language. The Orientalist content was replaced by English literature, poetry, geography and history. Thus, it appears that an effort was made to transform the North Western society to create a demand and liking for the colonial values commodities, and to exploit its untouched markets.

### **Response to English Education**

Contrary to their expectations, the British found relatively little demand for English education among the people in the North Western Provinces. "Do the people see the value of education they import? In Calcutta the advantage of English education was seen and appreciated both by the aristocracy and the middle class. A child belonging to a respectable family is sent to an English school to as soon as the solemn ceremony of its dedication to the goddess of learning is over. But here English is not of the bugbears, which our good fellow citizens think it is their duty to shun. The millions and grandees of the city generally keep their children aloof from it. The numbers of the hierarchy contemplate it with religious horror. And the middle classes content themselves with a little proficiency in the vernacular and some acquaintance with the forms of court business. So little prized is English education in this city that in the three schools alluded to, you will hardly find more than five hundred boys learning English.<sup>27</sup>" The year 1843 was historically very important for the educational developments in the province as, it marked a transfer of the control

of Education from the Committee of Public Instruction to the hands of the provincial Government. The Government, on the basis of its experiences, realized that due to the socio-economic conditions prevailing in the provinces, downward filtration of education could not be successful. Peter Smith highlighting these variations remarked, "certain fundamental realities in the life of the upper gangetic plain posed a barrier to these cultural inroads, which no amount of official action could altogether overcome. Broadly speaking, many of the circumstances favorable to the study of English in the lower provinces simply did not exist in the territory of the north western region."<sup>28</sup> Hence the downward filtration policy was abandoned in the province in 1848-49.

Among these circumstances that discouraged the spread of English education was the fact that except for a handful of the Government functionaries there were relatively very few European residents in North Western Provinces. The cities of the region had a small body of European merchants transacting this business in the English language. No Supreme court administering justice, had been established. Similarly, there was no English bar or attorney. "Most of the European residents were sufficiently acquainted with the vernaculars, to be able to express themselves. Moreover, all the business, except correspondence between English officers was carried on in the vernacular languages."<sup>29</sup>

On the other hand as mentioned earlier there was no interest shown by the local natives as well. Due to absence of an English educated middle class in the provinces, as in Bengal or Bombay, which could be absorbed in English bureaucracy, the new education was unable to take off. The annual reports on the progress of education stated that, "so few of the higher classes, or of the superior native officers in the different branches of administration have as yet seen sufficient prospects of benefit, to induce them to send their children into the Anglo vernacular schools."<sup>30</sup>

While these observations were being noted, the Board of Revenue, on the basis of the minute, recorded annually, came out with an important revenue report, diverting the attention of the Government from the

commercial to the agricultural importance of the region. These highlighted the possibilities of a steady and increased revenue from the agrarian system, if improved. It was in this context that the Government interest in education, especially at the elementary level arose. Proposals were invited to evolve an effective educational system.

### **Thomason's Scheme for Vernacular Elementary Education**

The North Western Provinces as mentioned earlier had a complex land settlement system. The landed property was minutely subdivided and the existing rights in land were of many different kinds. The Government attempted to protect these rights by defining them under a system of complete registration. The efficiency of the system and also the amount of revenue collected depended on the ability of local people to comprehend it, and maintain accurate records in registers. For this purpose skills of reading, writing and simple algebra were essential. Reports indicated that the local people were ignorant about changes that had been made in economic arrangements. In addition existing provisions for education were also inadequate. Further people were poor and at the same time unable to support their school masters if unaided.<sup>31</sup> It was in this context that the scheme known as 'Vernacular scheme for elementary education' evolved in the region. Thomason, the Lieutenant Governor of North Western Provinces had lived in the provinces for a long time. His knowledge of the vernacular brought him into close contact with farming communities like Zamindars, Taluqdars and Bhumihars. He had keen sense of the socio-economic conditions of the region and realized the need for elementary education.

In a letter he says, "It is undoubtedly most desirable that the numerous small land holders, who are responsible to the government for the public revenue should, by possessing the qualifications of reading, writing and arithmetic along with mensuration, be enabled to verify the entries in the village accounts, and to comprehend the extent of their several liabilities. These qualifications are however, at present possessed but by few, and are not likely to become much more extensive as long as on an average, less than 5% of the youths, who are of an age to attend schools, obtain any instruction, and that the instruction,

which they do receive, is of a very imperfect kind.<sup>32</sup> Under his guidance, the new scheme of vernacular education was initially experimented in eight districts. These were Bareilly, Shahjahanpur, Agra, Mathura, Manipuri, Aligarh, Ferukhabad and Etawah.<sup>33</sup>

**The Scheme:** The scheme for elementary vernacular education was implemented as a joint venture of the indigenous elites and the British East India Company. Initially, few model schools were opened in each Tehsil. These 'Tehsildari' schools were fully controlled by the government. They were updated and provided with all essential facilities. Procedures were laid down for all the administrative activities.

The company also encouraged the traditional elites to open vernacular schools in their region by providing certain concessions and privileges in the revenue assessment. The 'Tehsildari' schools acted as model schools for the indigenous educational institutions and local village schools. These were followed regarding the rules and regulations for admission, mode of instruction, content, settlement of records and subsidies. These schools assisted the indigenous schools and the teachers by advising, and giving encouragement for rewarding those schools masters who were found the most deserving.

**Nature of the Schools:** Thomason's scheme of vernacular elementary education, contemplated the setting up of an endowment for a school in every village of a given size. These schools were to follow a vernacular medium of instruction. An effort was made to attain uniformity by making the tehsildari schools the model schools. The scheme was based on the system of inspection and maintaining accountability. The timely visits by the Zillah visitor resulted in regular maintenance of registers and functioning of schools in the proper manner. The visitors were the important figures, as they were responsible for inspections. They advised the instructors and were the most important mediators between the The new scheme was based on the system of invigilation checks and inspections. Government and the school authorities. Often they recommended the names of teachers and scholars for the financial

grants, remuneration and scholarships to the Government. They were assisted by the local instructors, patwaries and qanungoes in bringing about necessary changes in the system.

**Funding of the Scheme of Vernacular Education:** One of the reasons why the British Government felt that the scheme was attractive was that it was relatively economical as compared to the other vernacular schemes, proposed in different provinces.<sup>34</sup> As already maintained the scheme was a joint venture of the aristocratic elite groups and the Government. Together they funded the new educational system. According to the scheme, the Zamindars were to provide a piece of land which amounted to revenue not less than 20 to 40 Rupees per annum. The Government, contributed an equal amount of revenue entitled from that land, and this constituted the endowment provided for the funding of the institutions. This amount, generally appeared small, but for a jagir of a village servant it was more than sufficient. This revenue was subtracted from the income of the region to estimate the total expense on education.

During the year 1850-1855 the number of mauzahs (villages) in the Regulation Provinces were 79,033. Out of these, it appears that an average of several villages (approx. 18,000) contained 100 houses and more. The average jumma (revenue) of land proposed, eliminated from the rent roll, was Rs. 2. It was estimated that if a school was established in every village of the size specified, the revenue of the state would be diminished to amount to 1,80,000 rupees, if the endowment were of the minimum size of 5 acres, and of Rs.3,60,000 if of the maximum size i.e., 10 acres. The number of villages containing not less than 200 houses were about 5,440 and if the government were to give endowments proportionate to size, the maximum contribution of state would be reduced to a sum varying from 54,000 to 1,08,800; or from about 2 annas to 4  $\frac{1}{2}$  annas percent on the whole land revenue. This loss of revenue was to be covered up by an annual increase in the rent roll in a much larger amount than the amount spent on education. Thus, the government could not only recover the revenue spent on education, it could also save its expenses on the administration of schools.

The following is the estimate of the expenses involved in the introduction of Thomason's scheme in the 31 districts which formed the old acquired territories of these provinces:

**TABLE 2**  
**Estimated Expenditure on Thomason's Scheme for Vernacular Education in 31 Districts of North Western Province:**

<i>Expenditure Heads</i>	<i>Expenditure in Rs.</i>
One zillah visitor	150
3 pargunah visitors @ 30	90
6 Tehsildari school masters @ 15	90
	330
Total per annum	3960
Rewards	540
Total for each districts	4500
Total for 31 districts	1,39,500
26 districts schools where there was no college @ 2,400/- annum	62,400
Total in company's rupees.	2,01,300

*Source:* Appendix to the report of the education commission: Report by the North Western Provinces and Oudh provincial committee.

Above the visiting staff an office of supervisor was created. He was responsible for visiting the interior of several districts, communicating with the Zillah and Pargunah visitors. Since decision regarding the changes in the scheme lay with the supervisors he was expected to be a civilian of talent and experience, possessing a good acquaintance with the local land revenue system and having an influence upon the local people to encourage them to join the new schools. A salary of 1000/- per mensum along with travelling allowance at the rate of a annas per mile was fixed for the supervisors. This resulted in an annual expense of around 13,200 rupees. On the basis of these reports the limits of the expenditure proposed came to be around:

For the districts	36,000
For the Visitor General	13,200
Total	49,200

The above scheme was considered economical and effective for the region. J.A. Richer, while describing the scheme maintained that "founded upon the revenue system of the province under Agra Government, (the scheme) was confessedly the most perfect and complete in India. Its object was to work out a scheme of national instruction founded upon the indigenous efforts of the people themselves."<sup>35</sup>

**The Selection and Maintenance of Masters:** The nomination of school masters rested with the Zamindars and principle residents of the mauzah. It was only when the nominated school masters fully understood and was able to explain and give instruction from Ram Suran Das's four elementary books, both in Urdu and Hindi, that he was appointed the school master. The appointment was made with the approval of the collectors. The master was a Government servant and was paid in land revenue than in cash. An endowment in land was also preferred as 'it gave greater respectability of station than a precautionary stipend, much exceeding the rent of the land, and because it connected the schools master with the community in a way which rendered his services more acceptable to them than if he were the paid servant of the government'.<sup>36</sup>

Along with the annual revenue from land he was offered presents, grants, charity and meals by the village communities. If the school charged a tuition fee, it was given to the school master for general expenses on schools. If the teachers were found enthusiastic and hardworking they were given a raise of 5 acres of endowment. But, on finding them inefficient, the visitor could call on Zamindar and other respectable residents, to discharge them and to appoint new qualified people.<sup>37</sup>

**The Students:** Throughout the experiment period, emphasis was to make the scheme popular among all the castes and communities. Still, it was found that relatively few students belonging to superior castes and classes, attended these schools. The number of Hindu students was comparatively more than the Muslim students. Even in the Muslim dominated areas like Aligarh, the statistical figures show a greater number of Hindus attending schools. The girls and the

most discriminated social groups had no access to these schools.

Most of the students who attended schools belonged to average economic groups. One of the disappointments of the English officials was that the Taluqdars continued to have an apathetic response towards the vernacular schools and this discouraged many other farming communities from joining these institutions. The pupils paid a minimum fee to the school masters, but this was exempted for the poor students. The experiment in the eight provinces, however showed a relatively better response towards schools and formal education. It soon became popular among local people and had significant implication for the economic settlement in the region. The scheme was later implemented in the entire North Western Provinces. It was seen to have enhanced the awareness regarding the revenue reforms and to encourage a system of mutual exploitation of the resources.

### **Spread of Education between 1854-1870**

The period between 1854 to 1870 was a landmark in the history of education, in the United Provinces. It can be seen as a period of socio-political stability and progress. Though the mutiny of 1857 resulted in turbulence, the ultimate shift of administrative powers from the hands of the East India Company to the British Crown in 1858 marked the beginning of a new 'Epoch'. Despite the revolt, the Government did not intervene in existing socio-economic institutions. On the contrary the administrative machinery was made more accountable and effective.

Educational institutions were seldom affected. The period witnessed a widespread growth of education in the provinces. The Government scheme on one hand gave impetus to the Anglo vernacular education, on the other hand patronized indigenous institutions. A variety of educational institutions emerged during these two decades. It is surprising to note that despite the general emphasis on the higher education throughout India, the North Western Provinces showed a continuous demand for elementary education. Government policies and indigenous efforts proved significant whereas higher education almost failed to take off in the region.



**Nature of Education:** The developments in the field of education from 1854 were based on the policies of Wood's Despatch. However, the regional variation continued to exist. These variations were carefully observed and efforts were made to ensure colonial interests. Throughout the two decades after Wood's Despatch the educational developments had the following features:

- It was believed that education could play a vital role in socializing and reforming the ignorant North Western society therefore it should be under constant checks and control. The Provincial Government was given the responsibility of its extension and growth, but education was controlled by the state.
- As was usually done earlier indigenous institutions were refashioned to suit the needs of the colonizer keeping in view its suitability in a particular social context. In other words indigenous institutions were utilized, but built upon the traditional system of learning. Thus, the old fallacious policy of downward filtration was abandoned and education for the local people was encouraged. While the new education encouraged English education, as a channel for upward mobility it actively promoted the indigenous institutions as well.
- The most significant features of educational development was scheme of government financial supports other than the revenue endowment for the upliftment of education. This was called the 'Grant in aid'. Generally the grant-in-aid was for the aided institutions but there are sufficient references when the private institutions, including the missionary and the popular schools, were given these grants.
- However, the most important feature of new education was that it was built upon the traditional system of education, thereby resulting in a continuity of the traditional institutions.

By 1870's we find a variety of institutions actively involved in the spread of education. Some of these institutions appeared to be new whereas some of them were revived. But, a deeper observation shows that most of these institutions were built upon the traditional institutions and resulted in a remarkable continuity. In the sphere of elementary education, two new developments were noted. These were the Government Anglo-vernacular Tehsil schools and the Halkabandi Schools. Along with these we find popular technical institution, female educational institutions and private vernacular schools.

**The Tehsil School.** Tehsildari schools, which were initially opened in eight districts were now established throughout the province. From 1854 onwards, we find a regular spread of tehsil schools. Generally only one school was opened in each Tehsil but, later it was found difficult to manage with just one school each. Consequently, not only were a large number of schools opened out, one also finds various branches being opened in different towns and mauzah. The following table shows an increase in the number of schools between 1856 to 1862 highlighting the popularity of the schools.

**TABLE 3**  
**Tehsil schools in the North Western Provinces 1856-1862**

<i>Year</i>	<i>No. of Tehsil schools</i>	<i>% of Increase</i>
1856-57	69	—
1857-58	130	88.4
1858-59	208	37.5
1859-60	213	2.3
1860-61	271	21.4
1861-62	256	5.8
<b>Total</b>		

*Source:* Annual Report on the progress of education in the province of Agra and Oudh 1862

Not only did the number of schools increase but its quality and standard was significantly improved. These schools were divided into the lower, middle

and the higher standards. The following table shows the division of classes of people into, and time taken by the pupils to complete these classes.

**Structure of Tehsil Schools**

<i>Section</i>	<i>Classes Included</i>	<i>Time Occupied</i>
Lower vernacular	VII to V	2 to 3 Years.
Middle vernacular	IV to II	3 Years.
Higher vernacular	Ist to entrance	2 Years.

*Source: Appendix to the report of the education commission: Report by the North Western Provinces and Oudh Provincial committee*

In the lower section the boys learned to read and write the vernaculars moderately well, to work out examples in simple and compound rules in arithmetic, to read and write easy lessons in English, the elements of Urdu grammar and the geography of Asia. This was usually completed in three years, but diligent pupils could get through in two years. In the middle schools, pupil learned to read and translate ordinary English composition fluently to copy well, to write correctly from dictation, and begin English composition. He also used to go through easy English grammar and begin to make use of English as a medium for acquiring a knowledge of history geography, arithmetic, algebra and geometry. Meanwhile, the pupil studied Indian history, geography, arithmetic and geometry in the vernacular together with Persian, grammar and the easier Persian classics.

In higher section the university entrance courses including English literature and grammar, history, geography, arithmetic, algebra and geometry along with languages and Persian literature were taught. Unlike earlier policy there was no forceful attempt made to encourage Anglo-vernacular schools. Rather, it was found expensive where there were relatively few students favouring English education. At many places the Anglo-vernacular schools were transformed into vernacular schools.<sup>38</sup>

An increase in the number of schools resulted in additional responsibilities. A number of additional deputy inspectors were appointed to

look after the accounts and to supervise the staff. In 1864 provisions were made for the establishment of school committees which were to meet every month to discuss the progress of education. The sub-committees supervised the aided schools, undertook the visits and inspections and endeavored to excite general interest in government education. A copy of minutes of a committee held at Pratapbag showed that there appeared to have no European present in these sub committees, and this gave a free working hand to the indigenous representatives.

Initially the tehsil schools showed a rise in the revenue and collection from different heads. There were three main sources of revenue, the annual cess and the voluntary subscription followed by grants and other subsidies from the municipal bodies. The demand for the tehsil schools was so strongly felt that the Government levied a compulsory subscription on relatively all the Taluqedars and Zamindars of Tehsils. Since these elite classes were already voluntarily taking the subscription along with a compulsory annual cess, they refused to shoulder as additional compulsory levy. This had a deterrent affect on the spread of Tehsil schools. During late 60's we find a considerable drop in district fund collections. For instance, in the Province of Oudh, the subscription as well as the rate of cess collection showed considerable fall from Rs. 44,193 in 1867-1868 to 16,157 in 1868.

**TABLE 4**  
**Fall in the funding for Tehsil Schools**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Subscriptions</i>	<i>Cess Collection</i>
1867-68	66701	44,193
1868-69	31289	16,157

*Source:* Annual report on the progress of education in the province of Agra and Oudh 1869-70.

As half of the expenditure was levied from the local and private funds, a sudden refusal of the private groups to take compulsory subscriptions affected the educational activities in a considerable manner. Unlike other provinces as

in Central Provinces and Bombay where the Municipal committees were supporting cause of education by handsome grants (for instance, Central Province municipal committee paid 28,000 annually as grant), these provided only 35 rupees per mensum. Thus, around 1870's we find relative decline in the percentage of increase of tehsil schools.

**The Halkabandi Schools:** During the 1838-39 surveys of the existing indigenous education, in the province of North Western region the officials found only 3516 villages and towns having some formal education whereas 59,434 villages and towns, which constituted the remaining 96% of villages were without any formal education. After a successful vernacular education scheme, during the early 1851 another experiment was carried out with the Halkabandi scheme of education. This was a novel attempt and was initially tried out in the North Western Provinces. Alexander, collector of Mathura the difficulties in reforming indigenous schools resolved to open these new schools. According to the system, the entire North Western Provinces were divided into various Halkas (circuit) of 5 village each, comprising an average area of  $5\frac{1}{2}$  sq. miles (The average villages are being 71,985 divided by 62,950, i.e., the area of the North Western Provinces divided by the number of villages). Each circuit was provided at least one school, accessible to all within the area of  $5\frac{1}{2}$  sq. miles. According to the education memoirs of 1854, around 12,590 schools were proposed, to be established in the entire North Western region. An amount of 8 Lakhs was an estimated expenditure and the scheme was to be funded by the annual revenue, collected from the villages.

During 1860's we find a well established body of Halkabandi schools. Though these schools were based on the vernacular educational scheme of James Thomason they were relatively autonomous in nature as they were largely controlled and managed by the village constituencies. This was more of a collective effort of the villagers who managed together to run these institutions.

The revenue of the halka was found out, and this found the basis of the capacity of the people to pay. The guardians of the boys, however, were not to be taxed. The landlord agreed to contribute towards the expense of the schools. But this contribution was voluntary in nature. The visitor general's report for the year 1862-63 mentioned "Such a system brought the means of education within the reach of all. The payment, being distributed over so great a mass, fell heavily on none. The poor were exempted. The rate of expenditure was to be included in 'Gaon-Kharch' (village expense) was either added to the 'bhayachara', or to the 'Jamabandi' in villages". These schools were most popular in Etah, Manipuri, Shahjahanpur and Mathura districts. In other region it showed relatively little drive. The reports on the spread of these schools indicate that 'the scheme was a tentative measure rather than a mature setup'.<sup>39</sup>

**The Girls Educational Institutions:** The period between 1860-1870 was considerably important as it marked the growth of girls formal education in the province. Prior to 1860 there were relatively negligible number of schools imparting education for girls except the domestic private institutions. The early missionary efforts encouraged girls education but these remained confined to co-education. In around late 1860's for the first time we find a serious Government effort in this direction. Initially few schools were opened in the tehsils. By 1861 there were around 17 schools throughout the province. The private institutions soon followed the government designs of girls education and within a year 4 private schools were established. The government encouraged private efforts in this sphere by giving grant-in-aid facilities to them. A significant number of girls from different castes and communities were given instructions in these institutions.

The following table indicates the total number of girls schools and girl students going to formal schools in 1868. It appears that by 1868 the girls schools were not confined only to the towns and cities. Many district and village level schools had also emerged but a better response was shown towards girls education in city schools.

**TABLE 5**  
**Enrollment of girls in North Western Provinces in 1868**

<i>District/town</i>	<i>School</i>	<i>Pupil</i>	<i>Remark</i>
Lucknow (City)	7	152	
Lucknow (Dist/twon)	5	115	
Faizabad (Dist)	2	55	
SultanPur (Dist)	6	122	
Barabunki	4	39	
Raibarellie	1	-	no returns receive school closed
Sitapur	2	43	
Hardoi	6	123	one school closed during the year.
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>649</b>	

**Source:** Annual report on the progress of education in the North Western Provinces, 1868.

5 out of the 7 Lucknow city schools were attended by the Muslim girls. They were taught geography, Indian history, Urdu grammar, mathematic (algebra). They were taught by muhammadan women. There are references of shudra girls also attending these schools. The attendance of other castes like Thakurs, Brahmins, etc. were relatively poorer. The Hindu girl schools were relatively less satisfactory as compared to the Muslim schools. Still the girls education was favoured by the government. For instance, in 1867 the Government of India sanctioned Rs. 380/- per mensum for female always in Oudh.

**The Private and Indigenous Schools:** The period between 1854 to 1870 where on one hand witnessed a steady growth of government education on the other hand marked a continuation of the indigenous institutions. Most popular among these were the indigenous village schools. Due to the government vernacular elementary education scheme, these schools received significant impetus. These were reformed on the line of the model tehsil

schools. The system of accountability was important for the rise of the village institutions. The new Zamindars,<sup>40</sup> in order to attain concessions on the revenue from the government, opened many schools. These schools were generally maintained on the land revenue grants, given to the school masters. Similarly, the local patronizer enhanced the cause of indigenous education, Due to these efforts, with in a short while the stagnating indigenous village institutions re-emerged and flourished throughout the North Western Provinces

Private institutions were also widespread. These efforts were made in the urban areas, towns and districts. Although the figurers show many gaps but it appears that these private institutions were other than the Domestic private institutions, which were widespread in the rural areas. The following figures give a general idea of the rate at which these private institutions increased between 1867-1872 in the province of Oudh.

TABLE 6  
Private schools in Oudh 1867-1872.

Year	No of Private Schools Under Govt. Inspection		Grant-in-aid
	Aided	Unaided	
1867-68	73	—	47816
1868-69	72	—	52286
1870-71	81	507	53307
1871-72	75	568	52055

Source: Annual report on the progress of education in the Provinces of Oudh, 1872.

It is surprising to note that as against 81 private aided institutions in 1870-71, there were 507 unaided indigenous private institutes which increased to 568 in 1871-72. These did not enjoy any government subsidy or grant-in-aid facility. A general idea of all the elementary educational institutions during the period can be held from the following figures, based on the annual report of the progress of education in the North Western Provinces.



**TABLE 6**  
**Growth of the Elementary Schools in North Western Provinces 1856-1882.**

<i>Institutions</i>	<i>Year</i>					
	1856-57	1857-58	1858-59	1859-60	1860-61	1861-62
Tehsil Schools (Govt.)	69	130	208	213	271	256
Halkabandi Schools (Govt)	984	989	2074	2661	3086	1121 (Lower)
Vernacular Schools (Private)	6418	5069	8363	9520	-	-
Indigenous schools	3274	3950	6084	6646	4279	6155
Anglo-Vernacular Schools (Lower)	-	-	-	-	18	2
Missionary schools	-	-	-	-	26	22
girls schools	-	-	-	-	17	21
Popular/Normal Training schools	-	-	-	-	4	4

*Sources:* Annual report on the progress of education in the North Western Provinces 1856-1862.

The above figures indicate towards three major developments. The Tehsil schools being locally governed and maintained by the government, flourished during the fifties but from the early sixties we find a decline in their number. The government halkabandi schools, being looked after by the village council increased till 1860-61 after which only the lower schools could flourish. The missionary and Anglo-vernacular English schools more or less died down.

On the contrary we find a tremendous rise in the vernacular and indigenous schools. The vernacular schools were the private aided and unaided institutions which were established on the model of the tehsil schools in different regions of the provinces, whereas the indigenous institutes were the traditional vernacular elementary institutions patronized by the local people.

The period between 1860-1870 witnessed a significant change in the Government attitude towards education. With the despatch of 1859, the Government abolished the policy of grant-in-aid for elementary schools. Consequently the Government's earlier promise to share the burden of village

schools equally with Zamindars was also abandoned. According to the "Saharanpur settlement in directions", it was prescribed that the Government demand was to be limited to 50 per cent of the net assets of the land, and that the cess was to be deducted before the determination of the demand and thus it fell equally upon the landowners and the state. In theory the contribution was voluntary. Since its theoretical nature made its realization in secure it was ruled by Edmonstone, the Lieutenant Governor, that "the education cess could not be realized compulsorily from the defaulters."<sup>41</sup> However, on the basis of the despatch of 1859, in 1866, the Government declared that its demand was 55 per cent of the net profits on lands assessed at the latest settlement including the cess. But no safeguard was made in this consolidated higher demand for the claim of the Zamindar to control the proceeds of his share of the cess, which he paid in addition to the original Government demand on land alone. The payment came as directly from his pocket as before. The only change that took place was that whereas formerly the Government was bound to contribute an equal amount, now the fund might consist wholly of the Zamindars' contribution. The voluntary contribution had now attained the status of a tax.<sup>42</sup>

Another aspect of the question was the changed point of view of the subject. So far as the agricultural population was concerned it ceased to be a local cess paid by the Zamindar, and began to look upon the expenditure on the village schools as a grant paid by the Government. And thus, "Zamindar could not sustain a claim to a control of such funds." Further it lost its local aspects. So far it could be used for the local schools only, but henceforward it was imposed for the encouragement of higher education. This aroused local discontent and the Zamindars refused to shoulder this extra burden.<sup>43</sup>

However, the Zamindars agreed to pay half per cent of revenue in a mutual understanding in 1866, but demanded the control on the funds. In the memorial they complained that while they paid the cess for expenses of education, "it is obviously a hardship that they should not be allowed to take any part in the management of the system, or exercise any control over the disbursement of funds. It very mortifying to them to find that they are not consulted on any

points connected therewith, and that, notwithstanding their having to provide the funds, they know nothing as to the manner and purposes in which these funds are expended.<sup>44</sup> As a result of these developments the most significant support to the Government educational policies—the contribution of the local aristocracy ceased. On the contrary they paid much attention towards indigenous traditional institutions and revived many old schools.

It follows from these development that the Zamindars were fairly enlightened and knew their rights and privileges and hailed "a movement among the landed gentry towards a more active exercise of influence which belonged to them."

## Conclusion

The development of education cannot strictly be periodized. It evolved over many decades. The period selected for analysis, 1850-1870 only highlights a process of continuity and change varying from region to region. The North Western Provinces, emerged as an important politico-economic region under the Mughals, however, due to constant war-fare, external interference and British colonial policies the region lost its glory. Initially the North Western Provinces were not crucial to British interests as there was neither sea born trade nor mineral resources. It was later that the province could become an important revenue yielding region. The colonial administrators tended to build upon the traditional institutions rather than make drastic changes and this could be seen in the context of education. The New education (English education) proved to be a failure in the region. However, a deeper understanding of the nature and the extent of the indigenous education system by the colonizer changed their attitude towards these institutions. It was realized that a little accountability and systemization could very well serve the British interests, as a result emphasis was made on the traditional educational system.

In doing so however, the Government ceased to allow an autonomous spread of schools. The Despatch of 1854 and 1859 reconformed the Government control on education. With the result of the changes suggested by the Despatch

of 1859, Government scrutinized a policy of education where the entire burden for indigenous and Government education was put on the Zamindars and local aristocrats. In other words Government withdrew all the official efforts to enhance local education and concentrated on higher education. A gradual awareness among these classes made them suspicious of Government policies. On the contrary they enhanced the traditional institutions as a protest against the colonial designs. These developments acted as an important basis for the forthcoming movements in the region giving rise to anti-British sentiments.

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## Social Context, Reform Movements and Indigenous Education 1870-1880

The spread of education towards the end of the third quarter of the 19th century was significantly affected by the changing economic and political situations in the country. These changes brought about shifts in colonial policies particularly those relating to education. The revolt of 1857 (seen as the first war of independence) symbolized the discontent that was gradually simmering in India. The continued neglect of industrial potential in the country, unemployment of the educated, the biased agrarian land settlement policies and the growing poverty of the peasantry and artisan castes created considerable social turbulence. The rise of social movements channelized discontent giving way to peasants' armed uprisings, founding of associations and private organizations and the emergence of nationalistic sentiments.

In the sphere of education though the Wood's Despatch of 1854 emphasized elementary education, in practice this was neglected. In 1859 itself, in an Education Despatch<sup>1</sup> (probably following from the events of 1857) the provision of grant-in-aid for the elementary educational institutions was ruled out. "A general plan of popular education", it was insisted, "had not been the purpose of the home authorities in originally sanctioning the grant-in-aid in principle. On the contrary the specific institutions they had in view were those for promoting education of a higher order."<sup>2</sup>

The deteriorating economic situation led to lightening of hold on financial resources and financial administration was centralized. Funds for education were curtailed. Regular deficit due to excessive expenditure and shortage in supply of adequate amount of revenue resulted in Government cutting down on

departments including education. Lord Mayo introduced a scheme of decentralization and transferred the above departments to Provincial Governments, who were asked to meet all expenditure of these departments from three sources viz. The receipt from these departments, central grants and, more taxation of a specified nature.<sup>3</sup>

Throughout seventies thus, a deliberate effort was made by Government to shift the emphasis from education and public works to the economic activities. The Government could not provide adequate resources to the provincial departments to arrange for educational activities. 'Mass education' declined in the Government priority list and emphasis was laid on the promotion of higher education. A growing number of universities were established. Many higher schools and colleges were opened but a similar attention was not given to the vernacular elementary schools.

Given the larger context of growing social discontent as well as the colonial Government's distinct disinterest in elementary education this chapter analysis specific developments in education in the North Western Provinces. An attempt will also be made to explore alternatives in education that emerged from among the people themselves in the light of growing nationalist sentiments.

## **British Colonialism in the North Western Provinces—Changes in Economic and Social Structure**

Colonialism, though an all-India phenomena was considerably influenced by the local conditions and developments. The colonial policies were transformed and transmitted keeping in view specific local contexts. The North Western region experienced relatively distinct colonial policies.

The reforms in the agrarian land settlement and revenue assessment initiated during 1830's-40's were implemented throughout the North Western Provinces. This brought about changes in the social structure, particularly in the composition of elites. A class of 'middlemen' who assisted the British revenue officials in the assessment and collection of revenue was encouraged by providing proprietary titles.<sup>4</sup> These middleman who came from different social

groups as compared to the traditional landlords became significantly effective and powerful. Big holdings were broken into small estates. The proprietary titles were sold to the highest bidders. The 'New Zamindars' were encouraged to participate in surplus production. The traditional agrarian techniques were replaced by commercial agriculture. New social groups emerged from lower classes in the social hierarchy. The rise of new elites and new Zamindars posed significant challenges to the traditional Zamindars. The attitudes of the former towards the English policies were more favourable than the traditional elites and the new aristocratic classes. The feudal chieftains and traditional aristocrats saw this as a direct attack on their social prestige and a threat against their traditional position.<sup>5</sup>

The growing antagonism between the traditional feudal elites and new aristocracy resulted in many controversies. However, the most significant development was a revival of anti-British sentiments among the traditional groups. These sentiments were further enhanced by British revenue policies and the increased burden on Zamindars and taluqdars.<sup>6</sup> The local peasantry was drastically affected by these new arrangements. They could no longer enjoy the patronage of the Zamindars. The profit oriented investment in land resulted in the exploitation of peasants, excessive revenue collection and disintegration of local agriculture.<sup>7</sup> There was considerable migrations from rural to urban areas. These were followed by desertion and abandonment of cultivable land by the oppressed farmers. The lack of trade, commerce and bureaucracy deprived the region from modern scientific innovations. All these developments prepared a ground for anti-British movements. However, these developments were not widespread. These were confined to few territories of the region. In most of the areas the traditional system continued.

### **Educational Developments in the North Western Provinces— 1870-1880**

As mentioned earlier the period between 1854 to 1870 marked the growth of institutions of elementary education—the vernacular schools, the taluka schools, the halkabandi schools, the normal schools, the jail and girls schools



emerged all over the province. However, the significant increase in institutions between 1850-1860 slowed down during the next decade. By 1870, we notice a new trend in the government policies towards education. During 1870's the government emphasis shifted from the elementary and mass education to a more selective and higher education. Government efforts were withdrawn from the sphere of elementary education and all the funds collected for elementary education were utilized for the higher education.<sup>8</sup>

What were the factors responsible for a sudden change in Government policies during 1870's? What was the impact of these changes on the growth of education?

Lack of resources was projected as the major reason for withdrawing government attention from elementary schooling.<sup>9</sup> The Government claimed to be faced with serious financial constrains. The mutiny had its significant impact on the North Western Provinces. It took a significant toll of money to suppress the outbreak of 1857. After the mutiny was suppressed and position was brought under control, the provincial government was left with little economic resources.<sup>10</sup> The general attitude and limited support of the traditional elite groups, Zamindars and Taluqdars, over the years that followed, worsened the situation. The government failed to meet the demands of existing educational institutions. The situation deteriorated with the decline of local support in the form of subscriptions and annual cess for the upliftment of elementary education.<sup>11</sup> "Educational expenses created anxiety to the government. A desire for remissions in this regard was expressed in two ways: Withdrawal of state aid from high English education and the invitation to private agency, to public funds and to patronize public instruction of education. Resolution number 2296, of the government of India in the financial department, dated Fort William, 31st March, 1870, proposed a reversal of the educational policy enunciated earlier.<sup>12,</sup> It was declared to be impossible, even if desirable, that the state should bear the whole expenses of education in so densely populated a country as India.<sup>13</sup>

Elementary educational institutions during 1870 were put under the

Provincial Municipalities, consisting of many native members. These municipalities were relatively new organizations and had no prior experience in the educational sphere. The elementary education could hardly develop within the municipal system.

The period following the 1857 rebellion was of immense historical importance. The company rule was abandoned in 1858 and all administrative powers were vested in the hands of British Crown. The Central Government, governed by the Viceroy and his cabinet was given all the direct powers regarding collection and allocation of revenue, power to levy new arrears, administration and control of socio-political institutions etc. The Provincial Governments were made dependent on the Central Government. Since there was a single budget for the country, the provincial organizations either developed indigenous systems or were always in conflict with the Center.<sup>14</sup>

The revolt of 1857 indicated that the English educated Indians remained aloof from the revolt. They condemned and criticized the uprisings. This gave new hopes to the Government. Instead of the previous policy of mass education, the Government decided to provide education to selective groups. The policies and objectives of 1854 Despatch were revised by the 1859 Despatch and the higher education was once again made the top priority. As the North Western Provinces was relatively the most backward, in higher education, a widespread effort was made to open new colleges, high schools and institutions in the region. The question of starting a separate university for the provinces was raised in 1869 and Sir William Muir, the Lieutenant Governor, opened the Central College in a hired building in Allahabad in 1872. The foundation of Muir Central College was laid by Lord Northbrook a year later, and the college was opened by lord Dufferin in 1886.<sup>15</sup> In 1864 the Lucknow Canning College was established by the Taluqdars of Oudh for commemorating the services of Lord Canning to India. The Mohammedan Anglo Oriental College, Aligarh was founded in 1875 by special efforts of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan for spreading English collegiate education in the Muslim community.

As a result of these developments the elementary education was significantly affected. Educational reports indicate a decline and abandonment of many vernacular schools. The new municipal schools were deliberately neglected by the government. "The Municipal schools of Jalesar and Saron, numbering 17 and 23 scholars respectively, are taught in very poor fashion by teachers of the very poor qualifications, and are infact mere pretence of schools. The municipalities will not give up the schools however, and continue to pay the teachers Rs. 20 a month each, inspite of ineffective character of their work.<sup>16</sup>" Some of the schools were either shut down by the government or every care was taken to reduce the standards of its educational instructions. In Etawah, for instance, a survey report stated that, "the committee of this district abolished eight halkabandi schools shortly after the beginning of the year, and the numbers of primary vernacular schools for boys is now 109 with 3,232 scholars against 117 school with 3,387 scholars last year.<sup>17</sup>" Similarly in Mainpuri 'seven halkabandi schools were closed during the year by order of the Education Committee. The inspection report of Farukhabad revealed a remarkable decline of final enrollment in government schools'. The following table shows a decrease in the total number of government and aided schools in six districts of the province on the eve of the Hunter Commission.

**TABLE 1**  
**Enrollment in Government Schools 1880-82**

DISTRICTS	1881-82		1880-81	
	No. of schools	No. of students on roll	No. of schools	No. of students on roll
Bijnaur	106	3,501	106	3,464
Moradabad	121	3,629	122	3,715
Badaun	109	3,291	109	3,783
Barelie	115	3,895	115	3,896
Shahjanpur	109	3245	111	3,276
Pilibhit	54	1,986	45	1,795
<b>Total</b>	<b>614</b>	<b>19,529</b>	<b>609</b>	<b>19,925</b>

*Sources:* Reports of Indian Education Commission, 1882, Calcutta 1883.

## Traditional Elites and the Growth of Private Education

The Zamindars and aristocratic classes comprised major groups which came in direct contact of the Britishers. Unlike other provinces, the traditional land settlement system in the North Western Provinces was only partially affected by the Britishers. The system was well maintained and suited local conditions. The quasi-feudal economic system vested many privileges and power in the hands of the local aristocracy, like Zamindars, Chieftains, Landlords etc. The princely groups and local Rajas counted heavily on these classes and these emerged as a significant mediators between the rulers and the ruled. British interest in the agrarian revenue brought them face to face with this class. To attain their favours and support the Britishers followed a benevolent policy but the traditional aristocratic groups showed their unwillingness to co-operate. A continuous refusal to accept British socio-economic policies clearly reflected this unwillingness. On the other hand the British experiment with the new-aristocracy<sup>18</sup> proved significantly effective. The growth of New Zamindars, landlords and middlemen from among the local peasantry, trading and commercial classes acquired considerable significance in the Indian as well as the British bureaucracy.

Along with a deliberate policy of neglect and lack of adequate resources, the Government educational institutions were affected by attitudes of local aristocrats, Zamindars, taluqdars and chieftains. Most of the aided and unaided educational institutions were funded by annual subscription, charity grants and land grants, given by the local patronizers. Still, the number of pupils belonging to these families coming to government schools remained negligible. As late as 1860's these were attended by pupils belonging to inferior socio-economic groups. "The schools and colleges were filled with pupils drawn from the lower ranks in society, from the hangers-on of the government offices, from the inferior shopkeepers, or from sojourning Bengalis."<sup>19</sup>

During 1860 and 1870 a number of private schools were established in the provinces. These were patronized by the local aristocratic and elite groups. Many of these were opened by native individuals who were voluntarily involved in

education apart from their other occupations. Most of these schools were established, to preserve the traditional languages, values and ideas. With the growing pressure to support and aid the Government education scheme, in the province, the private institutions had suffered. To receive Government favour the new elites and zamindars, supported the cause of education by contributing to annual subscriptions funding the Government programmes and policies. Initially this was voluntary. With the growing economic expenses, the Government not only made the subscriptions compulsory, it also forced an additional annual cess upon the taluqdars and zamindars to retain their involvement in the government educational scheme. "In the despatch no.4, dated 8th April 1861, it was strongly insisted upon that the wealthier classes should contribute to the cost of their education so to make the government schools more self supporting than before."<sup>20</sup> "The views were repeated in the despatch no.13 dated 25th April, 1864. With growing economic depression, disintegrating economy, lack of peasant support, increase in revenue assessment, these policies spread discontentment among aristocratic groups. They refused either to contribute any subscription or pay annual cess. On the contrary, they patronized private institutions. New schools were opened to retain the local support. A novel attempt was made to renovate the already existing but stagnating institutions. The indigenous schools, many of which had disintegrated, were reformed and transformed into private institutions.

The schools had a significant impact on the changing social conditions on one hand and the British educational policies on the other. The private institutions, built upon the traditional system of education, and revitalized interest in tradition and culture. The slow but clearly developing anti-British sentiments received a boost. The emphasis on vernacular and local languages gave it a more 'nationalistic character'. With the growing Government emphasis on higher education, the private elementary schools mushroomed throughout the provinces in this period.

The impact on the Government elementary schools was profound. Many municipal Government schools even followed the private institutions. For

instance, the inspector's report on English municipal primary schools in Meerut division indicated that 'these hitherto taught only a smattering of English, but as in examining such schools now, English is regarded as the second language, and the pupils are examined in the vernacular chiefly'. "The schools are awakening to the necessity of grounding their pupils in the vernacular first. As local effort is developed they must rise to be middle schools, but they are primary yet, and on passing these pupils should induce them to join higher schools."<sup>21</sup>

The private organization totally withdrew their support from the official educational efforts. As a result many aided schools were forced to be reconverted into the Government schools. "The cantonment schools in Agra could hardly be called an aided school as, such private support as it once had died out. It is really a Government schools, since the whole of income with the exception of some Rs. 32 a month, paid as fees by a few of the scholars, is drawn from the provincial funds."<sup>22</sup> However, the condition of government elementary schools deteriorated to such an extent that the government gave up all the efforts to preserve them. The private schools emerged as a strong competitors to government schools. It is clearly highlighted by the schools in Kashganj. "The schools of Kashganj is the best taught of all these unaided schools", marked the annual reports. "It is held in the building of tehsil school, and most of its pupils learned everything else but English."<sup>23</sup>

The Government policies thus underwent significant change towards the last quarter of 19th century. The initial enthusiasm and importance shown towards the spread of mass education among the local population waned. Though the economic depression and the financial crises were projected as the most significant causes behind such changes the adequate supply of revenue from relatively all the provinces dismisses the theory. Many local Zamindars and eminent leaders demanded the grand-in-aid facility for the growth of education. They refuted the idea that the Government had no funds. In the province of Bengal and Bihar it was clearly indicated that the Government deliberately discouraged education. Babu Keshab Lal Ghosh, honorary secy. of the 'Chuprah Association' in Sarun submitted of a figure

of population, land and other revenues and the educational expenses in the district of Sarun. He stated: The number of inhabitants of Sarun amounts to 12,35,385 and its land—

<i>Nature of Revenue</i>	<i>Revenue in Rs.</i>
Revenue alone is	12,51,427-0
The Abkary Revenue is	1,56,793-0
The Stamp Duties is	1,71,929-0
The Income Tax is	60,989-0
and the Post Office Receipts	13,600-0
and Miscellaneous Revenue is	261-0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16,54,999-0</b>

“Taking into consideration all kinds of revenues, the total revenue per head is Rs.1-4-2. If their kind and benevolent Government be pleased to give even 6 pies to each ryot out of the aforesaid revenue for thier education, the sum obtain thereby will be Rs. 38,605-12-6. If this amount be paid by Government out of the revenue for the education of the subject of Sarun, and the contribution of the Zamindars, Mahajans, and the well-wishers of the country, together with fees, be added thereto, it will make a sum, viz., Rs. 50,000 which , if devoted to this purpose here, no one will remain ignorant.<sup>24</sup>”

It thus appears that the Government was not interested in any long-term social development in the country. Particularly in the north western region where there was relatively little to hold the interest of the British imperialists.

### **Social Reform Movements and the Rise of Alternative Education**

The North Western Provinces were significantly influenced by movements which were widespread in Bengal, Bihar, Maharashtra, Madras and other territories of India in the late 19th century. As quoted by Mukharjee, “By the 19th century, started emerging indigenous movements which had clear nationalistic tendencies in as much as they were inspired by the glory and greatness of ancient culture of India and strived to rehabilitate it in the socio-religious life of the country. These movements were destined to play a

vital role in the field of national life.<sup>25</sup> Inspired by the developments in West, many social scientists have called this a period of 'Indian renaissance'. They see a significant role played by education in bringing about this renaissance. However, the role played by Western and indigenous Indian education in this context is controversial. The developments during 1870's cannot be seen in isolation from the political, economic and social policies of British Raj in the provinces. But at the same time it is also important to understand the way indigenous society conceived these policies. The administrative 'switch over' from an active participation in the political affairs of the region to a silent spectatorship came as a shock to a small group of the established middle class and those educated in English stream in a hope of a dynamic future. They could clearly see the purely imperialistic interest of the Britishers. Neglect of education and discrimination as in employments made the newly educated class hostile to the Government policies. 'Real advancement of learning was not aimed at, standardization of curriculum of study was neglected, zeal for research work was not much in evidence at the higher level, where as elementary education presented a chaotic picture. A general failure to attain important and influential position in British bureaucracy despite educational qualification and demonstration of loyalty turned these groups toward the growing socio-religious reform movements.

Education became the most significant feature of all these movements. The new patrons particularly the English educated people, emphasized on the content of education. It was revised and the need <sup>was felt</sup> to modify it in order to reflect native culture, language, literature and history of the people concerned. The tone of curricular was given a liberal tinge, emphasizing the need of individual rather than to the demands of state exclusively. It was well known that 'historical records were distorted so as to put a highly favourable aspect on the victories and defects of the child's own country'.<sup>26</sup>

The new intelligentsia also gave adequate attention to the spread of elementary and higher education, giving equal emphasis to the knowledge of English language as well. They considered it a tonic that would restore the path



and spring for the rejuvenation of the nation.' English literature, science and thought was presented as significant means to reform the society. Though less antagonistic to English education, they remained bitter against English colonial institutions, policies and administration. Modern ideas were transformed to local population through the technical institutions promoting 'swadeshi' products. The 'Khadi-Abhiyan' is one of the prominent movements in the region where the inflow of imported Cotton in India was rejected and a protest movement was started in the form of 'Khadi-Abhiyan' to encourage the indigenous textile products and local handicrafts.

The new ideology was popularized through local schools by reaffirming indigenous values and inculcating national ideas among people.

The growth of woman's education is one of the most significant feature of educational development during 1880's. Men like Ishwar Chandra Vidya Sagar became the champion of girls' education and worked to open individual girls' educational institutions. As quoted by Bipan Chandra, "As early as 1857, a number of girls schools were established in the districts of Agra, Mathura and Manipuri in U.P. owing to special efforts of some enthusiastic educational inspectors. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar working as an Inspector of schools, established over 40 girls' schools.<sup>27</sup>" The period between 1858 to 1880 marked the growth of many primary and middle girls schools. The reformists emphasis further enhanced girls' education in the region. But most of these development were confined to urban areas. The Provinces also responded positively to major socio-religious reform movements. The Aryasamaj Movement became popular among the provinces of Punjab and the North West. The Movement expressed its protest against the British colonial policies, on the other hand stood against the blindfold stress upon westernization by the local movements. The founder Swami Dyanand propagated the Vedic philosophy and demanded socio-religious reforms on the Vedic lines.

Unlike the Brahmosamj, Dayananda was a champion of national education. The preblem of Arya Samaj Schools clearly stated that 'It will be conceded

by all right-thinking persons, that to secure the best advantage in education, it is necessary to make it national in tone and character. In fact, the system of education should be so devised as to strengthen the ties which naturally bind individuals into a common nationality.<sup>28</sup>

The Dayanand Anglo Vedic movement (D.A.V.) upheld the disintegrating traditional history, languages, and geography at a time when the British colonialists were denying their legitimacy. It most and diffused a mass oriented education movement. There is not much information regarding spread of educational institutions encouraged by the Arya Samaj but, under Lala Hans Raj and Swami Shradhanand there was a significant progress made in the educational sphere. The stress was given on the moral upliftment and on overall educational development. There was an equal emphasis made to encourage western literature, science and ideas. These were significantly used to enhance a rationalistic approach towards the traditional education system. The growth of public educational institutions under Lala Hans Raj clearly highlights the positive attitude towards English thought. The efforts of Swami Shradhanand on the contrary were confined to a traditional educational system, who established 'Gurukula' system of education in Haridwar.

Emphasis was on the growth of elementary education based on the cultural and traditional aspects. The impact of movement was significantly noted throughout the provinces. It attained the support of traditional intellectuals and aristocratic classes on one hand and the modern reformists on the other. Due to a relatively traditional approach, the philosophy became popular among all the groups. "The movement tried to infuse new hopes and confidence among people of the country not only among the educated sections but among the masses. The movement, in fact, ventilated clearly, for the first time, the nationalization spirit of India and acted as a precursor of India's regeneration in the years to come"<sup>29</sup> However, due to its religious character, it could do little for the religious groups other than Hindus.

Though Muslims constituted a minority in the country, they were in a

significant number in the North Western Provinces. The general condition of the Muslims was socially as well as educationally relatively backward. The spread of Muslim reform movements was a later development. The attitude of Muslims towards English education and reforms was hostile. The most dynamic and rational development to uplift the cause of Muslim reform was carried out by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. Where on one hand he was influenced by the modern western ideas, on the other hand he had an immense knowledge on Islamic laws and regulations. His reinterpretations of Quran emphasized on the rationality of thought. He maintained that 'until the development of independent and rational ideas, a civilized life could not be attained'. Muslim education attained significant patronage and support under Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. The emphasis was on Western ideas and thoughts, and the establishment of many schools and colleges imparting English education throughout the North Western Provinces. The establishment of Anglo Muhammadan College in Aligarh, in 1875, against British policies to withdraw all support from education proved significant. Later, it not only emerged as a university, but made significant contribution in the Indian struggle for independence providing many eminent political leaders.

These movements were followed by various local movements at different region in the province. Inspired by the social changes and reforms, these were significantly popularized by educational institutions. As a result there emerged innumerable schools of different character, by different castes, communities and local groups, giving rise to a widespread growth of education, elementary in nature. Another important development particularly in the North Western Provinces during this period of socio-religious reform movements was a strong vernacular basis attained due to the spread of vernacular schools. The development of 'Hindi and Urdu played the most crucial role. The writers, preachers, reformers, and the growing modern intelligentsia made significant use of the vernacular basis and highlighted the feudal grievances, backwardness and exploitation on one hand, and colonial highhandedness on the other. The growth of Indian press speeded the social changes.

## Conclusion

The social reform movements, the anti-British sentiments and the growth of parallel institutions in different territories exhibited a general anxiety of people towards English policies. Despite the widespread criticism, it was too late for the Government to curb these sentiments by policy reforms and changes. Due to the deep involvement in the international affairs at various fronts, it diverted the local attentions and came out with the temporal changes in the education commission called in 1882, known as the Hunter Commission. In response to the developments, the British Government in its recommendations to the Hunter Commission verified that "the elementary education be regarded as the instruction of the masses through the vernacular, in such subjects as will fit them for their position in life and be not necessarily regarded as a portion of instructions leading up to the University." Thus, our above observation indicates towards a transformation, which was clearly visible in the administrative, socio-economic and ideological sphere. The changes were mostly on the nationalistic lines and offered a platform on which the future movements were based.

The developments in the North Western Provinces were relatively different as unlike other provinces there could not develop a close interaction with the English institutions. On the contrary, there was noted a continuation of traditional values and customs. During late 19th century, with the growing colonial exploitative pressures people looked back to their traditional culture for emancipation giving way to 'early nationalistic sentiments. Traditional indigenous education played a significant role in shaping the movement.

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## **Conclusion**

### *Trends in the Education in the North Western Provinces*

The spread of colonialism in Asia and Africa lasted for near about two decades. Throughout the colonial countries one find a widespread network of colonial education showing that education was used to diffuse the colonial ideals. While a considerable effort was expended for the growth of colonial educational institutions, we also find in many regions the uninterrupted continuation of various indigenous educational trends. The nature of these trends, the extent of their growth and their impact on society further indicate complex relationship between society and social institutions.

Apart from educational institutions and social structure what needs analysis are the agencies that act as the mediator between society and social institutions. These agencies can be as large as Government or State and as widespread as popular social and religious organisations and movements. At times these act together where a in some social contexts one dominates the other.

The present study focuses attention on the North Western Provinces of India. Though the period between 1850-1880, is a very narrow one for the analysis of as complex a subject as developments in education, the study highlights certain trends that were taking shape.

### **Indigenous Education in the North Western Provinces**

Institutional learning since antiquity has been one of the significant social institutions in India. It was of two kinds, religious and secular learning. Despite changes at the wider level we find a continuation of its fundamental character derived from tradition and nurtured by the socio-cultural context in which these

functioned. However the socio-political and economic developments significantly influenced the nature of its growth.

The period between 1850-1880 witnessed a flood of educational institutions in the North Western Provinces. Most popular among these were Indigenous education, Vernacular education and English education. Broadly these can be categorized into two—Traditional (Indigenous) Education and European (English) Education.

Prior to the development and spread of English education, Indigenous system of education was the dominant feature of the society. This indigenous system had a significant relationship within the social and economic structure. On one hand it trained a select group in society to take up jobs in the administration and in position of authority. On the other hand it catered to larger social groups, they were leading to a parallel development from below and above. The education system which developed from below, being secular was more popular and widespread. In course of time it ceased to be an institution alone and reflected a wider ideology of people

The attitude towards indigenous education was significantly different when compared with colonial education. It was seen to be integrally a part of every day life in Indian society. Apart from being widespread and traditional in nature it was not age based and catered to various social and economic groups. For instance, there were 'Pandit's School', and 'Mahajani Pathshala', in which Indian book-keeping, arithmetic and mahajani (banker's) script were taught. These schools were situated in the 'Mahajani tola' in the heart of city." State played a significant role of protecting the rights of its people by carefully watching each and every situation but it was the people who had the final verdict. These people rising in the form of nobility, bureaucracy, peasantry, etc. together formed a secular group. Many schools for the Muslims were attended by the Brahmins as well and kshatriyas. These schools were relatively loose-knit and flexible, and were able to adjust to the socio-economic circumstances. Many schools, as we have already seen had no school buildings and other resources needed to run

them. Some of the schools were seasonal. During the harvesting season, or in the monsoon etc, these schools remained closed. But in favorable conditions these mushroomed. Chaturvedi maintains that village elementary schools, "suffered not only in efficiency, but their very existence was precarious. There was no continuity. Every year the schools were formed anew. Many of these elementary schools were of an ephemeral character."

Education imparted in these schools was elementary but of a very practical nature. It was related to the economic and professional needs of the society. "The object of these schools was to qualify scholars to transact the ordinary business of every day life." Agriculture, for instance, was the common profession of all, Hindus, Muslims, Kshatriyas and even Vaishyas'. The schools gave them the knowledge about cultivation, land measurement, revenue organization, tenure settlement etc. Book keeping and accounting were among the common subjects taught at all levels. Unlike English schools, indigenous elementary institutions emphasised oral learning. Its economical and productive nature made it popular among many socio-economic groups.

Language to a great extent influenced the nature of education and the vernacular medium of instruction for the added to the secular nature of education. The instruction in the vernaculars directly linked education with the social contexts in which these operated. These schools took examples from day to day social, and economic lives of people bringing the people close to their culture and tradition. The ideas gained or learnt in these schools were easily absorbed by the social groups protecting them from stagnation.

One of the significant reason for the widespread growth of indigenous secular education was the control of education by the indigenous social groups—the village communities. One of its unique feature was that it was based on the system of patronage. Patronage was not of financial nature all the time. Sometimes the voluntary services of teachers, the mutual co-operation of people, the community help in providing place, resources etc. for the school, etc. was part of the patronage given to education. The objective behind the patronage



was seldom the attainment of social prestige or social mobility. It was seen as a mutual responsibility. Patronage did not imply social interference in the education pattern. The educationist was free and independent to teach the scholars, according to the general trends.

### **English Education in the North Western Provinces**

The rise of English education in India was a result of carefully implemented colonial policies of the Britishers. Education was considered one of the most significant and sensitive media to influence the masses. Education which developed under the colonial rule had certain specific ends to meet. One of the early objectives of the colonial education was to gain the favour of Indian aristocracy and secure their commercial interests. Gradually, with the changing trends of British rule, the nature and objectives of education also changed. By the 18th-19th centuries English education emerged as one of the significant Catalyst of societal change.

'A change' indeed it was but how far it was a change in the favour of Indian society and culture is a topic of controversy. English education in India as in any other Asian, African, colonial country was devised. Keeping in view the wider colonial interests. It seldom reflected the best of western culture, ideologies and values. It was more of a training given through English schools to legitimize the rule of the colonizer and to serve the British Empire. 'It alienated the Indians from their culture, values and heritage'. Later, this alienation was structured to such an extent that the Indians themselves favoured it. A blind acceptance of westernization clearly reflects this change.

The provinces where the Britishers were most successful in attaining these ends were the economically and politically most important regions. Bengal for instance, with Hoogly as a major port was the first to get influenced. English education took its earliest shape in Bengal. English education, english religion, clubs, theaters and institutions affected the Indian psychology and very soon gave rise to movements like Young Bengal movement, Brahma Samaj Movement etc., which looked towards artificially cultivated English culture for inspiration.

A similar development was seen in Bombay, Madras and other central provinces. The North Western Provinces present a relatively different picture altogether. To a great extent these differences were a result of the changing socio-political conditions in the province with in a span of around 150 years.

Taking the political significance of the region first, we see that right from antiquity the North Western Provinces has remained in the political limelight. The Vedic culture which though developed near Punjab found significant roots in this region. Agriculturally fertile and adequate supply of water made it one of the favorable places for administrative purposes. The region attained its peak under the Mughal rule. The provinces of cities, it soon became the nucleus of trade and commerce. The presence of the Mughals in Agra (Fatehpur) further helped the region to expand economically. It was also strategically located to control the other areas.

The political stability encouraged the social and cultural institutions. The foreign emissaries brought about an exchange of cultural ideas. All these factors significantly affected the educational academies, institutions and schools. Together with the secular education system these ideas gave birth to a rich culture. Hinduism, Buddhism and after a chain of religious reform movements we find the development of Din-i-Ilahi, the religious philosophy innovated by Akbar. Despite the cultural flexibility, the system was quasi-feudal in character. This feudalistic tendencies were more dominant in the rural than urban areas. Urbanization had brought important changes in the society but the religious and social ties continued to dominate the general social practices. The self sufficient feudal agrarian economy proved a barrier in the development of Merchant Capitalism in the North Western Provinces and despite external interaction, there continued to exist a 'closed economy'. The disintegration of the Mughal Empire and the conquest of the provinces by the Britishers brought a decline in the economic status of the region. The demise of its cities due to warfare and battles, disturbed the trade and commerce, bringing ruin to rural handicrafts. The British colonial policies aggravated this decline by continuous exploitation and drain of its wealth.

The economic system in the North Western Provinces had crucial implications on the indigenous education. It served the local needs and played an important role in reproducing the land tenure relationships. However 'initially' the British administrators failed to realize the intricacies of indigenous education system and in order to extend the colonial policies encouraged an alternative system of education. The New Education, based on the downward filtration policy was introduced in the provinces around 19th century by the missionaries and the private agencies. It was to serve a wider colonial objective. An emphasis was on English Language, values, tastes and opinions. The idea was to extent a uniform system of english based education to a select group of people who could be used as 'mediators between the colonial rulers and the ruled'. The specific socio-economic objectives were either neglected or overlooked and a colonial dependency was enhanced. The response of the North Western Province to english education was apathatic and hostile. It was seen as a deliberate effort to substitute and replace the indigenous system of education. Consequently inspite of a continuous effort of the government and the private agencies English education failed to take root in North Western Provinces.

Apart from economic productivity, there are various other socio-economic factors responsible for such an underdevelopment of English education in the region. The most significant factor was the commercial insignificance of North Western Provinces for the Britishers. The region unlike the other provinces had no sea-born trade to attract the attention of the British residential. The rural handicrafts were in little demand. Moreover, the decline of rural industries and commerce had kept the British commercial classes aloof from the region. The region was politically important as it meant direct control of the surrounding areas. The conquest of North Western Provinces brought many missionary organizations in the region. But these missionary organisations, unlike in the other provinces, failed to obtain any patronage from commercial classes. There was a very small cluster of European residents in the provinces. The English schools that first started in North Western Provinces were attended by the socially lower classes who chose to change their religion and take up Christianity.

The official efforts in the sphere of education in the provinces began relatively late. By then people had already developed many preconceived notions against the English schools and English education. This was furthered by the absence of English courts and attorney, administrative organisations, clubs, and other important institutions which could generate a need for English education.

On the other hand the spread of indigenous education system in the provinces discouraged the growth of English education on purely western lines. The traditional education system was more deep-rooted and in line with the needs and objectives of society. The general fear regarding precarious impact of English education and English culture on indigenous economic organization proved a major deterrent to the growth of English education. It was seen as a deliberate effort to retrench the local land tenure system.

The downward filtration policy also had a significant influence on the growth of English education. Statistical data indicate that English education, developed only after the replacement of downward filtration policy by a scheme more similar to the indigenous system called the 'Vernacular System of English education'. The government's realization of its indigenous importance persuaded it to follow the traditional pattern of learning as the basis of new education system.

Language played one of the most important factors in the spread of new education. In the North Western Provinces the knowledge of English language was used for different purposes apart from instruction in the schools and colleges. The knowledge helped in translating various English works in Hindi and other regional languages, which was widely used by the social reformists and nationalists in the later 19th century.

It was seen as a policy of the British government to do away with the traditional educational system. One of the peculiarities of New Education in the North Western Provinces was that it was extended as a 'joint venture' of the local patronizers and the Government. However during early sixties the Government withdrew all financial support from local education leaving it solely on the mercy of Zamindars and elites. The voluntary support was converted

into compulsory practices arousing mutual discontent between local patronizers and state. Their demand to participate in the educational planning was discouraged leading to complete withdrawal of local elites to support the Government educational scheme. On the other hand they diverted their attention to the growth of traditional education. It was seen as a major threat to English schools as the implementation of policies, the planning, the administration needed both, full time attention and money. Moreover the objective of British education in India was not to bring social reforms and change. It was to cater to the lower level administrative tasks and official chores. Thus a policy of Mass education was discouraged and concentration was made on higher education.

Apart from the social factors, an important reason relating to the response to education was the productivity of education. The attitude to education had changed, particularly to English education. It was earlier looked upon as a means for upward social mobility. It guaranteed jobs and employment to the middle class Indians. But by the fifties and sixties this myth had exploded. The lack of jobs, growing unemployment, discontinuation regarding higher jobs, the inhuman servitude experienced in English offices, all resulted in the change of opinion regarding English education. In the North Western Provinces, there were also very few offices to absorb the educated young people. Higher education was also made practically out of their reach by making London University the center for examination and convocation. Later, the civil services examinations were made the only criteria for jobs. Thus, where the English education led to socio-political changes in the provinces like Bengal and Bombay, it became the issue of protest in the North Western Provinces.

The period between 1860-1870 marked a new phase in the history of Indian education. The rise of social reform movements strongly influence education in the North Western Provinces as well. These movements like 'D.A.V movement', 'Ahamadia movements' etc., gave the indigenous education a new look by introducing it as an 'alternative' system of education relatively national in character. In order to revive the declining Indian tradition, values, etc, these reformists encouraged the schools giving emphasis to Indian history, sociology

and religion. Indian regional languages and culture was put forward through these institutions. Their emphasis on traditional education proved advantageous for the gradually emerging nationalist sentiments in the regions. Though there are different opinions regarding the factors contributing to what has been called the early national movement in India, in the North Western Provinces it was significantly influenced by the socio-political turbulence. An alternative system of education played a crucial role in diffusing these sentiments among the people.

Another significant reason for the popularity of indigenous 'alternative' education in the North Western Provinces were the social institutions—the village communities, the family structure, the religious institutions, the socio-religious societies and the nationalist organisations—these agencies were the popular means of inducing educational reforms and changes. Unlike the English educational institutions, the indigenous agencies were fully supported by 'Patronages'. The traditional elites, the village community, the commercial guilds, all supported and shared the responsibility mutually. The educational records indicate a sudden bloom in the indigenous private schools between 1870 to 1880 substantially affecting the English elementary institutions (private and government alike). This situation was clearly reflected in the educational despatch of 1882, which approved the spread of elementary indigenous education through municipal boards and private agencies.

It follows from the above observation that the period between the dispatches of 1854 to 1887 Hunter Commission witnessed a growth of varied educational system of traditional fundamental ideas was one of the marked feature of these educational experiments. Education in the North Western Province unlike other provinces seldom confirmed social mobility or moral values among people. Rather it reproduced the local socio-economic institutions and common land tenure relationship. It enjoyed local faith and loyalty. It was flexible and 'democratic' in nature. Its relatively autonomous character made it adaptable to socio-economic changes. There was an emphasis on quantitative development of education. Qualitatively these were rudimentary and empirical in nature.

Above all it suited the local needs and played an important role in the continuation of traditional socio-economic institutions. The fact that it could not be replaced by the modern English education which failed to take roots in the region shows that the socio-economic and cultural peculiarities played a crucial role and significantly influenced the socio-political institutions.

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