

**COMMISSIONING HIGHER EDUCATION  
IN COLONIAL INDIA: A HISTORICAL STUDY,  
1919 – 1949**

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University in partial  
fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of*

**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

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DECLARATION

I, Shivam Agrawal, hereby declare that the dissertation entitled *Commissioning Higher Education in Colonial India: A Historical Study, 1919 – 1949* is submitted in partial fulfillment for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru University. This dissertation has not been previously submitted for any degree of this or any other University and is my original work.



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CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy in this University.

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Shivam Agrawal

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AU	Allahabad University.
B. A.	Bachelor of Arts.
B. Ag.	Bachelor of Agriculture.
B. Com.	Bachelor of Commerce.
BHU	Banaras Hindu University.
B. Sc.	Bachelor of Science.
B. T.	Bachelor of Technology.
CAB	Central Advisory Board.
CU	Calcutta University.
DU	Delhi University.
IMS	Indian Medical Service.
INC	Indian National Congress.
IUA	Indian Universities Act.
IUC	Indian Universities Commission.
LL. B.	Bachelor of Law.
LL. M.	Master of Law.
M. A.	Master of Arts.
M. Lit.	Master of Literature.
MOL	Master of Oriental Studies.
M. Sc.	Master of Science.

NCE	National Council of Education.
NPC	National Planning Committee.
NU	Nagpur University.
OU	Osmania University.
PU	Patna University.
UEC	University Education Commission.

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The existing functions of the University in regard to its colleges are, first, the definition of curricula, second, the conduct of examinations, and, third, the exercise of general supervision and inspection. All these functions must continue; but all must be materially modified, at any rate as they affect the constituent colleges, by the new system of teaching.<sup>1</sup>

-Calcutta University Commission Report (1919)

The lines of Post- War educational development in India which Government are considering are those embodied in the Report of the Central Advisory Board of Education of which there are copies in the library.<sup>2</sup>

-Mr. J. D. Tyson, (1944)

The foundation and consolidation of the colonial rule in India was a significant historical process. It heralded a new era of reforms with a wide range of consequences influencing the existing social, economic, political and cultural ethos—essentially an exercise to project the colonial government as benevolent. Soon enough however, an awakening in relation to these policies and realization of the actual autocratic and exploitative nature of the colonial government dawned. How do we explain this dichotomy between ideology and practice beyond the periphery of political and administrative governance? Did the colonial government have an appropriate mechanism to address the educational needs of the colonised? Was it indeed possible to consider the idea of controlling and regulating the said education system through various commissions? Of course, the colonial state was a bureaucratic state and the highest officials in the administration were expected to formulate and implement policies favourable to the Raj. Education could hardly have remained immune from this outlook given the impetus it gave to the colonial policies. Right from the days of the East India Company hence, the General Committee of Public Instruction not only guided education policies but had a major role in executing them apart from

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<sup>1</sup> *Calcutta University Commission, 1917 – 1919, Report, Volume 4, Part II, Recommendations of the Commission*, Superintendent Government Printing, Calcutta: 1919, pp. 287 – 288.

<sup>2</sup> National Archive of India, Branch, Home, Department, Education, Health and Land, The Secretary of Education, Health and Land Department, Mr. J. D. Tyson's respond to the questions asked by Dr. Zia-Ud-Din Ahmed in the Central Legislative Assembly on 10th November 1944, File no. 83-21/44E, 1944.



interpreting the educational provisions of various Charter Acts from time to time. After the end of company rule in 1858, the operational aspect had a cosmetic change with the educational commissions appointed by the government limited to the task of assessing progress and proposing recommendations for improvement, while policy decisions and implementations remained with the administrative bureaucracy. The commissions thus became an integral part of the colonial power structure through their analyses and policy recommendation which the state machinery duly implemented.

Much like other educational issues, Higher Education in India was a Bone of Contention- an issue on which not much work has been done. The evolution of the Indian Higher Education Structure was a complex process, intertwined closely with colonial policy. The government tightly controlled University administration and functioning- something detrimental to the growth of learning and an open academic environment. The genealogy of modern higher education in India can be traced back to the foundation of three Presidency Universities at Bengal, Bombay, and Madras in 1857, as proposed by the Wood's Dispatch of 1854. However, the Hindu College established in 1816 is generally considered as a precursor to the foundation of modern University system in the country. The three Universities were not conceived as much teaching institutes, as they were degree conferring bodies. The Preamble of the Indian Universities Act, 1857 stated that "It has been determined to establish the university for the purpose of ascertaining by means of examination, the person who have acquired proficiency in different branches of literature, science, art, and of rewarding them by academical degrees as evidence of their respective attainments". The Act went on to state that

except by special orders of the Senate no person shall be admitted as a candidate for a degree unless he shall present to the university a certificate from an institution authorised in that behalf by the Governor General or Governor in Council to the effect that he has completed the course of instruction prescribed by the university in the by-laws to be made by them under the power in that behalf given by the acts.<sup>3</sup>

The three Universities were founded on the University of London Model where the actual task of teaching was delegated to the affiliated colleges. The colleges in question were

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<sup>3</sup> R. Littlehales, *Ninth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1922 – 1927, Volume I*, Government of India Central Publication, Calcutta: 1929, p. 52.

granted approval from the Governor General in Council, in case of the Calcutta University and by the Governor in Council in case of the Universities of Bombay and Madras.<sup>4</sup>

The situation soon turned chaotic with unresolved questions related to the curriculum and the medium of instruction adversely affecting students. In 1884, the government appointed a commission to ascertain the progress of higher education in India since the Woods Dispatch, which however excluded substantial issues from its purview. Meanwhile, acts passed in 1882 and 1887 led to the foundation of the Punjab and the Allahabad University respectively, based on the Indian Universities Act of 1857. With the turn of the nineteenth century, the government under Lord Curzon (1899 – 1905) reviewed the state of higher education and subsequently appointed a separate Indian Universities Commission with Sir Walter Raleigh its chairman

To inquire into the condition and prospects of the universities established in British India; to consider and report upon any proposals which have been, or may be, made for improving their constitution and working, and to recommend to the Governor General in Council such measures as may tend to elevate the standard of university teaching, and to promote the advancement of learning.<sup>5</sup>

Curzon set aside any course of action to improve curriculum quality. He focussed instead on the administrative side and means to revamp them. The new Indian Universities Act passed in 1904 laid down provisions for wide ranging reforms in the Senate and other administrative functions of universities. Existing universities were also now instructed to take responsibility for teaching and maintain Postgraduate departments for encouraging research. It became a tall order for the Universities to do so in the absence of logistical and moral support from the government.

The growing resistance of the Indian intelligentsia over the slow progress of higher education was another significant feature of this age. These intellectuals not only highlighted the various defects in the existing system but also offered solutions. The most crucial step in this direction was the framing of a nationalist agenda of education centred on such issues as a suitable curriculum in line with the needs of the Indian student, promotion

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> *Report of the Indian Universities Commission 1902*, Government Central Printing Office, Simla: 1902, p. 1.

of modern Indian languages as mediums of instruction, delegating teaching work to the universities, more involvement of Indians in university administration and so on. In view of the increasing restlessness within the intelligentsia, the Government passed a resolution on the education 1913 with a view “To see teaching faculties developed at the seats of the existing universities and corporate life encouraged, in order to promote higher study and create an atmosphere from which students will imbibe good social, moral and intellectual influences.”<sup>6</sup> It was a few years after the said resolution that the Government of India appointed a commission under the chairmanship of Sir M. E. Sadler, in order to understand the ground realities and broadly shape its higher education policy on the strength of that assessment. After two years of strenuous work, the commission submitted its voluminous report in 1919, popularly known as the Calcutta University Commission Report. The Calcutta University was the central focus of this commission and was primarily concerned with its reorganisation. However, “Many of their recommendations were equally applicable to the other Indian Universities which has been reconstituted on identical lines by the University Act of 1904.”<sup>7</sup> With this detailed outline, the study focused on the transition that took place after 1919 in the Indian education system as well as in the national movement which widely influenced the structure of the higher education. The focal points of the analysis would be the contentious issues of the period under study such as the curricula, medium of instruction, examination reforms and the delegation of teaching in universities; issues which are relevant yet.

## **EXISTING HISTORICAL WORKS AND GAPS**

It is very hard to find any literature exclusively on the evolution of the higher education system and its functioning in colonial India since most historians and educationists wrote about education in general rather than any specialized focus on higher education. The following is an attempted survey of the existing literature with a view to find slippages in

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<sup>6</sup> *Resolution on Indian Educational Policy 1913*, Superintendent Government Printing, Calcutta: 1915, p. 34.

<sup>7</sup> J. A. Richey, *Eighth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1917 – 1922*, Volume I, Superintendent Government Printing, Calcutta: 1923, p. 51.

terms of priorities and focus we shall consider the works of authors like Aparna Basu, Eric Ashby, J. P. Naik, Krishna Kumar, Sanjay Seth and Suresh Chandra Ghosh.

In his monumental work, *Universities: British, Indian and African*, Eric Ashby presented an analytical description of University establishment by the colonial administrations in Afro-Asian countries. In his analysis, he emphasised upon three key conceptions; the British policy of exporting the university system to the Commonwealth, pattern of higher education considered appropriate for the non-European world and most importantly, the attitude of non-European societies towards Western learning. The author presented the University as the embodiment of an idea. He believed that for its survival, two conditions need to be fulfilled: “It must be sufficiently stable to sustain the ideal which gave it birth and sufficiently responsive to remain relevant to society which supports it.”<sup>8</sup> The account of the British policy regarding Universities in India covered a wide stretch from the establishment of the three Presidency Universities to independence. He further talks about the unsuccessful attempt to redefine higher education by Curzon in the early 20th Century. As a starting reformist measure, Curzon constituted the Indian Universities Commission in 1902. It did not bear much fruit however, as the curriculum could not be considerably modified and the issue regarding the Medium of Instruction remained unresolved. His intent did pave the way for gradual modification, and inspired his successors to rework the colonial policy, culminating in the authoritative statement of the Calcutta University Commission in 1919

The author considered the CU Commission report as a milestone which was successful in redefining the idea of higher education and suggesting reforms with regard to curriculum, teaching methods and examinations along with administrative bodies like the Senate. The most noteworthy impact of the commission was the transformation of Calcutta University into a teaching university and the foundation of post-graduate departments along with the Dhaka University being established as a teaching university which subsequently became a role model for other universities. The author seemed oblivious however of the nationalist reaction against the colonial policy, even as it was laced with incentives- a fact

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<sup>8</sup> Eric Ashby and Mary Anderson, *Universities: British, Indian and African: A Study in the Ecology of Higher Education*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London: 1966, p. 3.

essential to understand the attitude of Indians towards western learning. Similarly, he did not focus on the implementation of the Commission recommendations which consequently led to changes in the character and function of other universities after 1919. He did however refer to the report of the University Education Commission 1949 and tried to highlight the limitations of the colonial policy of higher education. He failed to sufficiently highlight about the tackling of key issues related to higher education by the postcolonial Indian state after independence and the role of the Commission in the said function.

Aparna Basu, in her seminal article *'Indian Higher Education: Colonialism and Beyond'*, started with tracing the roots of higher education in India wherein Nalanda and Taxila functioned as centres of learning in ancient India. As a result of the Muslim invasions in the 11th and the 12th centuries, these centres gradually declined in prominence as Sanskrit was replaced by Arabic and Persian as the new elite lingua franca. With the arrival of the British, the idea of education obviously acquired a modernist tone and tenor. Education, as the author underlined, was a tool for a radical social transformation suited to the needs of the British wherein "Indian universities were instruments for strengthening British cultural, intellectual and political domination."<sup>9</sup> For the mass of the young, a higher education degree was now a passport to enter into government service and have at least some access to the benefits of the new order. It is worth pointing out that the author went beyond the establishment of the three Presidency Universities to focus in-depth on the continuing reform process.

Commenting on the relentless pursuit of reforms aping the British model, she remarked: "Neither London, Oxford nor Cambridge could be exactly replicated in Indian conditions. Indian Universities could borrow the outward structure but seldom the inner spirit of the original system."<sup>10</sup> In order to substantiate her argument, she cited the examples of the government's strict control over the universities, their senate and other administrative units along with the curricula and pedagogy. In this context she also mentioned the recommendations of the Calcutta University Commission (Sadler

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<sup>9</sup> Aparna Basu, *Indian Higher Education: Colonialism and Beyond* in Philip G. Altbach, (Ed.), *From Dependence to Autonomy: The Development of Asian Universities* Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht: 1989, p. 167.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, p. 168.

Commission) 1919, which offered to establish new teaching and residential Universities and introduce subjects like Oriental Studies, Classical Indian Languages and Vernaculars in the curriculum. However, she overlooked their functioning as well as the limitations in implementing these recommendations due to which the scope of reforms could further have begun to broaden. She tried to accommodate the views of the Indian intelligentsia, who were highlighting the prevailing drawbacks and shortcomings in University Education and proposing alternatives to satisfy requirements for the education of Indians. She failed however, to account for the difficulties faced by Indian students due to a virtually new and unknown curriculum, the content of the syllabi and the medium of instruction. In due course, these issues became an important part of discourse in the native intellectual and academic circles. Not only Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore- influential voices in the political and socio cultural sphere of the national movement- but also numerous other educationists of the time such as Aurobindo Ghose, Asutosh Mookerjee, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Abul Kalam Azad and others expressed their opinions on the matter. The impact of the highly contested language issue on the direction of the national movement and the responses of the Indian intellectuals along with its limitations also need to be analysed.

The arduous task of providing a holistic account of the development of education system in modern India was taken up by J. P. Naik and Syed Nurullah, whose book, '*A Students' History of Education in India (1800 – 1973)*' talked about the said developments in detail along with the recommendations of the various commissions and committees on the matter. The book is divided into 6 phases covering developments from the beginning of the colonial rule up to independence. The period from 1898 up to 1947 discussed under the fourth, fifth and sixth phases, specifically deals with Government policies and responses of the Indian intelligentsia and is broadly termed "Period of Transition". In the analysis of reforms introduced under the viceroyalty of Lord Curzon in light of the report of Indian Universities Commission 1902 through the Indian Universities Act 1904, the authors take special care in highlighting the nature and vision of the reforms through arguments like these:

The real issue at stake went far deeper. Curzon represented, not himself, but the whole bureaucracy that ruled India in the name of parliament. It was, therefore,

really a conflict between the British bureaucracy on the one hand and the educated Indian intelligentsia on the other that was being staged now throughout all the controversies that arose over official policies.<sup>11</sup>

They further comment upon the carelessness of the colonial government regarding university curricula, but fail to elaborate on the vernacular language issue and the recommendations of various commissions since 1902. On the other hand, the reaction of the Indian intellectuals to the proposed national education system- a landmark in critical formulations of the colonial education system and policies- also escapes their notice. This new consciousness in fact led the native intelligentsia to put forward their agenda of educational reforms as means of the larger fight for self-rule.

In the next segment of their book, the authors deal with the matter of national education in the context of the Non-cooperation Movement launched by Mahatma Gandhi in 1920. The description mostly revolved around the issue of language and the national education policy for matriculation and secondary education. The recommendations of the Calcutta University Commission 1919 also find space in the discussion along with focus on other major issues, but there is a perceptible lack of detail regarding the transition from examining to teaching universities and reforms in the examination system which directly influenced teaching practice and the curriculum. The authors also focused on the diarchic rule of 16 years (1921 – 1937) which marked the beginning of various new developments in the Indian education system. During this period, while the demand of increasing quality instead of quantity acquired prominence in academic circles, there was also the consolidation of old institutions acquiring a significant place in the reform agenda. Due to financial constraint, the colonial government could not effectively address the various demands to address disparities in higher education, but the foundation of the Inter-University Board in 1924 as a means to increase inter-University cooperation was an important step. In order to enrich the account of that period, a detailed description of various newly introduced faculties, courses of study in graduation and post-graduation, and the condition of research in liberal arts and science is imperative.

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<sup>11</sup> J. P. Naik and Syed Nurullah, *A Student History of Education in India (1800 – 1973)*, Macmillan India LTD, Delhi: 2004, p. 245.

Further, the authors elaborated upon the development of education in the last decade of colonial rule under the section “Education under Provincial Autonomy” and argued that due to political disturbances, numerous important issues pertaining to education were completely eclipsed and consequently “the national leaders could not devote adequate time and money to educational reconstruction and if the educational advance under provincial autonomy did not at all come up to the high hopes aroused in 1937.”<sup>12</sup> Contrary to their contention, a proper understanding of the development of education in the crucial last phase of colonial rule would entail the recognition of processes that aided the articulating and implementation of educational policies even in these adverse circumstances. For example, the various Reports of All-India Educational Conference, the Central Advisory Board and the National Planning Committee on General and Technical Education surfaced in the 1940s. These documents provided adequate guideline for the evolution of a comprehensive higher education policy which ultimately took shape in the report of the University Education Commission in 1949. Therefore, the entire process leading to the evolution of higher education deserves critical evaluation with due reference to the mutations that shaped education policy in different phases of the pre-independence period.

Suresh Chandra Ghosh, in his book, *'The History of Education in Modern India, (1757 – 1998)'* tries to adopt new approaches and methodologies in analysing and interpreting facts and events of importance. Unlike Naik and Nurullah, Ghosh echoes the development of historiography and seems to be inspired by the emerging trend of “new history” in western academia. His work, departing from the usual narration of sequences of events and presentation of facts, engages rather with the processes. For instance he underlines the growing youth unemployment in the 19th Century as a potent explanation for the formulation of the reform agenda by the intelligentsia in India. The book further reflects his perceptive reading of the political process in explaining the development of the native education system and university reforms- in Curzon’s term for instance, where he emphasizes upon the effects of the political goings-on, which however seem to prevent him from highlighting glaring defects in the higher education system. His writing also reflects on the proposed recommendations and reforms in the universities which were confined to

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p. 364.



the senate and other administrative bodies. His concluding remarks in the context of Calcutta University Commission 1919 suffice to substantiate that: “The universities in India were to enter an era of freer growth and development- the process of university autonomy and democratisation of higher education in India may be said to have begun with the recommendations of the Calcutta University Commission.”<sup>13</sup>

Further discussion in the book comprises of a brief elucidation of different measures taken up by the colonial government in order to enhance the self-styled ‘quality of education’. The reports of the various commissions appointed by the government between 1929 and 1944 are the focal points of this discussion. The author could not however maintain consistency in highlighting the nationalist programme of education and the views of Indian academicians over the contested issues of curricula, language, teaching and examining system in higher education. In another book, *‘Education Policy in India since Warren Hastings’*, he prefers to study the development of higher education in science and technology under the British Raj. There he tries to chart the course of colonial policy on science and technology education starting with the Charter Act of 1813. Clause 43 of this act laid down provisions to introduce and promote sciences among the inhabitants of British India, but the government twisted interpretations to accommodate the colonial interest, resulting in advanced knowledge of science and technology not penetrating sections of the society it could so well have benefited. The author cites the instances of Indian Scientists like J. C. Bose (Plant Physiology), P. C. Ray (Chemistry), Meghnad Saha and C. V. Raman Physics) who got international acclaim for their researches; the first two trained abroad while the latter two in India itself: “These works were all but isolated attempts and as yet there had been no systematic development of science and technology at the higher education level.”<sup>14</sup> The argument raises various questions over the development of higher education system in general and the education of Science and Technology in particular. Hence there arises the need for a comparative study of higher educational

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<sup>13</sup> Suresh Chandra Ghosh, *History of Education in Modern India (1757 – 1998)*, Orient Longman Limited, New Delhi: 2000, p. 148.

<sup>14</sup> Suresh Chandra Ghosh, *Education Policy in India since Warren Hastings*, Naya Prokash, Calcutta: 1989, p. 100.

policies with respect to science and technology; particularly their implementation and institutionalisation before conclusions are drawn.

An important intervention in the conventional historiography of Indian education was made by Krishna Kumar through his book *'Political Agenda of Education'*. He discussed various newer aspects under the twin titles of 'Dynamics of Colonisation' and 'Dynamics of the Freedom Struggle', in the former, the author touches upon four key aspects of colonial education: state role in institutional arrangements, idea of citizenship, differences in European and Indian thought about curriculum and culture, and impact of colonization on the teacher's role and status. In the latter, he discusses three important discourses of the freedom struggle: equality, self-identity and progress. The Last section of the book provides justification to the educational ideas of Mahatma Gandhi styled as 'NaiTalim' (New Education) and attacks Nehru for promotion of Economic and Industrial development instead of education in terms of its values and morals. He examines widely, the linkages between the colonial and nationalist views on education along with recognizing similarities in the Indian and English conceptions regarding education. These similarities reflected not only in the choices at policy level but also in their understanding of the implication of these choices. The implication part was in fact the most striking example of it. It was believed that science will not just improve India materially but intellectually and morally as well. While further discussing these interrelations, he favoured the pedagogical ideas propagated by Gandhi. This was because firstly, Gandhi talked about engaging children in manual activities which demonstrated the practical nature of Science. Secondly, religious teaching and moral improvement as the primary aims of education defined Gandhi's educational agenda, while the modern education system and modernity in general were things not in consonance with his ideals and reflected in his distinct apathy towards Higher Education.

Discussion on the various curricula released by the colonial government towards the middle of the 19th century is yet another focal point that the book deals with. Prior to this, the author had raised certain questions about the contemporary curricula and concluded in rather hollow terms that the root of all problems lay in the colonial and pre-colonial legacy. He seems to fail to acknowledge the errors committed by the postcolonial policymakers in

framing and execution of reforms. He goes on to highlight the impact of English education policies and the resistance of the native intelligentsia. The role of missionaries in designing the textbooks and their control over pedagogy was the chief cause of such opposition. On the other hand, the pedagogy employed by the colonial state was textbook oriented; whose contents had the same meaning for both the teacher and the taught. According to the author, the absence of teachers' voice in matters of curriculum further led to deterioration in their condition. They came under a lot of structural constraints because of the restrictions on what they could teach and a time limit to complete the syllabus. The problem was rooted in the bureaucratization of the administration and filtered down to the lower level, corroding its performance. All the decisions pertaining to the syllabus and textbooks were taken by administrative officials. However, the author recognises the fact that conditions at the college level were quite different since teaching in a college could be considered as a relatively sophisticated job in line with intellectual stimulation compared to the school which was for all purpose accepted as a low stature job. He further talks about the lower pay scale of teachers and a lack of impartiality in appointments at school level. Contrary to his assumption, the condition of college teachers was similarly critical, leading to the fall in standards which need to be further elaborated upon.

The portrait of the freedom struggle as painted by the author in the shade of social mobility, self-identity and progress does not appear to be as radiant on closer inspection. He neglects certain other equally important reforming voices which provided new horizons and value to the debate. He contends that the idea of a separate unified identity cemented its place in the Indian psyche due to the conflicting perceptions about English education. One was that English education made an enriching contribution to India's culture, and the second considered English education to have led to the utter detriment of the same. An important terrain of inspection here was 'the control over educational institution'. On the one hand, Indians criticised the English curriculum as 'alien' while a different views inspired by Anglophile notions considered it a tool to assemble a nation state with modern institutions and command superior socio economic status. The author talks about the Indian National Movement leading two historic movements- the Swadeshi and the Non-Cooperation Movement- to establish the required control and hegemony on their own institutions. Religion and language contentiously became prominent tools for the operation

which entwined with concept of race, ancestry, cast and motherland produced an explosive concoction. But such efforts could not necessarily sustain themselves without the support of the British government. The author links this quest for identity with the Hindi Language and in detail discusses its evolution through analysing the contribution of a Provincial University in Allahabad. Founded in the late 19th century, the Allahabad University became something of a cultural microcosm for standard Hindi with scholars like Acharya Mahavir Prasad Divedi who popularized the language when he took the editorship of the magazine 'Swaraswati' in 1902. His contribution is credited with developing prose in the Hindi language. Along with AU, there was the Banaras Hindu University founded in 1916 in the pilgrimage town of Varanasi. Acharya Ram Chandra Shukla was appointed- first as a lecturer, and later the head of department in the University, he designed a standard syllabus to be introduced in the curriculum. His book '*Hindi Sahitya ka Itihas*' (The History of Hindi Literature) published in 1929 was meant as an introductory text for mass readership and establishment of Hindi as the standard-bearer of popular culture. The author moves on to the much touted conflict between the Hindi and Urdu strands of the Hindustani language and concludes that Hindi acquired a legionary symbolism for Hindus in the struggle against colonialism and its much reviled expression in the English language, while Urdu became a rallying cry for Muslims to preserve their communal distinctiveness in the face of a perceived Hindu aggression.<sup>15</sup>

Sanjay Seth's '*Subject Lessons: The Western Education of Colonial India*', attempts to highlight the avant-garde nature of numerous crucial facts and interpretations in the history of education in India. He adopted a modernist framework for bringing to light relatively unexplored dimensions of the colonial education policies along with the government response to changing conditions. For serving the purpose, he broadly divides his book into two parts-'Subject to Pedagogy' and 'Modern Knowledge, Modern Nation'. The first part focuses in detail on the 'hidden presumptions' which originated with the spread of modern knowledge, while the latter highlights the place of education in the imagination of the nationalists as well as the colonizers. The author starts with raising the

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<sup>15</sup> Krishna Kumar, *Political Agenda of Education: A Study of Colonialist and Nationalist Ideas*, (Second ed.), Sage Publication, New Delhi: 2005, p. 137.

issue of using Western Education as a means to an end and links it up with the problems in teaching and the examination system. According to him, the unnecessary extra emphasis on examination, especially at the University level, ruined the atmosphere conducive to learning and acquiring a degree or a diploma was limited to the tokenism associated with a government career. He cites a convocation speech of Lord Curzon in 1902 to emphasize that the essence of knowledge is comprehension rather than mere rote learning of facts and figures. He raises questions on pedagogic methods to arrive at the conclusion that modern knowledge was not producing the presupposed modern subjects. He further notes the perception among many thinkers of the times about a sort of moral crisis among the educated youth due to the conflict created between native values and Westernized education. Such categorizations seem to be unfounded however given the youth being referred to were themselves not aware of such a crisis befalling them.

Indian nationalists seemed to be attracted towards western education due to a subjective element within it, with a power to instil among the Indians, a sense of collective identity. The importance of western education lay in the fact that despite a very small number of people being exposed to it, it became an opinion maker among nationalist thought in terms of the making and development of a nation state built on modern institutions. With this premise in mind, the next section of the book has the author analysing the role of western education in producing collective identities and a nationalistic imagination. In the second half of the 19th century, a census held in India characterized the status of the Muslim community as 'Backward' in terms of their educational status. The Report of the Hunter Commission in 1883 suggested steps for the educational advancement of Muslims. The author goes on to emphasize upon a distinct practice of 'colonial governmentality', pertaining to the debate centred on Western Education and its impact on the material advancement of the Muslim community. Likewise, the discussion on female education also became a powerful discourse during the national movement, albeit within a limited sphere of the modernity project. The tensions of modernity are manifested in the two-sided behaviour of those at the vanguard of the national movement- tasked with bringing the onset of modernity, but paradoxically not considered modern enough in their own private spheres. Contestations over the issue of modern education are an important subject of discussion within the ambit of Indian Nationalism. The book also seeks to

elaborate the vision of intellectuals like Tagore and Gandhi in providing an alternative model of education. The issue of language quite obviously figured in the discussion, but herein the author adopts a very cursory approach to the language debate which was quite complex and had variations corresponding to the different levels of education. Though his argument about the palpable tensions is worth looking at: “Education was both important to and problematic for nationalism, because it straddled this distinction...”<sup>16</sup> His arguments can be summed up in the following terms: Education was a key element of any possible transformation in India, but a thorough-going transformation could not take place.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

Thus, the survey of the existing literature on the topic given above tells us about the diverse perspectives of authors who combined modern history and education to arrive at the complex pictures we looked at. My intention through the ambit of Higher Education is:

1. To analyse the curricula designed by the colonial government for science and humanities, along with the language discourse in higher education in the light of various recommendations of the commissions for reforms during the period considered.
2. To examine the reaction among the native intelligentsia with respect to the issues above mentioned and relate it to the growing nationalist upsurge.
3. To study the transformation of examining universities into teaching universities along with the reforms which took place in the examination and teaching systems under the period considered.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

In light of the above objectives, the proposed study will seek the answers of the following questions:

1. What were the curricula offered by Universities in India for the promotion of Science and Humanities? Did the colonial government facilitate these universities in

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<sup>16</sup> Sanjay Seth, *Subject Lessons: The Western Education of Colonial India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi: 2008, p. 177.

line with their respective curricula? If not, what were the alternative proposals for reform made by the different commissions appointed by the government from time to time and to what extent did it adopt or reject their proposals?

2. Was the question of language debatable in the terrain of higher education under the given period of study? What were the difficulties faced by Indian students trained in the vernacular languages in pursuing their academic lives in the Universities? What were the proposals of these commissions in order to deal with the language issue and to what extent were they successful in its resolution?
3. What was the reaction of the Indian intelligentsia towards then prevailing disarray in higher education? Did they propose any alternatives with regard to the curricula of Liberal Arts and Science courses and for the resolution of the language issue? What were their means of resistance against the hegemony of the colonial government on higher education and did the language question influence the course of national movement?
4. What was the state of functioning of the Universities with regard to accomplishing the task of imparting higher education? What were the issues which led the transformation of the universities from the examining to teaching ones? Did the recommendations of the Calcutta University Commission prove a landmark in this direction? If not, what were the other alternatives and suggestions for the reformation of the teaching universities under the said period?

## **METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY**

The methodology of this study can be seen in an interpretative paradigm. Since the study highlights the implementation of the reports prepared by the various commissions and their impact on Indian higher education, it would include analysis and interpretation of the said commissions, as well as the higher education system which emerged during the colonial regime. Colonialism has gained a prominent place in the modern Indian historical discourse with academicians and scholars have put across a range of diverse interpretations of the phenomena, from emphasis on the modes of production, the process of economic dependence based on political supremacy or the knowledge power discourse. There are several scholarly works on colonialism which shows how the British government was

fixated upon a view of education stemming from modern European values with a view to assimilate the natives in this process. But as has been already discussed, such type of works give us just a general idea on the inter-relationship between colonialism and education rather than a specific focus on higher education.

Hence, this study consists of detailed discussions on the functioning of these commissions, the character of the recommendations they suggested be implemented, the motive behind such steps by the Raj and the gap between recommendations and ground realities. It is also a critical analysis of the transformation of the character of Universities (from examining institutions to direct teaching Campuses) the curricula, mediums of instruction and reforms in the examination system. The reports of these commissions, University Records, quinquennial reviews, proceedings of various events and contemporary journals would act as resources to aid us in discerning the state of education in India in the said period. Apart from the commission reports, there was the small matter of the nationalist leadership demanding a more liberal educational policy, promotion of Indian languages in higher education and teaching system in Universities. Therefore, the study would also focus on the nationalist demands, subsequent government initiatives and the cycle of responses; speeches of the nationalist leaders, articles pamphlets and their interventions in government policies would act as our sources. Hence both primary and secondary sources are of use when we deal with a Historical period in the colonial era.

## **RATIONALE OF THE STUDY**

Along with the responses of the stalwarts of the national movement in the 20th century who campaigned widely on the issue through their writings and speeches, this study would of course focus on the recommendations of the different commissions appointed by the government between the period 1919 to 1949. These commissions became important forums for discussing major issues related to education policy in which numerous educationists, activists and government officials participated. However their functioning was confined to an advisory role. The significance of this study lies in the fact that the conventional history of education dealt with the education in general rather than higher education as a specialized area of research and the few historians and educationists who



have tried to explore this area have remained silent on the various highly contested key issues which have been repeatedly pointed out above and retain their relevance.

The focus on various commissions and their reports is also a means to lay bare the various contesting discourses at the heart of the debate on Higher Education in the 20th Century. Such discourses are not represented here in the form of a simple narrative- on the contrary, these wide ranging approaches and methodologies have been adopted to unearth hidden discourses and thereby conduct an analysis of the past which can be used to understand the prevailing discourses and the state of higher education in the present time. The rationale behind rooting the study in the inter war period (1919 – 1949) lies in the fact that the major recommendations of such commissions came into force during the said period, including the Report of the Calcutta University Commission 1919, Hartog Committee Report 1929, Report of the Central Advisory Board on Education in 1944, National Planning Committee Report on General and Technical Education in 1948 and the Report of the University Education Commission in 1949. This resulted in a proliferation of educational institutions across the country leading to considerable transformation. The tempestuous nature of the national movement also created a vibrant milieu in which Indian Intellectuals could express themselves and propose remedies for the existing state of higher education, creating a powerful counter-discourse. The idea of going beyond the inter-war period is to consider also the changes brought about by the freedom from colonial rule and the changing state of education with priorities now different from the earlier colonial administration.

## **PREVIEW**

The following three chapters will explain the functioning of the system of higher education in colonial India vis-à-vis the colonial and nationalist incentives to seek remedy from the existing state of affairs. For the analysis, key issues pertaining to the curriculum of science and humanities, the medium of instruction and reforms in teaching and examining system are chosen. The central focus of the study is the recommendations of the various commissions- appointed to do something about the deterioration in higher education and moreover crucially, to placate those Indian intellectuals likely to agitate over the issue.

The next chapter details various challenges related to the curricula of higher education with regard to science and humanities. It not only includes the said recommendations, but also provides general information about the progress of curriculum designing in different Indian universities and their various departments created especially for imparting education in sciences and liberal arts. Not only is there a description of the colonial mismanagement on the matters of curriculum, but also a counter-nationalist discourse in this regard.

Chapter 3 documents the language discourse in higher education and displays the apathy of the colonial government which did not take serious steps for resolving the issue of the medium of instruction at higher levels. The said Commissions did go on an in-depth investigation of the matter, but couldn't succeed in finding a permanent solution. The contentious nature of the English language imposition on Universities is also given due weightage as it became a rallying cry for the nationalist leaders to mobilize opposition but could not, or only sporadically succeeded in its aims.

Chapter 4 describes the transition that took place in the functioning of Universities and their transformation from examining bodies to teaching institutions. It highlights the defects in existing examining structure and reforms introduced in the due course of time. The Calcutta University was least affected from the recommendations of CU Commission while various other Universities did not get much benefit out of the reform. The role of the Indian intelligentsia in their critique of the existing system and pressure for reform is also quite noteworthy and has been duly elaborated upon.

Finally, it was concluded that the colonial government had used the commissions as an instrument for diluting the main stream discourse of resolving the key issues and enhancing the teaching standard. Therefore, at the time of implementing the recommendations, the government showed a distinct lack of will for execution and credibility. Consequently, the modern higher education system was not firmly established and even essential basic requirements were not fulfilled on time leading to restrictions in the spread of benefits of higher education among Indians. After the independence of India, the newly elected nationalist government started to function with a slightly modified bureaucratic administrative system and adopted the same methods and techniques for

investigating the issue of education. when, the government did not initiate essential reforms in the existing system of higher education according the advice of University Education Commission of 1949, a renowned scientist and educationist Meghnad Saha reminded the promises to Indian government in 1952 which were made during the freedom struggle in regard of evolving a vibrant higher education system. He also emphasized the need to implement the recommendations of UEC for the growth of higher education. Thus, the setup of commissions is a valuable mechanism to assess the status of education as well as to propose suggestions for reforms. However, the implementation part is most important to bring out changes on the ground. In case of India, the governments did not pay much attention on the effective implementation of the recommendations and had neglected them without any reason.

## CHAPTER 2: EDUCATION IN SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES

Indian Universities will be judged by two standards, firstly, by their contribution to discovery, invention and the expansion of the field of science and art; and, secondly, by the number and the quality of the men whom they send forth, filled with a genuine devotion to the good of India and to the service of their fellow-countrymen of all grades and ranks, irrespective of caste and creed.<sup>1</sup>

-Maharaja of Mysore, (1919)

There has been a general lack of planning in university education and both central and provincial government have yielded to popular pressure in bringing universities into existence without providing the necessary resources to enable them to function on sound lines. It has yet to be appreciated in many quarters that to run education on the cheap is the falsest of false economies. Moreover, universities have been gravely handicapped by the fact that the education given in most high schools has been a very inadequate preparation for a university career.<sup>2</sup>

-Report of the Central Advisory Board of Education, (1944).

During the colonial rule, India experienced a new kind of power structure which acquired legitimacy via its ability to conquer. Among the pillars of its foundation, education and knowledge acquired a significant place and the colonial masters used it successfully as an instrument to consolidate their power.

Under the East India Company, perhaps for the first time in Indian history, the state had emerged as the producer of knowledge and the sole arbiter of what was to be delivered and to whom. The recipients had limited options and limited access. Moreover, they had their own prejudices and requirements which were not always congruent with those of the rulers.<sup>3</sup>

With Universities founded in the Presidencies of Bengal, Bombay, Madras, and later at Punjab and Allahabad during the turn of the 19th century, discontentment and excitement multiplied among Indians for obtaining higher education. The most debateable issue of the time was the curricula of Universities. However, Massive contestation and conflict of

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<sup>1</sup> Document, Maharaja of Mysore first convocation address in Banaras Hindu University on January 19, 1919 in V. A. Sundaram, (Ed.), *Banaras Hindu University, 1905 – 1935*, R. Pathak, Banaras: 1936, p. 315.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the Central Advisory Board of Education (Sergeant Committee Report)*, Manager Government of India Press, Simla: 1944, p. 29.

<sup>3</sup> Deepak Kumar *et al.*, (Eds.), Introduction, *Education in Colonial India: Historical Insights*, Manohar Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi: 2013, p. 7.

opinion over aims and curricula of higher education was quite visible in the early phase of the colonial rule, Bearce brought our attention to three important viewpoints which had particular relevance in the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>4</sup> The time had come when the agent provocateurs (foreign as well as indigenous) and their instruments for control and resistance developed to maturity and the swing of the pendulum indicated drastic change. The colonial administration took the help of various commissions and committees to placate the Indians and maintain their image of an active agent of effective reforms. With this brief introduction, the chapter would highlight the general progress that took place after 1919 in the curriculum of higher education in the Sciences and Humanities, and the resulting emphasis given upon Universities and Colleges established for this purpose. The nationalist wave was at full swing during this period, hence the need to highlight the response of the Indian Intelligentsia, and their works in the post-war period critiquing the colonial policy of higher education.

## **MAPPING THE FIELD AND GENERAL PROGRESS**

Education in science and humanities is a mainstay of University curricula, but sufficient interest and enthusiasm was not shown by the colonial government for the promotion of education and research in pure sciences and liberal arts. Consequently “before 1900 little scientific research was conducted in Indian Universities. Professorial chairs in botany, geology and chemistry were generally reserved for the members of the IMS or the Educational Service.”<sup>5</sup> Applied sciences and vocational courses acquired relatively more importance in the educational policy of the government premised on generating employment for graduates in a poverty stricken nation. When the Government started giving importance, and later patronage to professional education, the scenario was that

the line dividing professional employment under the government from professional self-employment was still hard to establish. Some Indian engineers and doctors were employed in public services, and many of the arts graduates,

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<sup>4</sup> G. D. Bearce, *British Attitudes towards India 1784 – 1858*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, Great Britain: 1961, pp. 226 – 227.

<sup>5</sup> David Arnold, *Science, Technology and Medicine in Colonial India*, (First Ed.), Cambridge University Press, New Delhi: 2004, pp. 159 – 160.

who might have practised law or taught in private schools, were similarly attracted into the service of the regime.<sup>6</sup>

The growing tendency for obtaining graduate/postgraduate degrees meant that the intake for Civil Services was a major problem before the Indian University Commission, 1902 and the Calcutta University Commission, 1919. These Commissions tackled the problem effectively through a larger perspective and proposed recommendations to promote genuine learning and teaching, but the final ball still lay in the court of the government.

After the formulation and enactment of Curzon's Indian Universities Act, 1904 on the bases of recommendations of the Indian Universities Commission, 1902, the beacon of hope to reform the university curriculum could be sighted. Provisions were made, to "(Open)The way for Universities to become centres of post-graduate training and research, able to appoint their own academic staff, maintain laboratories and museums and engage in all activities 'which tend to the promotion of study and research'."<sup>7</sup> The reach of these reforms could not be extended at the same time to all the five existing Universities. The Calcutta University got an upper hand in this regard, primarily due to its establishment in the capital city and also because,

In 1909, under its dynamic Vice Chancellor, lawyer and mathematician Asutosh Mukherjee, the University of Calcutta initiated post graduate training and research in the sciences, to create over the next decade chairs in physics, chemistry, higher mathematics, botany and zoology.<sup>8</sup>

The universities of Bombay, Madras, Punjab and Allahabad also maintained Faculties of Arts and Science, albeit with extensive variations, and were free to design their own frameworks for different courses of study.<sup>9</sup>

In the midst of this series of reforms, the imported idea of nationalism was also spreading gradually indifferent parts of India. The Indian National Congress, founded in 1885, was developing as an important platform for discussing the issues of indigenous interests, and subsequently led the movement for an end to colonial oppression. The first

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<sup>6</sup> Anil Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism: Competition and Collaboration in the Later Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge University Press (paperback edition), London: 1971, p. 119.

<sup>7</sup> David Arnold, *Science, Technology and Medicine in Colonial India*, Op. cit. pp. 159 – 160.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

<sup>9</sup> *Report of the Indian Universities Commission 1902*, Government Central Printing Office, Simla: 1902, p. 38.

major organized opposition against the discriminatory colonial policy emerged in 1905 in the form of the Swadeshi Movement, when the wily Viceroy Lord Curzon (1899 – 1905) divided the province of Bengal into two different entities mirroring a communal divide, with the intention to check the rise of nationalism and to govern India based on the policy of ‘divide and rule’. The leaders of the Swadeshi Movement had to wait till 1911 for the annulment of partition, but its lessons were to be learnt swiftly- encouraging Indians to undertake “Efforts to promote the autonomous development of national life through Swadeshi industries and crafts, national schools and village society.”<sup>10</sup> As a result, demerits of the colonial policy of education were highlighted and subsequent attacks launched against Curzon’s Universities reforms. He was perceived as an imperialist viceroy,

His ideal was not free education, but an education, controlled by the state. The Apostle of efficiency cannot tolerate a variety of institutions with different ideals and methods. They must need to be regulated by the state. The Universities already under Government influenced must become directly Government controlled, otherwise they won’t be efficient as though efficiency were the end of educational institutions.<sup>11</sup>

This provided Indians an opportunity to give concrete shape to their imagined ideals of nationalist education. The opening was made with the foundation of the National Council of Education in 1906. The same year Bengal National College was founded with Aurobindo Ghose (1872 – 1950) its first principal. The curricula “...Started by the NCE included lessons in politics, religion and economics. Stress was also laid on physical and technical education. Apart from this, there was not much difference between its courses and those of Calcutta University.”<sup>12</sup> In the absence of continuous financial support, such remarkable native efforts could not go on for long. There were other factors equally responsible for its decline, including the growing revolutionary nationalism and the obvious ire of the colonial government towards it. Apathy of the British towards reforms in higher education proved to be yet another obstacle for the Indian intelligentsia, wherein the government did not finance projects for promoting science and research. One could be

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<sup>10</sup> Sumit Sarkar, *The Swadeshi Movement In Bengal 1903 - 1908*, (Second Reprint), Pratul Lahiri for People's Publishing House LTD, New Delhi: February 1994, p. 494.

<sup>11</sup> K. M. Panikkar, *Essays on Educational Reconstruction in India*, The Cambridge Press, Madras: 1920, p. 19.

<sup>12</sup> Aparna Basu, National Education in Bengal (1905 – 1912) in Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, (Ed.), *The Contested Terrain: Perspectives on Education in India* (First ed.), Orient Longman Limited, New Delhi: 1998, p. 61.

grateful to the Philanthropic Indians, who helped fund the rapid expansion of science in Indian Universities, and compensated for the relative indifference of the colonial regime.<sup>13</sup> The beginning was made with the establishment of College of Science in 1915. It was founded thanks to the respective grants of fourteen and ten lakh rupees offered by Sir Tarak Nath Palit and Sir Rash Bihari Ghosh, and was intended for post-graduate teaching and Research work.<sup>14</sup> Later, through the contribution of Sir Asutosh Mookerjee, the chair of Physics and Chemistry were created. Numerous others industrialists, landholders, lawyers and wealthy Indians came forward for the economic support of these reformist projects in order to reduce the financial and psychological dependence on the colonial government.

### **EDUCATION CURRICULA, EXPANSION AND DISENCHANTMENT**

The growing demand for better facilities and rapid rise in the number of University students were the most remarkable features of the Indian higher education system. Concurrently, the failure of the colonial government in incorporating the rising aspirations and providing the educational infrastructure were important factors for consideration, since neither the standard of University education nor new appropriate courses for education in science and humanities could be increased leading to academic process being completely hindered. Certain remarks by authors of the Calcutta University Commission are sufficient in underlining the hardships of those times:

The problem with which we have to deal is by no means purely an academic or intellectual problem. It is a social, political and economic problem of the most complex and difficult character; and the longer the solution is postponed, the more difficult it will be.<sup>15</sup>

Important recommendations of the CU Commission, such as bifurcation of higher secondary education from the universities,<sup>16</sup> strengthening the collegiate system,<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> David Arnold, *Science, Technology and Medicine in Colonial India*, Op. Cit. p. 160.

<sup>14</sup> H. Sharp, *Seventh Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1912 - 1917, Volume I*, Superintendent Government Printing, Calcutta: 1918, p. 64.

<sup>15</sup> *Calcutta University Commission, 1917 – 1919, Report, Volume 1, Part I, Analysis of Present Conditions*, Superintendent Government Printing, Calcutta: 1919, p. 28.

<sup>16</sup> *Calcutta University Commission, 1917 – 1919, Report, Volume 4, Part II, Recommendations of the Commission*, Superintendent Government Printing, Calcutta: 1919, p. 37.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 247 – 248.



separation of the courses of B.A. and B.SC. Honours degree from pass course,<sup>18</sup> duration of honours degree course for three years;<sup>19</sup> etc, reflected the commitment of the members and their farsighted approach to deal with the problems. On the other hand, education was considered by the colonial regime as a philanthropic venture and a tool for breeding loyalty to the Raj in the name of ‘character building’.<sup>20</sup> Thus, all recommendations of the commission could not immediately be brought into effect.

The British government, buoyed by victory in the First World War, revised the Government of India Act, 1909 and hastily implemented provisions of the new Act of 1919 in order to transfer the financial burden of education from the central administration to the provinces. The Act declared education “To be a provincial transferred subject, to be entrusted to the charge of ministers responsible to the provincial legislatures.”<sup>21</sup> This step by the government brought drastic change in the education system, with expansion taking place at the cost of quality. Universities multiplied, curricula were enlarged and provincial governments had to compromise with their local needs. In spite of financial constraints, the passage of the Dhaka University Act in 1920 signified the desirability of the government to promote higher education. The Dhaka University started to function under its Vice Chancellor Philip Hartog in 1921 with intent to comply with the recommendations of the CU Commission for teaching instruction. The University offered courses in arts and sciences. Laboratory facilities for physics and chemistry were provided to encourage original research work. A department of the Islamic Studies was also established, and the Department of Economics was supplemented by Commerce. The old library of Dhaka College was modernised and tutorial system was introduced, along with additional increase of staff members for other departments.<sup>22</sup>

Soon, the Dhaka University emerged as a model and various changes were introduced accordingly in other universities such as Aligarh University, Lucknow

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p. 251.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. p. 258.

<sup>20</sup> *Interim Report of the Indian Statutory Commission: Review of the Growth of the Education in British India by the Auxiliary Committee (Hartog Committee)*, Government of India Central Publication Branch, Calcutta: 1929, p. 4.

<sup>21</sup> J. A. Richey, *Eighth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1917 – 1922, Volume I*, Superintendent Government Printing, Calcutta: 1923, p. 11.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p. 55.

University and Allahabad University etc. For introducing the mechanism of post graduate teaching and research, Calcutta University served as a model, with the establishment of new branches of study in “Anthropology, Ancient Indian History and Culture, and Indian Vernaculars. The latter department for the critical, scientific and comparative study of Indian Vernaculars was opened in 1919, the first M.A. examination in the subject being held in 1920.”<sup>23</sup> After the death of Asutosh Mookerjee in 1924, chairs of Sanskrit and Islamic Culture were created in his name.

However, post-graduate departments of Calcutta University were not reorganised and there was no removal of the secondary and intermediate classes from the University as proposed by the CU Commission. Therefore, these departments suffered. Due to causes such as financial rigidity, student numbers declined, university staff was reduced and a number of Departments closed. In August 1925, the Legislative Assembly sanctioned three lakh rupees for the revival of post-graduate department in the university.<sup>24</sup> Along with the promotion of institutional innovations for education in science and humanities, government also faced a challenge to reduce the number of young graduates, who deserted science and humanities and moved to law. The profession of law was quite over crowded.<sup>25</sup> The course dropouts in the Sciences and Arts by Indian students had adverse impact on production of knowledge in these disciplines. Depleting strength of students interested in scientific education was a burning topic among Indian scientists who

.....Were not directly involved with the independence movement then current in the country, but there was no doubt they were imbued with national feelings. Their patriotic mind encouraged them to uplift themselves and their countrymen through modern scientific education and research, and thereby belong to the comedy of the nation of the world.<sup>26</sup>

Its reflection can be found in the presidential address of Prafulla Chandra Ray (1861 – 1944) in the Indian Science Congress held in 1920, where, he urged to existing

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p. 63.

<sup>24</sup> R. Littlehales, *Ninth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1922 – 1927, Volume I*, Government of India Central Publication, Calcutta: 1929, pp. 59 - 60.

<sup>25</sup> J. A. Richey, *Eighth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1917 – 1922, Volume I*, Op. Cit. p. 153.

<sup>26</sup> Chandana Roy Chowdhury, *Some Pioneers of Modern Indian Science: During the Last few Decades of British Rule in Arun Kumar Biswas, (Ed.), History, Science and Society in the Indian Context*, The Asiatic Society, Kolkata: 2001, pp. 197 - 198.

universities to pay attention on the cultivation of pure sciences, particularly Physics and Chemistry and to establish more institutions and colleges for study in applied sciences. In his words,

If India by the grace of God will avail herself of this opportunity to raise equal to the occasion, if her men of science and industrial pioneers will put their shoulders to the wheel together, if the study of physics and chemistry, of mining and engineering, of marine and aerial navigation and of the biological sciences will succeed in enlisting on their behalf the energy and enthusiasm of thousands of votaries, if the young men of the middle classes will crowded in great numbers the science colleges and technological institutes more than the law colleges.... India will not take a long time in coming to the forefront of nations and making her political renaissance not a dream but a reality.<sup>27</sup>

These desired changes in Universities existing at those times couldn't be expected in the absence of wide ranging reforms. The colonial government however, started bringing changes in other Universities bypassing the general concerns of Indians, as they believed, "Extensive reconstruction not mere of the superstructure but of very ground work of our educational system is necessary for all progress."<sup>28</sup> Bombay University for example, had departments for postgraduate studies and research, but the subjects in its curriculum were restricted to Economics, Sociology, Sanskrit, Indian History, and Mathematics. In due course of time, the reforms were introduced in the administrative and academic function of the University. When, it was observed that the new system was not working satisfactorily, the syndicate appointed a committee in 1926 to consider the problem for post graduate study and to draw up a new scheme.<sup>29</sup> After a long deliberation, the committee submitted its report, and the Bombay University Act was subsequently amended in 1928. The act provided,

The constitution and function of a board of post-graduate studies as one of the authorities of the university with a view to enabling the university to provide

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<sup>27</sup> Document No. 138, P. C. Ray advocates the cause of science education among Indians at the Indian Science Congress, Nagpur, 13 January 1920 in Sabyasachi Bhattacharya *et al.*, (Eds.), *Educating the Nation: Documents on the Discourse of National Education in India (1880 - 1920)* Kanishka Publisher, New Delhi: 2003, pp. 260 – 261.

<sup>28</sup> K. M. Panikkar, *Essays on Educational Reconstruction in India*, The Cambridge Press, Madras: 1920, p. 8.

<sup>29</sup> R. Littlehales, *Ninth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1922 – 1927, Volume I, Op. Cit.*, p. 60.

greater facilities for higher education and to conduct post-graduate teaching in all branches of learning including technology.<sup>30</sup>

Impact of the new policy was gradually visible, with the number of research students increasing from 48 in 1932 to 53 in 1937. However, in comparison to humanities, applied sciences and professional courses received more importance. The 1930's saw the creation of a new Faculty of Technology along with the syllabuses of professional courses such as engineering, agriculture, medicine, and law being revised.<sup>31</sup> Later, Bachelor of Textile was introduced as a new Degree course in the faculty of technology in 1945 – 1946. Perhaps it was the impact of changing times, in which sound technical education was considered essential for getting employment and therefore the promotion of applied sciences remained the only choice.

One of the stronger voices in support of applied sciences was raised by A. B. Dhruva, than Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Benares Hindu University and Principal of Central Hindu College, Benares, in the second Inter University Conference at Delhi held in 1929. He spoke on numerous issues regarding reforms in the higher education system and encouraged thinking beyond the British ideals of education by saying,

It is high time that India took a leaf from the educational wisdom of other countries like Germany and America, who do not make a fetish of pure science and do not mutter at its shrine the mantra of 'science for its own sake/ but attach sufficient importance to the applied side of the various sciences. These are at present taught only in a one-sided and therefore imperfect, in my opinion, in an unreal way in India. This is another direction in which a thorough-going reform is needed.<sup>32</sup>

Afterwards, the Universities of Allahabad, Aligarh, Banaras and Lucknow revised old curricula and included some new courses laying emphasis on education of science and technology.<sup>33</sup> Unlike the government of Bombay and Calcutta Presidencies, after the amendment of the Madras University Act in 1923, the government of Madras sanctioned the establishment of a Science Research Institute under Madras University for providing

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<sup>30</sup> John Sargent, *Eleventh Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1932 – 1937, Volume I, Manager of Publications, Delhi: 1939, p. 58.*

<sup>31</sup> Ibid

<sup>32</sup> *Report of the Universities' Conference held at Delhi on the 30th and 31 October and the 1st November, 1929, Government of India Central Publication Branch, Calcutta: 1929, p. 61.*

<sup>33</sup> Sir John Sargent, *Decennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1937 – 1947, Volume I, Central Bureau of Education, Delhi: 1948, p. 123.*

advance study and research in Botany, Zoology, and Bio-chemistry. Establishment of department for higher teaching and research in Indian philosophy and Mathematics, foundation of a school for Indian history and the institutes for advanced study of Sanskrit, Dravidian and Islamic study and research was also sanctioned.<sup>34</sup> The project of expansion of the Madras University curriculum was further enhanced, when Oriental Research Institute, consisting of Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, Kenner, Malayalam, Arabic, Persian and Urdu Section.<sup>35</sup>

The Madras University Act was revised again in 1929 subsequently increasing research activity in science and humanities. In early 1930's, changes took place in courses and examination pattern. A diploma in political and public administration was instituted, faculty of veterinary science established and a proposal for introducing home science as an optional subject in B.A. and B.Sc. courses was accepted.<sup>36</sup> Other than the Presidency Universities, the older University of Punjab also initiated reforms after 1919. Curriculum was developed by instituting Honours course in chemistry, Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic along with combined Honours Arts course in English, history, economics and philosophy. Research was also promoted in some areas in science and humanities.<sup>37</sup> In 1930s; Punjab University broadened its functioning by organising Honours in Physics and the establishment of a Department of Political Science along with classes on public service examination.<sup>38</sup> Indian intellectuals also took initiatives to provide higher education according to changing circumstances. The Banaras Hindu University, founded in 1916, as a unitary teaching and residential university, was one of the more progressive institutions as envisioned by its founders. The university maintained faculties of arts, science, law, agriculture and technology. It also had a department of theology and Oriental Studies, and provided instruction at graduation, post-graduation and research level. In the 1920's, new

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<sup>34</sup> R. Littlehailes, *Ninth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1922 – 1927*, Volume I, Op. Cit. p. 62.

<sup>35</sup> Sir George Anderson, *Tenth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1927 – 1932*, Volume I, Manager of Publications, Delhi: 1934, p. 64.

<sup>36</sup> John Sargent, *Eleventh Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1932 – 1937*, Volume I, Op. Cit., p. 58.

<sup>37</sup> R. Littlehailes, *Ninth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1922 – 1927*, Volume I, Op. Cit., p. 62.

<sup>38</sup> John Sargent, *Eleventh Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1932 – 1937*, Volume I, Op. Cit., p. 59.

courses in Music, Domestic Science and Painting were opened up as optional subjects for women, and other courses in Hindi, Civics, politics, and Ancient Indian History and Culture were introduced in the teaching curriculum for everyone.<sup>39</sup>

The BHU acquired fame for providing teaching instruction in liberal arts along with pure and applied sciences. Between 1922 and 1927, the enrolment of students increased from 1,469 to 1,936, of which 952 were studying science.<sup>40</sup> It was the first University where Pharmaceutical Chemistry was introduced as an optional subject in B.Sc. during the very first year of its establishment. Later, the curriculum was revised to design a separate course for pharmaceutical studies in 1933 and legislation was passed by the Senate which said “It will include the study of Pharmaceutical Chemistry, Pharmacy, and Pharmacognasy, and its standard will be the same as that of the qualifying examination of the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain.”<sup>41</sup> The Aligarh Muslim University did not lag behind in this project. Science College was instituted in the 1930’s which provided research facilities in all science subjects.<sup>42</sup> For the government of Bengal, the steady increase in the number of students in Dhaka University, from 1,003 in 1931 – 32 to 1,268 at the end of 31 marches 1937, was not satisfactory enough. Still the departments of Physiology, Botany, and Soil Science came up. The University carried out valuable research work in Agriculture Chemistry. A Biochemical section was started, and Biochemistry was also introduced as an alternative paper in Chemistry Honours examination along with being a subject in M.Sc. Statistics was introduced as a subject of study in Mathematics, and Military Science as one paper in the B.A. syllabus.<sup>43</sup>

The position of the colonial government was not the same for all universities and varied according to their whims and fancies. While the availability of funds was never an obstacle, the government treated Universities inappropriately. Patna University was a victim of precisely such a treatment. Established in 1917 after disjunction of the territories

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<sup>39</sup> R. Littlehales, *Ninth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1922 – 1927*, Volume I, *Op. Cit.*, p. 63.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> V. A. Sundaram, (Ed.), *Benares Hindu University 1905 – 1935*, R. Pathak, Banaras: 1936, p p. 607 – 608.

<sup>42</sup> John Sargent, *Eleventh Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1932 – 1937*, Volume I, *Op. Cit.*, p. 64.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

of Bihar and Orissa from Bengal in 1912, the University was an examining body federal in character. After the CU Commission report, modifications required in the administration and teaching curriculum, required for bringing efficiency were not initially brought about. Moreover, the government was keener to utilize existing financial resources for founding a Faculty in Engineering and Applied Sciences.<sup>44</sup> The necessary reforms only appeared at the end of the second decade in the Century, when a new Science College was opened in 1928. There was a consensus between government and the University, wherein both agreed that the University would be an examining body. It was decided to establish a completely unitary system of administration and teaching, where the college became a fundamental administrative unit, while the University took up the control of higher education in internal colleges. Because of this status quo in the functioning of the University, steady deterioration in academic standards could be observed statistically. In the session of 1937-28, 3,760 students appeared for matriculation of whom, 1,557 passed, while in the session of 1931-32, 1,782 students out of a total of 5,342 passed, which showed a dip in the passing percentage. The number of B.A. passed candidates also reduced from 278 to 195.<sup>45</sup>

The much awaited decision to amend the Patna University Act was taken by the government in 1932, which paved the way for setting up new courses in the affiliated colleges. In the following years, classes for B.A. Honours and pass in Experimental Psychology, B.A. Pass in Political Science and M.A. in Psychology were started in Patna College. In addition, the teaching of Experimental Psychology was begun in the great Bhumihar Brahman College, Muzaffarpur, and the Government College for Women in Patna was converted into a first grade college.<sup>46</sup> On the other hand, in the Colleges of Orissa, different level classes such as

First year B.Sc. classes in Puri College, third year B.A. class in Puri and Balasore colleges, third year B.Sc. class in Zoology and fifth year M.A. classes in Oriya and Economics in Ravenshaw College, third year B. A. class in

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<sup>44</sup> R. Littlehales, *Ninth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1922 – 1927, Volume I, Op. Cit.*, pp. 63 – 64.

<sup>45</sup> Sir George Anderson, *Tenth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1927 – 1932, Volume I*, Manager of Publications, Delhi: 1934, pp. 68 – 69.

<sup>46</sup> Sir John Sargent, *Decennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1937 – 1947, Volume I*, Central Bureau of Education, Delhi: 1948, p. 262.

Women's College Cuttack, and third year B.A. and B.Com. classes in Sambalpur College<sup>47</sup>

were initiated. Despite implementation in old Universities, the colonial government did not consider the recommendations of CU commission while founding new Universities such as the Nagpur University in 1923. The University acted purely as an affiliating body, and did not take any direct responsibility of teaching except the Law Department. The University had faculties of "Arts, science, law, agriculture and education and offered B.A., B.Sc., M.A., M.Sc., LL.B and L.T. Degrees."<sup>48</sup>

The Nagpur University received financial aid of Rupees 33, 88,508 between 1927 – 1932 by Rai Bahadur D. Laxminarayan, aimed at promoting applied sciences and chemistry for Hindu students. It proved a lifeline in enhancing teaching curriculum, with the subsequent opening of College of Science at Nagpur in 1929. The College provided regular courses instruction in English up along with Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Geology up to B Sc. It also provided facilities for research students.<sup>49</sup> Necessary advancement in teaching curriculum was not seen until the last decade of colonial rule, though; numerical expansion did take place with the number of the colleges almost doubling and increase in the admission of students.<sup>50</sup> Likewise, Andhra University was founded in the Madras Presidency in 1926. After a lot of deliberation, the model of a unitary University was accepted which was different from an affiliating one. The new Andhra University Act contained various features, the most important among which was the creation of "A number of teaching centres in which the organisation of the colleges and the teaching imparted is control not by the university but by the individual separately managed colleges."<sup>51</sup> Arts College of the University was opened in 1931 with provision for Honours in History, Economics, Politics, and Telugu Language and Literature. The next year saw the inauguration of Departments of Mathematics and Philosophy. The same year, University

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> R. Littlehailes, *Ninth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1922 – 1927, Volume I, Op. Cit.* pp. 57 – 58.

<sup>49</sup> Sir George Anderson, *Tenth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1927 – 1932, Volume I, Op. Cit.*, p. 69.

<sup>50</sup> John Sargent, *Eleventh Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1932 – 1937, Volume I, Op. Cit.*, p. 60.

<sup>51</sup> R. Littlehailes, *Ninth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1922 – 1927, Volume I, Op. Cit.*, pp. 58 - 59.



College of Science and Technology, offering B.Sc. Honours in Physics and Chemistry was opened. Sugar Industry as a special subject was introduced in Science College in July 1933. With effect from July 1934, honours and pass courses in B.Com. Degrees were organised in Arts College.<sup>52</sup>

Diversity in the curricula of Osmania and Annamalai Universities attracted the attention of scholars from Southern India. The former was founded in 1918 as a unitary university via Charter by the ruler of the state and provided teaching instruction in Urdu for all non-language subjects. Urdu, instead of English was continued as a compulsory language up to the B.A. stage with M.A in English and M.Sc. Biology starting in the 1930's. Along with instructions in subjects of arts and science, the University imparted training in medicine and engineering. One of the most significant efforts of the University was to provide translations of Standard English Language books.<sup>53</sup> On the contrary; the Annamalai University was established in 1929 as a unitary teaching and residential university as a first of its kind in South India. It decided to adopt Tamil as a medium of instruction. To fulfil this objective, a research department in Tamil was instituted in 1934. The incorporation of the Raja Annamalai Music College and the Oriental Training College in 1932 was an important step which highlighted the desire to assign a position of prominence to Indian classical music in the Indian University Curriculum. To serve the purpose,

A professional course in music extending over a period of four years leading to an examination for the title of 'SangitaBhushana' and a training course for pundits in Sanskrit and Tamil leading to the award of a certificate at the end of the one year study were instituted.<sup>54</sup>

In addition to this, the University maintained the faculties of arts and science, and provided instruction in the subjects of philosophy, Indian history, mathematics, physics, chemistry, economics, botany, zoology, Sanskrit and Tamil. English was prescribed in the curriculum as an optional subject and became the medium of instruction for degree courses

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<sup>52</sup> John Sargent, *Eleventh Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1932 – 1937, Volume I, Op. Cit.*, p. 61.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 67 – 68.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*.

in science and humanities including B.A., B.Sc. pass and honours, M.A., M.Litt. M.Sc. and MOL in Oriental Studies.<sup>55</sup>

By propagating such expansionist policies of higher education, the colonial government succeeded in building a network of higher education institutions across India. At the time of independence, there were 21 universities in India possessing large number of colleges of arts, science and technology in each province. But, the quality of education was not anywhere near universities abroad, which resulted in increasing disenchantment among Indians. Indian system of higher education and scholarship schemes has hence come under frequent criticism and consequently “Indian students who have graduated at European or American Universities are often looked upon as superior to those who have obtained the highest degrees of Indian Universities.”<sup>56</sup> In such a scenario, it was but natural that P. C. Ray, despite all his Swadeshi convictions, he

....Encouraged his ablest students to follow his own example and study abroad in order to acquire the best scientific training before returning to India. Many of his protégés went on to occupy important post in chemistry and related departments in Universities throughout India, creating academic networks that were in their way as extensive and influential as those of the state services.<sup>57</sup>

Apart from these flaws in the higher education system, the condition of school education was quite abysmal-education provided in the high schools was insufficient for a student to seek a university career.<sup>58</sup> In order to improve the quality of school education, the CU Commission had recommended the bifurcation of intermediate education from the University. However, till 1947,

Only the United Provinces and Orissa in addition to Delhi have decided to abolish the intermediate classes, but most of the provinces have made provision for developing University education along conventional lines, for starting new colleges and for expanding and improving existing institutions.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> N. K. Sidiqanta, *Handbook of Indian Universities 1942*, Inter-University Board Bangalore Press, Bangalore City: 1942, p. 125.

<sup>56</sup> *Report of the Central Advisory Board of Education (Sergeant Committee Report)*, Manager Government of India Press, Simla: 1944, p. 27.

<sup>57</sup> David Arnold, *Science, Technology and Medicine in Colonial India*, Op. Cit., p. 165.

<sup>58</sup> *Report of the Central Advisory Board of Education (Sergeant Committee Report)*, Op. Cit., p. 29.

<sup>59</sup> Sir John Sargent, *Decennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1937 – 1947, Volume I*, Central Bureau of Education, Delhi: 1948, p. 246.

On the other hand, the blissful ignorance of the colonial government towards reforms indicated their lack of interest in promoting higher education catering to Indian needs. Hence, their logic of not introducing reforms required for bringing effective change in the curriculum and quality due to insufficient investment surplus couldn't always be counted as valid. The efforts of the Colonial administration in this regard showed their willingness to finance education, not for the interest of Indians or betterment of the curriculum but the benefit of the Raj. The introduction of courses based on military core in Universities was a testimony to the government's intentions for India. For this purpose, the Indian Territorial Force Act was introduced in 1920, which enabled universities to establish University Training Core on permanent bases.<sup>60</sup>

The relevant Curricula were accordingly introduced in most Universities. Military Science was inserted as an optional subject at intermediate and degree level of the Punjab University.<sup>61</sup> When universities were facing the problem of students drifting away, the government paid scant attention, even as the recommendation of the Central Advisory Board of Education suggested the following:

The readjustment of the present system of higher education so as not only to prepare pupils for professional and university courses but also to enable them, at the completion of appropriate stages, to be diverted to occupations or to separate vocational institutions.<sup>62</sup>

Thus, at the cost of consolidating the existing University system and the advancement of old curriculum in sciences and humanities, military courses received attention for innovation in the name of producing good teachers and thoughtful leaders. In Calcutta University

A course for military studies for the member number of the university core was introduced in 1936. The Dhaka University has decided to introduce military science as one paper in the ordinary B. A. examination. Ordinances for a certificate of proficiency in military science have also been frame by the Allahabad University, and regular instruction is being given. A scheme for the

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<sup>60</sup> R. Littlehales, *Ninth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1922 – 1927*, Volume I, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 72 - 73.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> John Sargent, *Eleventh Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1932 – 1937*, Volume I, *Op. Cit.*, p. 70.

establishment of a military college is receiving the Ernest attention of the authorities of the Aligarh Muslim University.<sup>63</sup>

## **THE NATIONALIST VISION AND PROPOSALS FOR A NEW BEGINNING**

In the first section of this chapter, we looked at protest actions of the Indian intelligentsia against the arbitrary education policy of the colonial government, Actions of Indians were not confined to the movement on the ground. There were various debates and discussions within the intellectual community regarding the issue. The most salient feature of such discourses was the uniformity in objective and imagination, despite differences on conceptual issues or policy. Indian intellectuals not only criticised colonial measures, but also provided a framework to practice the ideal methods of learning. On the nature of higher education and its curriculum, a number of views regarding the conception of a University were visible. Some of the more important proposals to evolve nationalist view of higher education could be seen in the objectives of the Memorandum by the Association of the National Council of Education, Bengal dated 23 May 1906, which proposed,

To impart and promote the imparting of education – literary and scientific, as well as technical and professional on national lines and exclusively under national control not in opposition to, but standing apart from, the existing systems of primary, secondary and collegiate education attaching special importance to a knowledge of the country, its literature, history and philosophy, and design to incorporate with the best oriental ideals of life and thought, the ideals of the west that are assimilable, and to inspire students with a genuine love for and a real desire to serve the country.<sup>64</sup>

Indian intellectuals unsuccessfully tried to proceed as per the directives of the Memorandum by the Association of the NCE and their failure was a message that their efforts would go in vain without the support of the colonial administration. In order to make some headway, they would need to compromise with their nationalist ideals. Its classic reflection can be found in the establishment of the Banaras Hindu University in 1916. It was founded by a nationalist minded educationist Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid, p. 73

<sup>64</sup> Document No. 4, “Memorandum of Association” of the national Council of Education, Bengal dated 23 May 1906 in Sabyasachi Bhattacharya *et al.*, (Eds.), *Educating the Nation: Documents on the Discourse of National Education in India (1880 - 1920)*, Kanishka Publisher, New Delhi: 2003, p. 9.

(1861 – 1946) with the objective to impart Western Education in an Indian setting. The project of Malaviya was not only financially and morally supported by the native elites, but also by the colonial government. The debate which emerged after the foundation of the Benares Hindu College needs to be highlighted here as it provides a background to our discussion. The central focus of this debate was the concept of a ‘national university’, about which intellectual like Aurobindo Ghose were quite clear- that national education must be on nationalist lines and under the control of Indians.<sup>65</sup> The word ‘national’ here is a keyword which can have numerous interpretations. However, Ghose was careful in realizing its significance and expressed his disenchantment over the foundation of the Benares Hindu College by Annie Besant (1847 – 1933). He stated, “No institution which cannot rely on the people of India for its support and build itself up without official support or patronage, can be considered to have established its capacity of developing into a National University.”<sup>66</sup> He further went on to describe in detail, the objective he had in this regard and linked it with teaching and curriculum in a University. In his words,

We must introduce the best methods of teaching humanity has developed, whether modern or ancient. And all these we must harmonise into a system which will be impregnated with the spirit of self-reliance so as to build up men and not machines – national men, able men, men fit to carve out a career for themselves by their own brain power and resource, fit to meet the shocks of life and breast the waves of adventure....<sup>67</sup>

A nationalistic view for University education was advocated by another influential man, the leader of the extremist faction within the Congress, Lala Lajpat Rai (1865 – 1928), popularly known as Punjab Kesari. He derived his own ideals of a nationalist institution from the scheme of the National Council of Bengal, born during the Swadeshi and the Boycott Movement which

was free from the sectarian tinge of the Upper India movement; it took no notice of denominational nationalism; it took ample cognizance of the economic needs of the country as a whole and it frankly recognised the necessity of ignoring the official University curriculum, on the one hand, and

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<sup>65</sup> Document No. 5, Sri Aurobindo Ghose’s Editorial Note on the Concept of a National University in the *Bande Matram Weekly*, 1 March 1908 in Sabyasachi Bhattacharya *et al.*, (Eds.), *Educating the Nation: Documents on the Discourse of National Education in India (1880 - 1920)*, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 11 - 12.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

the state aid on the other. It aimed at national consolidation and national independence.<sup>68</sup>

Therefore, he did not view recently established educational institutions such as Mohammedan College at Aligarh, the Arya Samaj College at Lahore and the Hindu College at Benares, as in consonance with the national cause. Firstly, although these institutions were symbols of the nationalist ideals of their founders, but were constrained by sectarianism. Secondly, while these institutions did give ample importance to the study of Indian languages in the curriculum, but they unreservedly adopted official courses and there was too much emphasis on syllabus and examinations. When the two colleges at Aligarh and Banaras were converted into Universities, the difficulties related to the ideological character of the Universities further increased. On one side, a section of the nationalist intelligentsia refused to consider Banaras Hindu University and Aligarh Muslim University as national institutions, while on the other side, the colonial government maintained direct relations with these institutions and while continuing financial aid to these institutions, gave them the precarious tag of ‘communal institutions’.<sup>69</sup> It has to be noted however that these Universities officially did not discriminate in admissions based on caste, creed or community.

Unlike the extremist section of the nationalist intelligentsia, a class of intellectuals expressed their dislike for such official universities and their curricula, without going into the debate of what constitutes ‘national’. It was not. In their opinion, a question of copying or affiliating to the western model, but as they opined:

The Universities of India have made no attempt to adopt themselves to the intellectual needs of the country. They have not- been-seats of learning where the torch of scholarship and culture has been held high for the enlighten-ment of the people. Nor have they attempted to interpret social ideals and values and help in the great readjustment that is taking place within the Indian society.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Document No. 9, Lala Lajpat Ray Surveys Various Experiments on an Issues Connected with “National Education”, 1920 in Sabyasachi Bhattacharya et al., (Eds.), *Educating the Nation: Documents on the Discourse of National Education in India (1880 - 1920)*, Op. Cit., p. 24.

<sup>69</sup> J. A. Richey, *Eighth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1917 – 1922, Volume I*, Superintendent Government Printing, Calcutta: 1923, pp. 55 - 56.

<sup>70</sup> K. M. Panikkar, *Essays on Educational Reconstruction in India*, The Cambridge Press, Madras: 1920, pp. 86 – 87.

These intellectuals were encouraged by the CU Commission report which in their view should have acted as a mirror to the policymakers. The subsequent rejection of its recommendations however, vanquished their hopes and their optimism receded. The fervent appeals of Rabindranath Tagore (1861 – 1941) cannot be bypassed in this matter. He propagated a kind of cultural synthesis between the East and the West, and his zeal to reform the existing state of education led to the foundation of Santiniketan, latter the Viswabharti University in 1921 as alternative models while describing the contemporary education system as the case of ‘buying spectacles at the cost of eyesight’ he further said,

The introduction of this education was not a part of the solemn marriage ceremony which was to unite the minds of the East and West in mutual understanding. It represented an artificial method of training specially calculated to produce the careers of the white Man’s Burdon. This want of ideals still clings to per education system, though our universities have latterly burdened their syllabus with a greater number of subjects than before. But it is only like adding to the bags of wheat the bullock carries to market; it does not make the bullock any better off.<sup>71</sup>

This intriguing debate on the idea of a national University continued long, with many new conceptions being added with time. We have tried here to provide a short description in order to understand the nationalist vision about university education, in which there was great emphasis on the development of a secular structure of the education according to Indian needs. What was prominent here was the determination of the Indian intelligentsia on this account: “No amount of imported knowledge, no parrot – like repetition of unearned knowledge, no mere assertion of past greatness will make India an effective factor in the world of progress. Thus a classical revival must be the very base of our educational reconstruction.”<sup>72</sup> These concrete debates on higher education among the native intelligentsia provided enough material to evolve a framework for an inclusive and all-encompassing education system. The first noteworthy attempt to prepare a policy draft from the side of the leadership appeared in 1939, when a National Planning Committee was appointed under the chairmanship of Jawaharlal Nehru, to evolve a national development

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<sup>71</sup> Document No. 16, Rabindranath Tagore in a speech in USA in 1922 elucidates his idea of an “Eastern University” as a centre of the “Intellectual Life of the People” in Sabyasachi Bhattacharya et al., (Eds.), *Educating the Nation: Documents on the Discourse of National Education in India (1880 - 1920)*, *Op. Cit.*, p. 41.

<sup>72</sup> K. M. Panikkar, *Essays on Educational Reconstruction in India*, The Cambridge Press, Madras: 1920, p. 106.

plan. Out of twenty-nine subcommittees, one had the responsibility to propose a national plan on general and technical education and developmental research. The Committee submitted its report in 1948 which proposed revolutionizing education and subsequently living conditions in the country after implementation.<sup>73</sup>

As expected, the committee provided a stringent critique of the British education policy, but surprisingly, without offering a coherent alternative to create the foundations for the future development of education in independent India. It proposed the construction of a superstructure on the foundation of the colonial education system. The objectives of the committee were thus:

We have to convert the mass of mere literates into a body of independent, intelligent workers, responsible citizens of a free democracy. We have to mobilise the entire man power of the country to fit into an over-all national plan, to work it intelligently each in his or her own appropriate role; so that they become real architect of their own as well as their country's prosperity... In which new generation is to be trained, educated, and fitted for its tasks in the new age, now dawning upon this land.<sup>74</sup>

There construction of higher education did not grab sufficient attention from the committee members. Relegating the education of humanities in its priorities, the committee observed: "The highest degree of technical education and organisation of scientific research must necessarily be an integral part of the educational sector in the national plan."<sup>75</sup> Thus, much like the British, the government of independent India waited for the publication of another report of a commission exclusively devoted to higher education. The earlier appointed commission for higher education under the chairmanship of Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888 – 1975), the University Education Commission published its report in 1949. Its approach reflected the new idealism acquired fresh after independence with a view for creating a new education policy in independent India.

The UEC was faced with a dual challenge- to redefine the old conception of a University according the needs of a new India, and to create a new structure for the development of a culture of higher education and research. The commission took a

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<sup>73</sup> *Report of the National Planning Committee on General Education and Technical Education and Developmental Research*, Vora & Co. Publishers LTD, Bombay: 1948, p. 2.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 21 - 22.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid*, p. 41.



philosophical view in dealing with the former. It stated that the University is a place for intellectual adventure, and the goal of university education is to provide a coherent picture of the universe along with an integrated way of life. It should focus on cultivating a rational attitude in the individual to render him capable of analysis and insight. University education should hence focus on attaining wisdom and knowledge since education is considered a training of minds and souls.<sup>76</sup> In the context of education curriculum, the commission talked about bridging the division between natural and social sciences “Only by a combination of sciences and humanities can a true conception of civilization survive.”<sup>77</sup> Instead of proposing a new model or structure, the commission resolved to continue reforms in the existing one. The recommendation of the CU Commission regarding the duration of courses, which had been earlier rejected, was also considered this time. However, the emphasis on uniformity in the system became a priority, as stated by the UEC thus:

There should be uniformity in the regulations for the M.A. and M.Sc. degrees. A pass graduate should study for at least two years and honours graduate for at least one year; teaching for these degrees should be properly organised by means of regular lectures, seminars and laboratory work. The course should include advanced study of one special subject and training in methods of research, but not actual research. Admission to these courses should be on an all-India basis at every university. There should be the closest personal touch between staff and the students.<sup>78</sup>

The reforms were also proposed for liberal education, whose objectives included skill development and the nurturing of critical inquiry. It was felt that there would be no need for a separate system to impart liberal education, since its general philosophy could be well incorporated in the mainstream education system. Completion of higher education was conventionally limited to specialising in a particular subject, whereas general education provided an opportunity to learn about various aspects of nature and society, and hence the commission assumed

The aim of general education should be to select from the vast total of human knowledge elements which are most significant and representative, and to present them in such a way as to lead to an understanding of controlling

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<sup>76</sup> *Report of the University Education Commission (December 1948 – August 1949), Volume I*, (Reprinted), Ministry of Education, Government of India Press, Delhi: 1962, pp. 32 – 33.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid*, p. 152.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid*, p. 171.

principles and chief phenomena, with typical illustrations and cases; to the habit and capacity of objective critical inquiry; to creative thinking, to the habit of applying once knowledge to the solving of his own problem; to an attitude of interest and curiosity which will be expressed in awareness and continued growth; and to current enjoyment of living.<sup>79</sup>

In the syllabus for general education, all subjects in sciences and humanities were to be included, and the commission recommended including science as a subject for all students from the primary up till the undergraduate level. Similarly, education in humanities was recommended for enabling students to understand basic concepts of the subject so as to enable them to associate their subject knowledge with their lived realities.

A Graduation degree in liberal arts and sciences was proposed to be for three years, following the completion of the twelfth standard. Among the various subjects in liberal arts, the commission emphasized upon the learning of Sanskrit along with subjects like sociology that are to be introduced in all universities. The education of history was supposed to stimulate creative imagination about the past along with a sense of causality. Along with archaeology, it was also recommended that the honours students have knowledge of the historical world, geography and historical philosophy. The need to include subjects such as mathematics, anthropology and home economics in the curricula of the university was also felt.<sup>80</sup> The role of a university is important in promoting research. The commission critically assessed colonial efforts and found that most of the research was done by government sponsored scientific research institutions, while the colonial government made no attempts to develop scientific thinking among university students. For example, the commission referred to the report of the Empire Scientific Conference held in 1946, published by an eminent scientist Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar (1894 – 1955). He tried to provide a picture of the grim conditions of scientific research in India. In his view, the “Lack of equipment, lack of accommodation, long hours of routine work due to insufficient teaching staff and finally the eternal want of funds are some of the problems that handicap science teaching and scientific research in Indian universities.”<sup>81</sup> On the other hand, the

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid, p. 122.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, pp. 129 – 134.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, pp. 145 - 146.

colonial government spent most of the funds for research in applied sciences, while fundamental research took a back seat.

For improving the quality and quantity of research in the sciences as well as humanities, the commission proposed a broad outline, which suggested that every existing university should develop a structure for fulfilling the needs of research students, while affiliating and examining universities should include departments for post graduate studies. Facilities for scholarship should be extended, the university should play a vital role in creating a favourable environment for research and the focus should be on the originality, critical thinking, scientific reasoning, and creative approaches and methodologies. Students of humanities should utilise the material resources of the country for addressing fundamental problems in the disciplines of history, philosophy, fine arts, religion, language and literature etc. For the recruitment of quality science teachers, a large number of science students should be trained so that the acute shortage of trained professionals would not continue. A maintenance fund and a generous grant be allocated to ever post graduate department, and special attention should be given on less developed sciences such as Biochemistry, Biophysics, Geochemistry, Geophysics etc.<sup>82</sup> Keeping this in mind, the University Education Commission of 1949 proposed an effective framework for the development of higher education system and a unified higher education curricula for education in sciences and humanities. In short, much like the colonial government, the priorities of the government in independent India were paramount when it came to adopting and rejecting the recommendations.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The descriptions provided in this chapter tell us that the colonial government made insufficient efforts in imparting higher education to the colonised. The most critical part of the higher education was the curricula in sciences and humanities and till the end of 1920,

The study of sciences necessary to equip a man in the struggles of the modern world was neglected; scholarship was relegated to the back ground; Sanskrit and Persian, the two main classic languages of India, found hardly any place in the Universities at all. And more surprising was the omission of such languages

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid, pp. 171 – 173.

as Hindi and Bengali, Tamil and Telugu, from the higher studies of the University.<sup>83</sup>

It is important to understand that the colonial government did not take effective measures for the improvement of higher education- not because of lacking an appropriate mechanism for guidance regarding the higher education policy, but because they were mostly interested in propagating an ideology suited to the needs of the empire. The role of the Indian intelligentsia was significant, and they took vital steps for educating their countrymen. Due to their efforts, the first college for sciences was established in Calcutta University in 1915, and later various departments of sciences and humanities were started in the University.

The publication of the report of the Calcutta University Commission in 1919 revolutionised the whole education scenario, as it explicitly pointed fingers at the government for not attempting to provide quality education and suitable infrastructure. The syllabuses for higher studies were also found to be incompatible for Indian students, and incompetent in relation to the foreign universities. Instead of taking effective measures, the central authorities transferred the subject of education to provinces under the charge of an Indian minister; as a result of which, the provincial government had to bear the burden for schooling up to university education. However, the role of the colonial government in creating a network of universities cannot be underestimated either. At the time of independence; there were twenty-one universities across India with a large number of colleges. After 1919, the government expressed their desirability for providing higher education by establishing a much awaited university at Dhaka. But the action of the government was not encouraging enough for all such universities. For example, the Patna University did not receive any attention from the government and continued to teach through affiliated colleges and conventional curriculum. Like the older universities, the colonial government did not pay attention on the CU Commission's recommendations while laying the foundations of new universities, as was the case with Nagpur and Andhra University which we have discussed.

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<sup>83</sup> K. M. Panikkar, *Essays on Educational Reconstruction in India*, The Cambridge Press, Madras: 1920, p. 85.

Regarding the curricula in these universities, the government had a vested interest in financing and promotion of applied sciences and professional education, as in the cases of the Presidency Universities of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras, and likewise in the cases of newly established ones like Banaras Hindu University, Nagpur University, Dhaka University and Lucknow University (which has been explained). However these universities had different departments for the education of sciences and humanities. The most popular subjects in the curriculum were Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Geography, Zoology and Mathematics for the science students and History, Political Science, Economics and Philosophy for the students of humanities. There was also a choice of Languages as a subject for the students of humanities, whose curriculum varied according to the geographical location of the university. One of the most prominent developments in the humanities' curriculum was the recognition of Indian Classical Music as a subject. The most commendable steps for this purpose were taken by the Banaras Hindu University and Annamalai University. The latter went a little further and instituted a professional course extending over a period of four years to give the award of 'SangitaBhushana'. Over time, other universities also started to include music in their education curricula. For improving the quality of education, the CU commission recommended structuring the graduation honours as a three year course, and the bifurcation of intermediate classes from the universities. The colonial government however, did not implement these recommendations even in the Calcutta University till 1947, and only the United Provinces, Punjab and Delhi had decided upon bifurcation of intermediate classes from the University.

The promotion of post graduate studies and research as an important task of the university was begun to be recognized by various University Departments after the recommendations of the CU Commission. But the colonial government failed to facilitate the practice of fundamental research among universities. For science students, the situation was especially complex since most of the universities did not have the facility of laboratories and availability of required tools and equipments for performing experiments. Despite these difficulties, Indian scientists produced outstanding research and gained world reputation, largely thanks to their hard work and enthusiasm. Original researches in the field of humanities received some attention and several remarkable works were published by universities and institutes such as Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Indian

Institute of Philosophy etc. A significant feature of this age was the rise of nationalism and its impacts were discovered in the discussion that took place regarding the conception of a national university. The Indian intellectuals emphasised the need to evolve a secular structure and to adopt a curricula according to Indian needs. They were also willing to eliminate alien characteristics, and create a new structure based on the classical Indian ideals of education. Indians took initiative in preparing a framework for guiding the government of independent India regarding the higher education policy. The University Education Commission under the chairmanship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan performed a strenuous exercise to evolve recommendations for firm foundation of the University education system.

The authors of the UEC report focused on the need to continue the present series of reforms rather than proposing a new higher education system for the people of free India. The members of the commission were inspired from the national movement- not only did they criticise the British policy of education in one hand, but also lauded the efforts of those Indian intellectuals, who had contributed to the development of higher education in the country. The commission emphasized upon including the subjects of science and humanities in the education curricula, which were marginalized due to the colonial policies of excessive stress on the promotion of applied sciences and professional courses. The torch bearing ideas of the commission included the duration of the honours courses being for three years; and one and two years respectively for Honours and Pass Degrees. The commission also stressed on provisions to provide scholarships to research students and maintenance grants to the post graduate departments of the universities, along with the need to develop the examining and affiliating criteria of the universities in order to lay the foundations of more post-graduate departments. Most importantly, it was also recommended to pay attention on improving the quality and quantity of researches in both sciences and humanities. Thus, the colonial government made unsuccessful attempts to impart higher education to the people under its dominion and to compensate for that, large expansion of higher education institutions took place at the cost of improving the quality of education. Numerous changes were observed in the education curricula, which still did not fall anywhere close to foreign universities. The success of the government lay in the fact, that they introduced an efficient mechanism to advice on policy matters, while also making

it clear that they were not bound to follow all recommendations. After independence, Indians continued with the same system of education. What remains to be analysed is how well they implemented it.

### CHAPTER 3: LANGUAGE DISCOURSE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

....With a determined will to enable the vernaculars to secure their legitimate place in higher education is a crying need of the day. It is the one sure method, as an esteemed friend of mine put it, of naturalising and nationalising our education. through the vernaculars, extension work should be, done by our universities energetically and on a large scale; also a publication department should be maintained by each and every University, whose duty it should be to supply popular books to the country and at the same time to bring to light, research work done by brilliant groups of professors and students engaged in special studies.<sup>1</sup>

- A. V. Dhruva (1929).

I believe that, one of the main contributory causes of the comparatively low standards in many Indian universities is the fact that the students are taught in a language other than that in which they are accustomed to think, that it seems to me essential to relieve them of this disability as soon as possible.<sup>2</sup>

- Sir John Sargent (1948).

Arrival of colonial masters in India did not merely lead to a transformation of the regime and its administrative units of power structure; it also brought a deep alteration in thinking, expression and life style of the colonised. The early beneficiaries of the new government were those who had acquired English education and had a strong grip on it. Thus, for the colonial government, on the hand, the English language became an instrument for the inculcation of colonial ideology in the minds of Indians and utilise them for administrative needs. On the other hand, the gates to Western knowledge, including its literature, democratic principles, science and technology etc were also flung open for the colonised and they successfully used the new knowledge for the regeneration of their society, culture and religion.<sup>3</sup> The Minute of Macaulay and the Resolution of Lord William Bentinck were the cornerstones of the colonial policy on education and the Principle of 1835 also got

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<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Universities' Conference held at Delhi on the 30th and 31 October and the 1st November, 1929*, Government of India Central Publication Branch, Calcutta: 1929, pp. 61 – 62.

<sup>2</sup> Sir John Sargent, *Decennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1937 – 1947, Volume I*, Central Bureau of Education, Delhi: 1948, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> K. N. Panikkar, *Culture, Ideology and Hegemony: Intellectuals and Cultural Consciousness in Colonial India*, Tulika, New Delhi: 1995, p. 9.



recognition in the constitution of the three Presidency Universities at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, where English was made not only a compulsory subject but, also the medium of instruction for teaching and examination. Simultaneously, the English literature and European science were promoted while the Oriental studies did not receive sufficient attention. The Indian Universities Commission of (1902) did not abandon the policy of 1835 and proposed to give priority to English as a language in Arts courses on the basis of the earlier policy. “But in the course of its detailed recommendations it revealed the dawn of a new attitude to the place of Indian studies in the curriculum. It was not breaking fresh ground in calling for greater attention to Indian vernacular languages; or in proposing a compulsory classical language for the arts degree course.”<sup>4</sup>

Due to excessive emphasis on the use of English language, government reports on education too recorded the deteriorating academic quality and it emerged as a crucial cause behind the increased number of failing students at higher stages of education and for the huge drop-out rates.<sup>5</sup> Such an adverse situation motivated Indian intellectuals to search for an alternative language that could serve as a medium of instruction through which every student could benefit and be a part of modern education and later on, contribute in the process of nation making. Consequently, a discourse can be seen among Indians for the resolution of the language issue. But on this point, the opinions of Indian intellectuals are found to be sharply divided. Some favoured promotion of different vernaculars as medium of instruction for higher education, while others, a section of nationalists, made it an issue of identity and demanded to propagate either Hindi or Urdu. Yet another section of intellectuals were of the view of using English language for some higher ends until an Indian language evolves to serve academic purposes and the public opinion has a language of common intercourse. With this detailed outline, this chapter will exclusively interrogate the language discourse in higher academic circle and explain the efforts were taken by the colonial government and Indian intellectuals in direction of finding a solution to the

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<sup>4</sup> Eric Ashby and Mary Anderson, *Universities: British, Indian and African: A Study in the Ecology of Higher Education*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London: 1966, pp. 80 – 81.

<sup>5</sup> *Report of the Central Advisory Board of Education (Sergeant Committee Report)*, Manager Government of India Press, Simla: 1944, p. 30.

language problem. The relation of the language discourse with the idea of nationalism would also be explored.

## **ISSUES AND INTERVENTION**

Before the establishment of institutions for higher education in India, the colonial government had designed its education policy with the objective “To create a class of people who would be Indian by blood and colour but socialised through English education to serve the cause of perpetuating the British interest in India.”<sup>6</sup> In due course of time, this principle became a founding motive for all the initiatives taken for imparting education to the colonised. However, the Wood’s Dispatch of 1854 had given relaxation to the school children to learn in their own vernaculars while making English language compulsory in higher education. The curriculum of higher education was devoted towards developing the taste of Indians in the alien language. “Initially, English did not supersede Oriental studies but was taught alongside it. Yet it was clear that it enjoyed a different status, for there was a scrupulous attempt to establish separate colleges for its study. Even when English was taught within the same college, the English course of studies was kept separate from the course of Oriental study and was attended by a different set of students.”<sup>7</sup> Soon an English educated class started to emerge in India that had a responsibility on its shoulders to diffuse modern education among fellow countrymen. The idea of spreading education in this way was called ‘Downward Filtration Theory’ which, an English historian explained in the rhetorical language as “Education to permeate the masses from above. Drop by drop from the Himalayas of Indian life, useful information was to trickle downwards, forming in time a broad and stately stream to irrigate the thirsty plains.”<sup>8</sup> But the policy of the colonial government proved hectic and thus, the ‘thirsty plain’ was not cultivated with sufficient

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<sup>6</sup> Poromesh Acharya, Bengali ‘Bhadralok’ and Educational Development in 19th Century Bengal, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 30, No. 13, April 1, 1995, p. 673.

<sup>7</sup> Gauri Viswanathan, *Masks of Conquest: literary Study and British Rule in India*, (Fifth Ed.), Oxford University Press, New Delhi: 2004, pp. 46 – 47.

<sup>8</sup> Arthur Mayhew, *The Education of India: A Study of British Educational Policy in India, (1835 - 1920), and of its Bearing on National Life and Problems in India To-day*, Faber and Gwyer, London: 1926, p. 93.

amount of interest, enthusiasm and energy. Finally, it became barren and aloof from the main stream.

Here, it must be made clear that the upper strata of the society wasn't the first group who came forward to take English education whole heartedly. Rather, it was the lower caste people who were the chief beneficiary of English education. As enrolment data of schools and colleges of 1840s shows, "Baidvas and Kayasthas in Bengal; Kayasthas and Rajputs in Delhi and Agra; Modaliyars, Pillays and the artisanal caste in Madras, and Prabhus, goldsmiths and coppersmiths in Bombay were the first to take to English education."<sup>9</sup> At that time Brahmans controlled the Sanskrit schools of Banaras, Nadya, Poona and others. They came forward to learn English in the 1870s when they felt the need for improving their status in the society and make use of the available economic opportunities. This raises a fundamental question that if the lower caste people were the early beneficiaries of English education, why could they not join higher education in the same proportion and accumulate the knowledge of modern science and technology? The answer of this question lies in a range of factors. First, due to the monopoly of Brahmans over traditional Sanskrit learning pattern of Hindu social order, the lower caste people remained neglected from the main stream education, therefore, they had no option other than joining English schools and colleges. The second reason was that the British policy discriminated against these groups as higher education courses and advance knowledge of science and technology was kept exclusively for the upper caste people. As a result, English, instead of vernacular languages, became the sole medium of higher education. Unfortunately, the lower caste people could not acquire mastery on the former and thus, the gulf within the Indian society gradually widened which separated the intelligentsia of India from the masses.<sup>10</sup>

Despite the fragmentation in the Indian society, the colonial policies of education as well as the decisions were taken for sheer administrative convenience which "Affected the linguistic landscape of the country and sealed the fate of many popular languages during

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<sup>9</sup> Parimala V. Rao, (Ed.), Introduction, *New Perspectives in the History of Indian Education*, (first ed.), Orient BlackSwan, New Delhi: 2014, p. 25.

<sup>10</sup> Arthur Mayhew, *The Education of India: A Study of British Educational Policy in India*, Op. Cit., p. 91.

the nineteenth century.”<sup>11</sup> As English was the medium of instruction in higher education, the majority of upper caste people spent their money and attention to get Western knowledge with the hope to find best opportunities of employment in the civil and technical services of the Raj. These early beneficiaries of English education did not bother about the efflorescence of the vernacular languages and the diverse literary tradition of India. In the name of utility, they took to English literature also which could not serve any benefit in the direction and acquisition of an actual education in literature as it was very mechanical. The diffusion of education in this way,

Neither required nor encouraged any of the finer qualities of the literary culture (style, good judgement, taste) or moral discrimination... English education came to be criticised for its imitateness and superficiality and for having produced an uprooted elite who were at once apostates to their own national tradition and imperfect imitators of the West.<sup>12</sup>

Meanwhile, in a large part of north India, the then two most popular languages, Sanskrit and Persian appeared in a different form and style. “The new languages i.e., Sanskritised Hindi and Persianised Urdu satisfied the cultural need of the emerging middle class but failed to meet the cultural and occupational need of the masses.”<sup>13</sup> This new evolution of these languages prepared a ground of contestation and it gradually turned into conflict when the people of two communities (Hindu and Muslim) started to symbolise their identity. Thus, the most important concern then was to form unity among different communities at that time. Therefore, the question of medium of instruction was rarely discussed on the political platforms during the national movement and the debates for the resolution of the issue were by and large confined only to the government’s reports, academic writings and conferences.

The restrictive impact of excessive use of English language was also felt on the performance of the students and it was noticed that, sometimes for them, the degree course

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<sup>11</sup> Naresh Prasad Bhokta, *Marginalisation of the Popular Languages and Growth of Sectarian Education in Colonial India* in Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, (Ed.), *The Contested Terrain: Perspectives on Education in India* (First ed.), Orient Longman Limited, New Delhi: 1998, p. 201.

<sup>12</sup> Gauri Viswanathan, *Masks of Conquest: literary Study and British Rule in India*, Op. Cit., p. 161.

<sup>13</sup> Naresh Prasad Bhokta, *Marginalisation of the Popular Languages and Growth of Sectarian Education in Colonial India*, Op. Cit., p. 202.

was only a token to acquire public service. The deteriorating quality of education was also the concern of the colonial government. In 1902, Lord Curzon, the then Viceroy of India, in the Convocation address of Calcutta University, highlighted that

The great fault of education as pursued in this country is, as we all know, that knowledge is cultivated by the memory instead of the mind, and that aids to the memory are mistaken for implements of the mind.<sup>14</sup>

Certainly, there were numerous other faults in the colonial education system responsible for this situation, but here, the emphasis on language is essential because it was an important instrument in transmitting knowledge. The Indian Universities Commission in 1902 had efficiently diagnosed the issue. However, it did not suggest deep reforms regarding the medium of instruction. According to the Commission, the English language maintained its previous status in the University curriculum and the study of classical languages (Latin, Greek and Hebrew etc) was added to the curriculum of the Arts courses.<sup>15</sup> It did not give the required attention to the dispersion of vernacular languages and remarked, “The vernacular languages of India should not be recognised as second languages side by side with the allied classical languages for any of the University examination above the entrance.”<sup>16</sup> Thus, after the recommendations of the IUC, university students continued to suffer while the flexibility in the government’s attitude was observed when these recommendations were implemented by the Regulation of 1906 which laid the provisions that

Not only was an examination in a vernacular made compulsory at the entrance (matriculation) examination but permission was given to candidates who take up history to answer either in English or their own vernacular. Composition in a vernacular was also made compulsory at the B.A. level examination and subsequently, at the intermediate and final level examinations for the newly established B.Sc. Degree.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Sanjay Seth, *Subject Lessons : The Western Education of Colonial India*, (First Ed.), Oxford University Press, New Delhi: 2008, p. 22.

<sup>15</sup> *Report of the Indian Universities Commission 1902*, Government Central Printing Office, Simla: 1902, pp. 25 - 26.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, p. 28.

<sup>17</sup> *Calcutta University Commission, 1917 – 1919, Report, Volume 2, Part I, Analysis of Present Conditions*, Superintendent Government Printing, Calcutta: 1919, p. 236.

After these insufficient arrangement, however the issue of medium of instruction could not be resolved, but the representation of the Indian intelligentsia and language organisation in the IUC, indicated change in the mood and thinking of the English educated generation which was basically following the path of the protagonist of English learning, Raja Ram Mohan Ray (1773–1833). The most interesting intervention in this discourse was made by the Banaras based Nagri Pracharni Sabha Kashi which was founded in 1893 by Babu ShyamSundar Das, Ram Narayan Mishr and Shiv Kumar Singh. It gave suggestion to the IUC to introduce Sanskrit language in the University curriculum. Accordingly,

The classical languages of the East, however, deserve a place in the University curriculum. The training in Sanskrit is bad and defective. There are no good books for beginners. Beside this we are of opinion that the Sanskrit language must as a matter of course be written in the Devanagari character. No local and provincial variation should be allowed in this, as is the case in the Calcutta University.<sup>18</sup>

In the same proposal this organisation also tried to attract the attention of colonial government towards the deteriorating impact of marginalisation of vernacular languages. As a result of the colonial policy, the Sabha noted that a large number of University students were facing difficulty in expressing their thoughts in the subjects of Science and Philosophy with accuracy, elegance and ease. For diminishing this evil, it proposed that “The intermediate examination English should have four papers (1) prose, (2) poetry, (3) translation from vernacular into English, and (4) an essay in the vernacular. No books in the vernacular need to be prescribed for the examination.”<sup>19</sup>

The demands of the Sabha got a loose reference in the recommendations of the IUC while some Indian intellectuals had also raised many other interesting issues and had offered corresponding suggestions. However, they knew that the path to promote vernacular languages through universities was not an easy task. In this regard, Lala Hans Raj (1864-1938), an educationist and founder of Dayanand Anglo-Vedic School System,

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<sup>18</sup> Document No. 89, Benares- based Nagari Pracharini Sabha suggests to the Indian Universities Commission, 1902 ways to coordinate classical studies with vernaculars in Sabyasachi Bhattacharya et al., (Eds.), *Educating the Nation: Document on the Discourse of National Education in India (1880 - 1920)* Kanishka Publisher, New Delhi: 2003, p. 185.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

placed a note before the IUC by highlighting the state of Classical and vernacular studies in which he charged ‘University regulation’ which forced students to leave their study just at the point when they develop taste for vernacular, so that they knew vernacular as little as English and develop no further taste to study it, despite the fact that the University have had a chief object to develop the vernacular literature.<sup>20</sup> To find a solution to this problem, Goroo Das Banerjee (1844–1918), the first Indian Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University came in support to conduct teaching in the medium of instruction of the students’ vernacular. That would help not only in making learning process easy but also rapid, because the objective of teaching is to connect the things and thoughts with the subject matter of the study rather than as an expression of words and sentences. In his view, there were two practical difficulties that lay in the way of promoting the vernaculars. First was the absence of suitable text books in any vernacular languages and second, was the unavailability of number of vernaculars for higher teaching.<sup>21</sup> He further proposed to find the solution by accepting the idea that,

It may be left optional with candidates for the entrance examination to answer the questions in Mathematics, History and Geography to answer either in English or in their own vernacular, if, it was one of the vernacular languages recognised by the University for that purpose. In this way, a beginning was supposed to be made towards using vernacular languages as the medium for imparting higher education.<sup>22</sup>

This request by Indians could not get initially recognised in colonial policy initiatives, however, after Swadeshi Movement of 1905, enthusiastic Indian intellectuals tried to propagate the imagined ideals of vernacular education through NCE. As the objectives of the memorandum provided “To impart and to facilitate the imparting of education so far as practicable through the medium of the vernacular languages such as

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<sup>20</sup> Document No. 90, Lala Hans raj’s note on the state of classical and vernacular studies, Placed before the Indian Universities Commission 1902 in Sabyasachi Bhattacharya *et al.*, (Eds.), *Educating the Nation: Documents on the Discourse of National Education in India (1880 - 1920)*, *Op. Cit.*, p. 186.

<sup>21</sup> Document No. 92, Goroo Das Banerjee’s note on vernacular languages as the vehicle of education submitted to the Indian Universities Commission, 1902 in Sabyasachi Bhattacharya *et al.*, (Eds.), *Educating the Nation: Documents on the Discourse of National Education in India (1880 - 1920)*, *Opp. Cit.*, pp. 187 – 188.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

Bengali, Hindi, Urdu, etc., English being a compulsory second language.”<sup>23</sup> On the other hand, it also aimed to prepare vernacular text books for the subjects of Arts, Science, technical and professional education.<sup>24</sup> However, before these objectives of the memorandum of NCE could be materialised, the experiment of Indians started to disrupt and soon collapsed. But it left a message for the future generation to practice the ideals of national education if they really wanted to educate, enlighten and empower their countrymen. The two languages (Hindi and Urdu) hitherto grew mature. In the Text Book Committee of United Provinces in 1911, Mohammad Shibli Numani (1857–1914), an Islamic scholar, favoured to keep separate entities of Hindi and Urdu languages instead of mixing the two. In his own words,

We should decide once for all the Urdu and Hindi courses should be separate, otherwise the mixing up of the two languages would lead to a perpetual struggle in the Text Book committees between Hindus and Muslemans, and the claims of Arabic and Sanskrit would be alternately advanced by their respective partisans and the resultant language formed by their labour would be neither Hindi nor Urdu. Urdu and Hindi should be so far developed that they should become literary language, and could be used for the expression of all sorts of ideas and this could be done when they are allowed to develop on their own lines, without hindrance in their progress from one another.<sup>25</sup>

Some years after his far sighted suggestion, the Banaras Hindu University in 1916 and Osmania University in 1918 did an experiment to adopt Hindi and Urdu respectively as the medium of instruction in higher education. Before going in detail over the efforts of these two universities and others too after 1919, regarding innovation for medium of instruction, it is important to understand the assessment of the whole situation by the CU Commission of 1919. As the replies of witnesses, received by the commission, provide a glimpse of a sharp division among Indians. Out of more than 300 replies, 129 favoured to

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<sup>23</sup> Document No. 4, “Memorandum of Association” of the national Council of Education, Bengal dated 23 May 1906 in Sabyasachi Bhattacharya *et al.*, (Eds.), *Educating the Nation: Documents on the Discourse of National Education in India (1880 - 1920)*, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 9 – 10.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Document No. 94, Mohammad Shibli Numani argues separate entities of Urdu and Hindi languages while commenting on a discussion paper of the Committee on the Vernacular Education of the United Provinces, 1911 in Sabyasachi Bhattacharya *et al.*, (Eds.), *Educating the Nation: Documents on the Discourse of National Education in India (1880 - 1920)*, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 190 – 191.



hold English as the medium of instruction and examination at every stage after High School; 26 with slight reservation accepted usage of English for all academic purposes except while teaching the vernaculars and Sanskrit; 68 favoured to use English and vernacular simultaneously and very few, 33 replies suggested the gradual replacement of English by the vernacular languages.<sup>26</sup> It was notable that the exponent of vernaculars were in mood for a strong movement and wanted to introduce Bengali language in Calcutta University for some of the academic purposes. However,

Nearly all the more extreme advocates of the vernacular as a medium are in favour of making English a compulsory second language, both in school and in university. On the other hand, many of those who were in favour of using English as the medium of instruction in university were no less in favour of using vernacular as the principal medium in Secondary schools.<sup>27</sup>

Thus, the issue of medium of instruction was diverse and difficult in character and the CU Commission had the dual challenge to improve the quality of education on the one hand and to assuage the anger of Indians over the excessive emphasis over English language, on the other hand.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS, INNOVATION AND INITIATION**

The authors of CU Commission were conscious of the necessity of English language for a University student, according to them, there were two motives to introduce the study of English – first, students should have an effective command over English language which was the medium of instruction and had practical utility in daily life and second, to introduce students with the outlook and fundamental ideals of the western world.<sup>28</sup> Keeping in mind these objectives and purposes of the English language, it was recommended that the colleges should take initiative to provide training in English language in order to improve the writing and speaking skills of all students, those belong to Arts and Science alike. There should not be a definite training of a certain number of hours, rather, proficiency of

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<sup>26</sup> *Calcutta University Commission, 1917 – 1919, Report, Volume 2, Part I, Analysis of Present Conditions*, Superintendent Government Printing, Calcutta: 1919, pp. 241 - 242.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Calcutta University Commission, 1917 – 1919, Report, Volume 4, Part II, Recommendations of the Commission*, Superintendent Government Printing, Calcutta: 1919, pp. 263 – 264.

students and their needs must be the priority of the training course. In the curricula of the University examination, English comprehensions, and if possible, an oral test should be included, it required books for general reading, “But the books used for this purpose should mainly be modern, and should be varied according to the special interest of various groups of students. In the selection of books for general purpose, great freedom should be left to the teachers.”<sup>29</sup> Further, it was also suggested to cease the prescription of a single, uniform group of books for all students. While the study of some Standard English books should be upheld and made a part of the course of the study at such suitable stage of Western education. The recommendation also provided that

Even in those courses (as for example in honours schools of history or philosophy, or in science courses) wherein a specific period of general English literature was not included, a few books bearing on the subjects of the course, and chosen on the ground of the clarity and vigour of their style or the importance of the ideas they expressed, should be prescribed for study, the examination being so framed as to afford an opportunity of showing not a minute textual knowledge, but evidence of general-understanding of the books prescribed.<sup>30</sup>

Thus, it cleared the way for introduction and spread of the English language and literature instead of the vernaculars.

The idea of giving preference to the learning of English was also observed in the recommendations that were proposed for school education in general and higher secondary education, which was hitherto a part of the university system, in particular. On the contrary, the CU Commission advocated the child’s mother tongue as a rational instrument for mental training because, “The child begins its mastery of the mother tongue from infancy; it is the medium in which technical mastery is first achieved; it is the medium in which individuality can first show itself and be nursed to strength.”<sup>31</sup> While the premature use of foreign medium and the training in the half-understood language tends to produce intellectual muddle which can be concealed at the matriculation level but not beyond it. On

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, pp. 264 – 265.

<sup>31</sup> *Calcutta University Commission, 1917 – 1919, Report, Volume 5, Part II, Recommendations of the Commission*, Superintendent Government Printing, Calcutta: 1919, p. 30.

the basis of such assumption, the commission recommended that the metric students should have an option of writing all their exams except English and Mathematics, either in English or in the vernacular.<sup>32</sup> But, the intermediate classes were considered important for preparation of future university life as well as for a career in the field of teaching, industry and commerce. Therefore, the Commission recommended to adopt only English as a medium of instruction for intermediate education.<sup>33</sup> However, the question of technical terms was also a contested issue and on this point, the Commission considered the advice of Sir GoorooDass Banerjee, who had urged very strongly for “The desirability of using English technical terms in Bengali textbooks.”<sup>34</sup> For implementing the proposed recommendations, the Commission also suggested the need for adequately trained and paid teachers. The European and Anglo-Indian teachers were appointed for imparting the training of English language. For them, it was made desirable that they should have the knowledge of vernaculars such as Bengali after considering the mother tongue as the medium of instruction.<sup>35</sup>

The other focus of the Commission was on the drastic assessment of the students’ progress in English learning. For serving the purpose, a tutorial system was introduced which was recommended for practical training in English by the non-literary teachers to whom the students would show their works regularly for criticism.<sup>36</sup> Thus, the conclusive remark of the authors of the CU Commission were expressed to provide an ideal model of bilingual education system for interlinking the knowledge of the East and the West, as

Our general aim is to make the educated classes of Bengal, bilingual. But, like our predecessors, we lay stress on the continued necessity of improving the vernaculars, through which the results of western as well as of eastern knowledge can alone be conveyed to the masses of the people.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p. 34.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, pp. 37 – 38.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, p. 39.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, p. 40.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, pp. 47 – 48.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

Unfortunately, the commitment of colonial government towards the vernaculars was not taken seriously and English, instead of vernaculars was recommended for higher education. Moreover, all the recommendations of the commission neither support nor encourage the vernacular as well as bilingual education system and in short, the proposed ideas of Indian intellectuals, to promote the use of vernaculars at higher level went into disarray. After the publication of the CU Commission report in 1919, the supporters of vernaculars started to criticise the recommendations of the Commission. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya was the leading critic of the government's move and on the occasion of Second Convocation of BHU in 1920, he addressed the issue and said,

In these recommendations I would make a little modification. I think the time has come when the vernacular should be the medium of instruction not merely in the schools but throughout the University and even in the highest stages. I am fully aware that our vernacular does not at present possess the necessary literature to enable us to teach us all subjects through its medium. But that want will not be made up by our postponing the beginning of work in this direction....<sup>38</sup>

Despite his numerous differences over the initiatives of colonial government, Malaviya in the same address accepted the role of English language as a key to knowledge of modern Arts and Science, but also had this view that English should not be taught as a first language because it took many years of the youth to study and gain mastery over the language.<sup>39</sup> He took initiative to promote vernaculars for higher education and in the 1920s, wide ranging reforms were brought in the curricula of BHU. In the courses of Arts degree, Hindi as a subject was introduced for the first time. The credit for codifying the syllabus of Hindi subject goes to Acharya Ramchandra Shukla (1882–1941). He had been a part of the University since 1919 and he "...Shaped not only the format that the syllabi of Hindi in colleges continue to follow to a great extent to this day; he also defined the heritage of Hindi language and literature in a manner that few have dared to quarrel with."<sup>40</sup> His famous work, '*Hindi Sahitya ka Itihas*' was first published in 1929. This literary history of

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<sup>38</sup> Document, Pandit Malaviya's Convocation Address in V. A. Sundaram, (Ed.), *Benares Hindu University, (1905 – 1935)*, R. Pathak, Banaras: 1936, p. 350.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*, p. 355.

<sup>40</sup> Krishna Kumar, *Political Agenda of Education: A Study of Colonialist and Nationalist Ideas*, (Second ed.), Sage Publication, New Delhi: 2005, p. 137.

Hindi language is significant not only in compiling but also firmly bringing out the distorted tradition of Hindi language. The notable part of his work is the strong ideological position that he takes by “Indicating the irrelevance of the Urdu-Persian tradition for the development of modern Hindi. He ignored major Urdu poets of the eighteenth century in his otherwise meticulous chronology.”<sup>41</sup> The BHU had a Department of Sanskrit language too that conducted teaching and research in Oriental studies.

The biggest problem in the promotion of Hindi language as a medium of exchange was the unavailability of the textbooks and an appropriate mechanism for translating English textbooks in Hindi. In this regard, Indian intellectuals had a discussion in the First Inter-University Conference held at Simla in 1924 where they adopted the Resolution for recognising Modern Indian Languages and Literature as an optional subject at the level of an Intermediate in Arts, Bachelor and Master of Arts examination.<sup>42</sup> The most provocative idea for introducing vernaculars as a medium of instruction was provided by A. V. Dhruva on the occasion of second Inter-University Conference held in Delhi in 1929. He not only criticised the early beneficiary of English education for not realising their responsibility of the diffusion of modern knowledge, but also urged the representatives of the Universities to make arrangements for the adoption of vernaculars as a medium of instruction and maintain a Publication Department in each and every University for the continuous supply of popular books and new researches in vernacular languages.<sup>43</sup> The Banaras Hindu University took prompt action and on the occasion of the University Convocation in 1930s, Malaviya informed with hope that

A band of our scholars is now engaged in preparing text-books in arts, science and medical subjects in Hindi for use in the Intermediate college classes of the University. It is expected that a sufficient number of them will be ready for use next year. Our scholar will then take up the preparation of text-books for the B. A. classes. Hindi was made a distinct subject for examination for the M. A. degree several years ago, and it is becoming increasingly popular with the students. I hope the time is not very far when scholars will be allowed to

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> *Report of the Universities' Conference held at Simla from May the 19th to the 24th, 1924*, Government of India Central Publication Branch, Calcutta: 1924, p. 23.

<sup>43</sup> *Report of the Universities' Conference held at Delhi on the 30th and 31 October and the 1st November, 1929*, Government of India Central Publication Branch, Calcutta: 1929, pp. 61 – 62.

answer their question papers and offer their thesis for the M. A. degree also in Hindi. You will be thus see that our progress in this direction, though slow, is full of hope.<sup>44</sup>

As a result of his initiatives in this direction and the hard work of his team, the availability of the textbooks for different subjects of higher education in Hindi language were ensured. Thus, in the 1940s, the Banaras Hindu University had given the option of writing answers in exams in any of the modern language to the students of I.A., I.Sc, B.A., B.Sc. and B.T.<sup>45</sup>

In this context, another valuable experiment demands mentioning here. It was the establishment of Osmania University in southern part of India for the promotion of Urdu language as a medium of instruction. This University was founded in 1918 after the assent of Nizam of Hyderabad on the Charter of the Ruler of the State. Since beginning, the University adopted Urdu as a medium of Instruction not only because it was the official language of the state but because it was the only vernacular which was more or less spoken and understood throughout the state. Simultaneously, the teaching of English also continued as a compulsory subject up to the B.A. stage for enabling the pupil to compete with the students of other universities. As in a firman dated 26 April 1917, the Nizam of Hyderabad declared: "I am pleased to express my approval of the views set forth in Arzdasht and the memorandum submitted therewith, regarding the inauguration of a University in a state, in which the knowledge and culture of ancient and modern time may be blended so harmoniously as to remove the defects created by the present system of education, and full advantages may be taken of all that is best in the ancient and modern system of physical, intellectual and spiritual culture. In addition to its primary object to diffuse knowledge, it should aim at the moral training of the students and give an impetus to research in all scientific subjects. The fundamental principle in the working of the university should be that Urdu should form the medium of higher education, but that knowledge of English as a language should at the same time be deemed compulsory for all

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<sup>44</sup> Document, Pandit M. M. Malaviya's Convocation Address in V. A. Sundaram, (Ed.), *Benares Hindu University, (1905 – 1935)*, R. Pathak, Banaras, 1936, pp. 473 – 474.

<sup>45</sup> Sir John Sargent, *Decennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1937 – 1947, Volume I*, Central Bureau of Education, Delhi: 1948, pp. 118 - 119.

students.”<sup>46</sup> Like those of BHU, the students of the Osmania University were also largely dependent on the translation of standard English books. However, the enthusiasm for higher education among the students could be seen from the estimates of enrolment in the university that provided that “The number of students in the University has risen from 856 in 1931–32 to 1,723 in 1936-37.”<sup>47</sup> Thus, the Osmania University emerged as an example of imparting higher education in the same language as that of the mother land.

Contrary to these innovative initiatives, a gradual change could be observed in the other universities with regard to the medium of instructions adopted after 1919. According to the recommendation of the CU Commission, the universities started the procedure to adopt the vernaculars as a medium of instruction up to the matriculation stage. Initially,

The Senate of the Patna University has passed a resolution to the effect that the medium of examination may be the vernaculars after 1923 and shall be the vernaculars after 1928, but the necessary change in the regulations has not yet been sanctioned by Government. The Senate of the Calcutta University also proposes that for matriculation instruction and examination in all subjects, except English, shall be conducted in the vernacular. The Senate of the Punjab University has decided to give the option to the candidates in the matriculation and school leaving certificate examination of answer the questions in history and geography either in English or in Hindi, Urdu or Gurmukhi and the proposal is to be submitted to Government for sanction.<sup>48</sup>

In due course of time, the situation became complex because the number of vernaculars multiplied and were varied in each and every province, therefore, the numerous other universities showed their inability to adopt or promote several vernacular languages as a medium of instruction. Here, an example would suffice it to explain: “No examiner will be able to correct history papers written in several vernaculars nor even to co-ordinate the results of marking by assistant examiners conversant with the different languages used by

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<sup>46</sup> Document No. 4, S, M Fraser forwards a copy of proceedings of the Hyderabad State and informes C. C. Watson that it is a fact that His highness has sanctioned the establishment of Osmania University..... 14th December 1917 in S. C. Ghosh, (Ed.), *Development of University Education (1916 – 1920)*, Sterling Publishers, New Delhi: 1977, p. 273.

<sup>47</sup> John Sargent, *Eleventh Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1932 – 1937, Volume I, Manager of Publications, Delhi: 1939*, pp. 67 - 68.

<sup>48</sup> J. A. Richey, *Eighth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1917 – 1922, Volume I, Superintendent Government Printing, Calcutta: 1923*, p. 66.

the candidates.”<sup>49</sup> Thus, the deliberation on the recommendations of CU Commission continued among the Indian intellectuals and a farsighted suggestion for the resolution of the problem made by a prominent educationist, social emancipator and political leader Babasahib Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar (1891 – 1956) in a written reply of the questionnaire circulated by University Reforms Committee on August 15, 1924, was profoundly written as:

Spread of education should be a proper function of the University. But this cannot be achieved unless the University adopts vernacular as the medium of instruction which in the present circumstances is a far cry..... The problem cannot be solved unless Indian public opinion decides which vernacular it selects for common intercourse.<sup>50</sup>

However, his advice could not be recognised at that time, but the relevance of it was realised after the independence of India.

The enormous impact of adopting the vernaculars as a medium of instruction was also observed across some of the newly established Universities. During the discussion on the Andhra University Bill in the local Legislative Council, radical changes were introduced and local patriotism and interest superseded the educational ideas and principles. The most remarkable feature of the Andhra University Act was the ultimate use of the vernaculars as a medium of instruction and examination. The role of philanthropy was very important for the promotion of this project and “His Highness, the late Maharaja of Bobbili- first Pro-Chancellor of the University made a donation of Rs. 1 lakh to the University for the encouragement of Telugu and Sanskrit learning.”<sup>51</sup> Similarly, Annamalai University was founded in 1929, when Rajah Sir S. R. M. Annamalai Chettiar agreed with the local government to handover the earlier built institutions such as Sri Minakshi College, Sri Minakshi Tamil College and Sri Minakshi Sanskrit College for constituting a University.<sup>52</sup> The objective of the University was the advancement of Tamil literature and

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Hari Narke, (Ed.), *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches, Volume 2* (Eddited and Revised), Dr. Ambedkar Foundation, New Delhi: 2014, p. 305.

<sup>51</sup> R. Littlehales, *Ninth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1922 – 1927, Volume I*, Government of India Central Publication, Calcutta: 1929, p. 59.

<sup>52</sup> *Annamalai University*, Retrieved April 1, 2017, from <http://www.annamalaiuniversity.ac.in/>:



language. Therefore, a department for research in Tamil language was instituted in 1934 and “Attempts have also been made to procure the publication of suitable text-books in Tamil with a view to ultimate adoption of Tamil as the medium of instruction for the different subjects of study in the university.”<sup>53</sup> Thus, it was hoped that in the next few years, all text-books would be made available in all subjects in Tamil language so that a start was made at intermediate level in this direction.

Despite the inauguration of new universities for the propagation of vernaculars as a medium of instruction, a discourse can be observed in this regard at the policy level in the last decade of colonial rule. The significant initiative in this direction was made by the Central Advisory Board which decided in a meeting held in 1944 that, “Greater stress should be laid on instruction in higher stages of education being given through the medium of mother tongue.”<sup>54</sup> This opinion of CAB was subsequently accepted by the Inter-University Board and at the end of same year, it reaffirmed the Resolution which was passed earlier in the Fourth Conference of the Universities that, “The modern Indian languages be recognised gradually and as far as possible alternatively with English as medium of instruction for the intermediate and degree courses excepting for English and if necessary for science subjects.”<sup>55</sup> For giving effect to this resolution, the Inter-University Board recommended various steps in the twenty first meeting held in December, 1945. It provided, first, that the central, provincial and state governments should take responsibility of subsidising the publication of standard University books in modern Indian languages, and second, that the universities should play their role in selecting certain areas and institutions where Indian languages could be used as a medium of instruction and for the encouragement of such colleges, the awards should be given in the form of grants and preference in employment to their students.<sup>56</sup> Consequently, a drastic change appeared in several universities as, then

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<sup>53</sup> John Sargent, *Eleventh Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1932 – 1937, Volume I, Manager of Publications, Delhi: 1939*, pp. 67 - 68.

<sup>54</sup> Sir John Sargent, *Decennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1937 – 1947, Volume I, Central Bureau of Education, Delhi: 1948*, p. 118.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, p. 125.

Allahabad University has decided to introduce a compulsory paper in Hindi or Urdu composition for all students appearing at the B.A., B.Sc., and B.Com examinations.... The Lucknow University started teaching B.A., B.Com. and LL.B. through Urdu and Hindi from July 1946. The Nagpur University has resolved that from July 1947 all instructions in Intermediate classes shall be given in Hindi, Marathi or Urdu and not in English. The University of Patna has directed all colleges to make arrangements from July 1947 for teaching all non-language subjects up to B.A., B.Sc. or B.Com., through Hindustani, and where possible through Bengali.<sup>57</sup>

In summing up, the initiatives were taken by the universities for the promotion of vernacular languages as a medium of instruction had created a vibrant environment for discussion on the question of language at higher level. In this regard the CU Commission of 1919 had played a significant role but it could not provide a satisfactory solution of the whole problem. Despite this, several Universities initiated steps at their level to incorporate the highly ambitious nationalist idea of vernaculars as a medium of instruction, but the unavailability of textbooks in the vernaculars and multiple vernacular languages, posed a challenge to the whole project. On the advice of CAB and the recommendations of Inter-University Board, numerous universities made changes in the higher education policy in the later decade of the colonial rule, but the language question remained unresolved. In a Press Conference, dated 18 February, 1947, the first Minister of Education in independent India, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (1888 – 1958) had offered the solution on the issue, as:

Macaulay's contention that Sanskrit and Persian were unsuited to be the medium of instruction in India no doubt correct, but English could serve the purpose no better. It is true that the different Indian provincial languages were not at the time sufficiently developed to serve as the medium of instruction but there can be no doubt that a national government would have taken these languages in hand and gradually developed them to serve the purpose. In any case, the Indian languages today have attained a development where they can serve as the medium of instruction up to the highest stage.<sup>58</sup>

Thus, after the end of the two centuries long colonial rule, the newly formed first government of independent India was to bequeath the issue of medium of instruction and they were expected to resolve the issue.

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid, pp. 118 – 119.

<sup>58</sup> Document No. 17, Address in the Press Conference, 18 February 1947 in Ravindra Kumar, (Ed.), *Selected Works of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Vol. III, (1947 – 1948)*, Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi: 1991, p. 46.

## NATIONALISM, LANGUAGE AND HIGHER EDUCATION

The language was being widely considered as an instrument of identity; therefore, it was closely linked with the idea of nationalism in the colonies. In the country like India where language was not a homogenous entity, it was natural that the special efforts were made not only of promoting but also of elaborating, refining and popularising the script and literature of either one or two Indian languages, which were widely used by the majority of people for academic work and common intercourse. In fact, “In large parts of North India, Hindustani and Urdu emerged not only as popular languages, but were also turning into literary languages. At their own pace, some of the vernaculars were also developing literature.”<sup>59</sup> The whole process of evolution of languages was very complex and tricky and on some occasions, the battle was pitched on the intellectual and political grounds between the propagators of the two different languages (Hindi and Urdu) on the one hand, and that of the supporters of vernaculars on the other. But there was the uniformity on one point that, English language cannot become the lingua franca of India. Thus,

The nationalist struggle against the alien rule was at some level, a struggle against the imperialism of its language as well. English was not merely the language imposed by the colonial rule but it became a sort of a status symbol for those who were instruments of this rule, who formed an exclusive caste of their own, behaving as natural superiors to the rest of the people. It had become almost a way of life with them.<sup>60</sup>

The popular phase of nationalist discourse for Indian language as a medium of instruction at a higher level can be seen after 1919, when it became diverse and conflicting in nature. In the beginning, the most popular and thoughtful ideas of multi-cultural poet and educationist Rabindranath Tagore were full of hope and patriotism. He, as an opponent of the utilitarian ideals of English education system did not support English as a language of educational instruction. His belief was to impart education in one’s own ‘mother-tongue’. Since he was the exemplary product of Macaulay’s educational minutes, he implicitly understood the destitution one faced while learning in an alien tongue. On this issue, he has

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<sup>59</sup> Joseph Bara, Colonialism and Educational Fragmentation in India in Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, (Ed.), *The Contested Terrain: Perspectives on Education in India* (First ed.), Orient Longman Limited, New Delhi: 1998, p. 139.

<sup>60</sup> M. Mahmood, Language Politics and Higher Education in India, *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 35, No. 3, July – September 1974, p. 277.

written in 'ShiksharSwangikaran', 'Shikshayamatribhashaimatridugdha' (education, mother tongue is like the breast milk).<sup>61</sup> He wanted to introduce mother tongue as a medium of instruction in higher education as well and he made it clear very passionately that his conviction was to teach English in one's mother tongue and "wrote a primer called 'IngrajiSopan' for this purpose."<sup>62</sup> But, the dichotomy in his ideal and practice appeared through his remark during the Non-cooperation Movement in 1920, when the pioneer leader of national movement, Mahatma Gandhi (1869 – 1948) gave a call to boycott English schools and colleges. This raised a controversy. Like Tagore, Gandhi was also an opponent of English language as he wrote in 1921,

The foreign medium has caused the brain-fag, put an undo strain upon the nerves of our children, made them crammers and imitators, unfitted them for original work and thought, and disabled them filtrating their learning to the family or the masses. The foreign medium has made our children practically foreigners in their own land. It is the greatest tragedy of the existing system. The foreign medium has prevented the growth of our vernaculars. If I had the powers of a despot, I would today stop the tuition of our boys and girls through a foreign medium.<sup>63</sup>

However, he did not completely reject the role of English language as he further said, "I would certainly encourage its careful study among those who have linguistic talent and expect them to translate those treasures for the nation in its vernacular."<sup>64</sup>

In contrast to Gandhi, Tagore hung somewhere in the midst of the two extremes of outward rejection and blind acceptance. Though, it must be admitted at the very outset that his stand was never very clear. He shared the concerns of Gandhi yet differed with him about the role of English in his scheme of education. He uttered something in public and acted just the opposite in reality. For example, he was "All in favour of teaching English as a subject, even right from the beginning. In fact, English was taught from class I in

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<sup>61</sup> Poromesh Acharya, Educational Ideals of Tagore and Gandhi: A Comparative Study, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 32, No. 12, March 22-28, 1997, p. 602.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Document No. 14, M. K. Gandhi puts National Education on his Agenda of Action in his journal, *Young India*, September 1921 in Sabyasachi Bhattacharya et al., (Eds.), *Educating the Nation: Documents on the Discourse of National Education in India (1880 - 1920)*, Op. Cit., pp. 39 – 40.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

‘ShikshaSatra’ of Sriniketan, a school for village children.”<sup>65</sup> The differences between Gandhi and Tagore had widened even more during the period of Non-cooperation Movement as Tagore found it quite difficult to digest Gandhi’s call for outright rejection of English education. He called it a ‘retrograde step’ as that, as per him: “Would turn our house into a prison by preventing fresh air to blow into the national life.”<sup>66</sup> But here he misread Gandhi because the latter was against the English system of education which was a system that was spoiling the Indian intellectual life from within, and not against English language per se. This can be seen from Gandhi’s reply in the context of the above allegation of ‘turning our house into prison’ during the Non-cooperation Movement. Gandhi wrote back,

I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to live in other people’s houses as an interloper, a beggar or a slave... Mine is not a religion of the prison house. It has room for the least among God’s creation.<sup>67</sup>

Thus, Gandhi was in favour of promoting vernacular languages as a medium of instruction for education, but he did not deny the practical utility of English language for the propagation of western knowledge.

A section of nationalist intellectuals accepted the diversity of languages as a beauty of Indian culture and uniformity with diversity was asserted important for the unity of the nation. They were sure of popularising university education through vernaculars so that they tried to guard the diversity of Indian culture and advocated the different dialects and popular languages as the source of it. When colonial government did not alter their policy of greater emphasis on the use of English language, an admirer of Indian diversity wrote in reply to the proponents of English, that our,

Fear is legitimate, though groundless. The unique greatness of India lies in its wonderful diversity, and the ideal of a great India must always remain diversity

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<sup>65</sup> Poromesh Acharya, Educational Ideals of Tagore and Gandhi: A Comparative Study, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 32, No. 12, March 22-28, 1997, p. 602.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, (Ed.), *The Mahatma and the Poet Letters and Debates between Gandhi and Tagore 1915 - 1941*, (Reprinted), The National Book Trust, New Delhi, 1999, p. 64.

– ideal. Is the attempt to create a common language and attempt to create a uniformity of thought and action? If it is treason to India. But under no conceivable circumstances can it be so. A second language; taught and spoken as such can never replace a well cultivated mother tongue. The Bengali would be proud of his tongue as the Tamilian, the Gujarati, the Punjabi and the Malayali would be. They would be cultivated with greater zest and interest as the knowledge of the other Indian languages grew among the people.<sup>68</sup>

The promotion of the use of vernacular languages was also felt essential to reduce the burden of students in the process of learning English language and on the other hand, mother tongue was widely conceived as a key to firm foundation of higher education system. As an eminent chemist, P. C. Ray emphasized while speaking in the convocation of Banaras Hindu University in the 1930s:

A man of education must, in the first place, be one well up in all-round information, and he can gather it best and in the minimum of time if he does so in a language he learned to lisp in, while sucking his mother's breast—the language of his nursery. Arithmetic, history, economics, politics, logic and geography, in short the book of knowledge, can readily be mastered in one's own vernacular. That should be the first stone in our educational edifice if we want to build well and high.<sup>69</sup>

The extremist nationalist leader and devotee of Arya Samaj, Lala Lajpat Rai highlighted various problems of nationalist education and took a different stand on the question of language. He denied the idea of making Sanskrit as the medium of general education,<sup>70</sup> and suggested that the Indian traders and businessmen learn as many modern languages as they can, for having a strong grip on world trade. As he said,

The bulk of nation must be engaged in agriculture, or manufacture or business. For all these purposes knowledge of the modern languages is almost a necessity... Sanskrit must be studied by the few for the purpose of research and culture, and for enriching the nation in enriching the vocabulary of the

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<sup>68</sup> K. M. Panikkar, *Essays on Educational Reconstruction in India*, The Cambridge Press, Madras: 1920, p. 42.

<sup>69</sup> Document, Dr. Sir P. C. Roy's Convocation Address, V. A. Sundaram, (Ed.), *Benares Hindu University, (1905 – 1935)*, R. Pathak, Banaras, 1936, p. 546.

<sup>70</sup> Lala Lajpat Ray, *The Problem of National Education in India*, George Allen & Unwin LTD, London: 1920, p. 40.

vernaculars. For the many the study of foreign modern languages must be insisted on, accompanied by a good knowledge of modern languages of India.<sup>71</sup>

When the nationalist movement was in its full swing, a drastic change in the discourse of language appeared in the larger part of North India. Arousal of feeling of nationalism and unity among fellow countrymen, it was required that, “The leaders of the national movement tried to use Hindi or Hindustani as a symbol of the cultural unity of “the nation in the making”, and as a tool in their struggle against colonial rule and the English language.”<sup>72</sup> Contrary to their efforts, in the later phase of colonial rule, the whole issue of medium of instruction and national unity turned into a different direction. As a result of the provocative statements and action, internal conflicts of nationalist leaders started to surface. Thus, language was recognised as an effective instrument of identity which widely divided the Indian society into two language speaking groups (Hindi or Urdu) on the basis of religion as Hindu and Muslim respectively. As the description provided,

The propagators of Hindi language deployed potent gender symbols at this time. Language was animated as a person and represented as a matter of identity. It was not just Hindi that was regarded as ‘matribhasha’ or mother tongue and was important, but gender icons too, were effectively used to mark out boundaries between Hindi and Urdu and also brajbhasha and khariboli, leading to the assertion of the Nagari script. The imagery of mother tongue was endowed with overt political meaning which also revealed a tension. While Hindi was upheld as a respectful female in opposition to Urdu...<sup>73</sup>

The very sensitive issue of national importance, the language question was scarcely discussed on the platform of Indian National Congress (INC) which was an umbrella organisation and leading the national movement. However, in the annual session of February, 19–21, 1938 in Haripura, INC passed a resolution and reaffirmed its commitment for national education. In critique of the colonial establishment, it said,

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<sup>71</sup> Document No. 9, Lala Lajpat Ray Surveys Various Experiments on an Issues Connected with “National Education”, 1920 in Sabyasachi Bhattacharya *et al.*, (Eds.), *Educating the Nation: Documents on the Discourse of National Education in India (1880 - 1920)*, Op. Cit., p. 26.

<sup>72</sup> Naresh Prasad Bhokta, *Marginalisation of the Popular Languages and Growth of Sectarian Education in Colonial India*, Op. Cit., p. 212.

<sup>73</sup> Charu Gupta, The Icon of Mother in Late Colonial North India: ‘Bharat Mata’, ‘Matri Bhasha’ and ‘Gaumata’, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 36, No. 45, November 10–16, 2001, p. 4293.

The existing system of education in India is admitted to have failed. Its objectives have been anti-national and anti-social, its methods have been antiquated, and it has been confined to a small number of people and has left the vast majority of our people illiterate. It is essential therefore to build up national education on a new foundation and on a new nationwide scale.<sup>74</sup>

For formulating a comprehensive plan of national building, the National Planning Committee was appointed the next year under the chairmanship of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Out of 29 subcommittees, one dealt with the issue of general and technical education and developmental research. The NPC discarded the British Policy of Education which asserted the purely literary character of education in a foreign language.

The schools and colleges became so many factories for mass production of a standardised pattern. Little or no attention was or could be paid, in that system, to real education or training and development of the inner faculty of man, as distinguished from imparting literacy in an alien idiom....<sup>75</sup>

On the issue of medium of instruction, there was consensus among the distinguished educationists of the committee in favour of mother tongue, as it remarked,

Knowledge imparted can be fully retained, and instruction given properly grasped, only if it is conveyed through the medium of the child's mother-tongue. It should be reinforced, so to say, with the aid of some craft, or group of crafts, in which the mind as well as the mind, intelligence as well as the memory, sense of aesthetics as well as of utility, may be trained and developed. Then only will education be real as well as lasting, and all its purposes effectively served.<sup>76</sup>

In order to resolve the issue of language, the NPC recommended to adopt a child's mother tongue as a medium of instruction for basic education with Hindustani as a secondary language in grades V, VI, VII.<sup>77</sup> But, at the level of University education, NPC did not offer an ultimate solution to the issue. As it suggested,

...It must be, -in all stages, very considerable enterprise must be undertaken, on a systematic scale, to provide books for study, at least in the higher stages,

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<sup>74</sup> A. M. Zaidi, (Ed.), *The Encyclopaedia of Indian National Congress, Volume 11, (1936 - 1938), Combating an Unwanted Constitution*, S. Chand and Company, New Delhi: 1980, p. 431.

<sup>75</sup> *Report of the National Planning Committee on General Education and Technical Education and Developmental Research*, Vora & Co. Publishers LTD, Bombay: 1948, p. 21.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, p. 27.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid*, p. 56.



where the medium of instruction today is English. Even if a common national language is adopted, e.g., Hindi, with Deva Nagari script for education in the higher stages, this problem will face the country in every unit of the union. It must be an integral part of the overall plan to provide all the necessary books in the local language or national language, within a given period fixed in advance.<sup>78</sup>

On the other hand, it highlighted the limitation in adoption of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction at higher stages of education and made a conclusive remark that, “It is essentially exploratory or recommendatory, and not executive. But the ball has been rolling in a number of directions which will have to be all coordinated and integrated into the educational sector of a proper, comprehensive national plan.”<sup>79</sup> Thus, an initiative to discuss the question of language on a national platform, was taken up in 1949. Consequently, the Congress Working Committee adopted a resolution on August 5, 1949, according to which,

At the secondary stage, the study of the All India State language should be taken up as a second language. At the University stage, the medium of instruction would be the provincial language. For the purposes of this resolution Urdu shall be one of the languages concerned.<sup>80</sup>

At this stage of conflicting views, the Indian Government required a comprehensive scheme for taking step to progress on the matter. The University Education Commission, appointed under the chairmanship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan submitted its report in 1949 and provided a blueprint for resolving the issue of medium of instruction at higher stages of education. The Commission deeply observed the existing complex situation and profound attachment of Indians to the language question. According to the commission, “The national struggle gathered force, the desire for the adoption of an Indian language as the means of inter-provincial intercourse, of administration and of higher education gained in strength and volume. Naturally on the attainment of independence the ardent among it’s expected an immediate fulfilment of their desire, and they feel somewhat surprised and hurt when it is pointed out that the question is a complicated one and does not admit of an easy

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid, p. 39.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, p. 189.

<sup>80</sup> A. M. Zaidi, (Ed.), *The Encyclopaedia of Indian National Congress, Volume 13, (1946 - 1950), India Wins Freedom*, S. Chand and Company, New Delhi: 1981, p. 485.

and immediate solution.”<sup>81</sup> The Commission first dealt with the issue of use of scientific and technical terms and noted great differences of opinion in formulating such terms for example,

Osmania University where Urdu was adopted as the medium of instruction, scientific terms were coined largely with the help of Arabic roots. On the other hand NagariPrachariniSabha, and societies interested in the development of Hindi consider it to be essential that Sanskrit roots, words and particles should be employed together with Sanskrit rules of derivation.<sup>82</sup>

But there was a consensus among the educationists to adopt a unified system of scientific and technical terms, as Dr. Mahajani, Vice-Chancellor of Rajputana University, highlighted the distinction between science and literature, also expressed the view that, “For higher education in science subjects the language to be used should be one of the international languages- say English.”<sup>83</sup>

Similarly, the Vice-Chancellor of the Annamalai University, Shri M. Ramanujam suggested to adopt international nomenclature for scientific terms.<sup>84</sup> Thus, the Commission believed science is not parochial or national. It is universal,<sup>85</sup> therefore it recommended, “International technical and scientific terminology be adopted, the borrowed words be properly assimilated, their pronunciation be adopted to the phonetic system of the Indian language and their spelling fixed in accordance with the sound symbols of Indian scripts.”<sup>86</sup> The most important issue of medium of instruction was discussed in a broader prospect and the Commission critically analysed the impact of English education policy. It provided that,

English cannot continue to occupy the place of state language as in the past.  
Use of English as such divides the people into two nations, the few who govern

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<sup>81</sup> *Report of the University Education Commission (December 1948 – August 1949), Volume I*, (Reprinted), Ministry of Education, Government of India Press, Delhi: 1962, p. 305.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid*, p. 311.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid*, p. 312.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid*, p. 313.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid*, p. 326.

and the many who are governed, the one unable to talk the language of the other and mutually uncomprehending.<sup>87</sup>

For selection of any one Indian language as a medium of instruction, the Commission had the option of choosing either Sanskrit, Hindi, Urdu or any of the regional dialects. But, the Commission wanted to find an appropriate solution through which, a diverse nation could be united and its languages could attain a respectful place in higher education academia. After a detailed analysis of the available alternate languages, it rejected Sanskrit as a medium of instruction because of its refinement and extreme complexity.<sup>88</sup> Hindi too was unsuited for this purpose because, “It does not possess any advantages – literary or historical over the other modern Indian languages.”<sup>89</sup> Finally, the Commission suggested a three language formula according to which, “Pupils at the higher secondary and university stages be made conversant, with three languages, - the regional language, the federal language and English (the last one in order to acquire the ability to read books in English).”<sup>90</sup> Thus, the Commission intended to develop federal and regional languages and for that purpose, it suggested appointment of a Board consisting of scientists and linguists for the preparation of a scientific vocabulary that were common to Indian languages.<sup>91</sup> The board should also take initiative for the arrangement of science books in all Indian languages. Hence, unlike the CU Commission, the UEC did not prefer English language and by its thoughtful recommendations it tried to form unity and promote variety of Indian languages. In short, for resolving the language question and implementing or rejecting the recommendations, the final ball was in the court of government.

## CONCLUSIONS

This chapter provided a detailed description of the colonial policy in regard to the medium of instruction for higher education as well as the initiatives and responses of Indian intelligentsia on the matter. About colonial educational policy, it was explained that the

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid, p. 316.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, pp. 318 – 319.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid, p. 320.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, p. 326.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, pp. 324 – 325.

alien government used the language as an instrument to consolidate their power and to inculcate colonial ideology in the minds of Indians for petty administrative conveniences. The adverse impact of the English education policy appeared when an English educated class emerged in India that did not realise the responsibility of imparting education to fellow countrymen. Consequently, a division in Indian society was seen between the English educated intelligentsia and common masses that exists till date. However, the people of lower classes received some initial privileges in acquiring English education but due to discriminatory colonial education policy, they could not get mastery in the alien language and faced discrimination in accessing higher education and modern knowledge of science and technology. Hence, the lower classes could not take the benefit of English education system. The excessive emphasis on the use of English language and the decisions of colonial government also sealed the faith of many popular languages and consequently the linguistic landscape of the country started to shrink. But after the initiative of Indians some new languages started to grow and in this regard, Hindi and Urdu became the most significant languages. At the same time, the contrary effect of use of English language was also observed on the performance of University students. For investigating the matter, imperialist Viceroy Lord Curzon, appointed a Commission namely, the Indian Universities Commission in 1902. Though, the Commission, neither suggested to abandon the policy of 1835 nor promoted the use of vernaculars as a medium of instruction for higher education. Therefore, the English language was recommended for imparting higher education.

The Regulation of 1906 clearly showed the flexibility in government's attitude when it allowed for the use of vernaculars in Matriculation entrance exams. The compulsory comprehension in vernaculars was introduced at the level of B.A. examination as well as intermediate and the newly established B.Sc. Degree course. With these small concessions, the issue of language could not be resolved. While in IUC, the representation of Indian organisation and intellectuals in support of vernaculars indicated the change in the attitude of English educated generation. The Nagari Pracharni Sabha, Kashi, raised the demand for introduction of Sanskrit in the University curricula. Intellectuals like Lala Hans Raj and GoorooDass Banerjee, on the contrary, demanded the promotion of vernacular languages for university education. But these proposals could not take the shape of a policy and through the newly formulated National Council of Education in 1906, the enthusiastic

Indians took initiative to fulfil their wish for a structured national education whose medium of instruction will be the vernacular languages. With lack of financial and governmental support, their experiment could not produce the desired results. However, their efforts inspired the future policy makers to take up initiatives to restructure national education and practice the ideals of it to educate, enlighten and empower their countrymen. With these remarkable developments, the progress of Hindi and Urdu was noted in a large part of North India. Mohammad Shibli Numani, in the Text-book Committee of United Province, favoured to keep separate entities of Hindi and Urdu languages instead of mixing the two. In due course of time, Hindi or Urdu got recognition in higher education academia and Banaras Hindu University 1916 and Osmania University in 1918, experimented to adopt Hindi and Urdu respectively, as a medium of instruction.

Soon, the colonial government again appointed a commission called, the Calcutta University Commission of 1919, for exclusively inquiring into the matter of higher education. The medium of instruction was an important area of investigation and it noted the sharp divisions of Indian opinion on the issue. Empirical evidences suggest that a majority of Indians were in support of upholding the current English system of education. Therefore, its detailed recommendations reflected the favour of English education. The Commission recommended to adopt vernaculars as a medium of instruction up to the Matriculation stage and suggested to provide option to the students of matriculation, to write answers in either English or vernaculars, in all examinations except those of English and Mathematics. But, for Intermediate and higher education, the medium of instruction was suggested to be English. The Commission also recommended a general teaching of English for all Honours courses of History, Philosophy and Science, where erstwhile, English was not included for teaching. The Commission expressed its objective to find a bilingual education system, despite the fact that all its recommendations neither supported nor encouraged vernaculars or even a bilingual education system. Thus, the recommendations of the CU Commission widely suggested promoting English as a medium of instruction for higher education. While all this was happening, the founder of BHU was trying his best to promote Hindi language for all academic purposes. In this direction, the University made changes in its curriculum by adopting Hindi as a subject. The commemorating contribution of Acharya Ramchandra Shukla in this regard is worth

mentioning as he was the creator of the 'Hindi Sahitya ka Itihas' in 1929 and had also compiled the distorted tradition of Hindi language. The Nizam of Hyderabad sanctioned the foundation of Osmania University in 1917 to impart higher education in Urdu medium. Later on, various new universities were founded with the objective to impart education in regional languages. The cases of Andhra University and Annamalai University are some of the examples. The impact of CU Commission's recommendations could be seen on the old universities such as Patna University, Calcutta University and Punjab University etc, though the pace of their growth was very slow. One of the most drastic changes of the period, was seen in the multiple vernaculars and the unavailability of an appropriate mechanism for the translation of Standard English books. This situation posed a challenge in front of the Indian intellectuals in the process to adopt vernaculars as a medium of instruction. For solving this issue, A. V. Dhruva gave suggestion in the second Inter-University Conference held in 1929, to maintain a publication department in each and every university for ensuring the continuous supply of vernacular textbooks and modern researches. The Banaras Hindu University, Osmania University and Annamalai University etc maintained such departments. The discourse of language was also observed at policy level and during the last decade of colonial rule, when many universities made changes in higher education system on the basis of the recommendations of Central Advisory Board, 1944 and Inter-University Board, 1945. Thus, no final solution to the problem of language could be found.

The language question was also widely discussed by the leaders of the national movement. They did not just focus on the theoretical aspects, but also practised the ideals. Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi, Lala Lajpat Rai, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, P. C. Ray, MaulanaAbulKalam Azad and many stalwarts of the freedom struggle had agreed to provide education in the mother tongue. But, they did not underestimate the practical utility of the English language. These leaders made unsuccessful attempts to resolve the language issue. During the vibrant national movement, the discourse of language was turned into a different direction, especially in north India. The leaders of national movement found language as an instrument of identity so that they could use it decisively to form unity and fight against colonialism and English. But, the situation became complex when gender symbols were attached with Hindi and the language was widely claimed as 'MatriBhasha'.

The supporters of other languages such as Urdu, rejected the superiority of Hindi over their language and subsequently, Indian society started to divide into two languages, Hindi or Urdu, speaking groups on the basis of religious identity, which were, Hindu and Muslim respectively. For bridging the gap of Indian society, the solution to the language question was necessary. The National Planning Committee on General and Technical Education submitted its report in 1948. It asserted that the child's mother tongue was to be the key of better education. But, for higher education, it needed a little more investigation in the matter. The University Education Commission, 1949, dealt with the issue of language in a great detail and offered a three language formula for resolving the issue. According to it, the regional languages, federal language and English were considered essential for learning as well as for administrative works of the provinces and federation. Thus, after a long discussion and debate, the UEC gave valuable recommendations, but the commission was only an advisory body and it completely depended upon the Indian government on how to pursue the language discourse in higher education.

## **CHAPTER 4: EXAMINING TO TEACHING UNIVERSITIES: FUNCTIONING AND REFORMS**

A powerful stimulus to university reform and strong support for the establishment of the unitary teaching type of university advocated by the Government of India was also created by the report of the Calcutta University Commission. It is no exaggeration to say that the whole course of University education has been profoundly affected by the publication of this report. No aspect of the functions of a university in India, of the needs for which it should cater or of the conditions essential for its success, escaped the careful survey of this Commission. The highest praise for the labours of the members is to be found in the fact that, though only dealing with the Calcutta University, their conclusions were at once recognised as applicable or adoptable to the whole of India....<sup>1</sup>

- Lord Reading, (1924).

...Indian universities are little more than examining machines working on a mass scale, to standard pattern, producing by the thousands graduates and post graduates, who are more often than not misfits in life through no fault of their own. The highest stage of education needs, therefore, radical reform. The universities themselves need reorganisation and reorientation to guard against the danger of their becoming victims of party machines or power politics.<sup>2</sup>

- Report of the National Planning Committee, (1948).

The lack of comprehensive education curricula and the excessive emphasis on the use of alien language were not only the causes which led the deterioration of higher education. But the complex functioning of universities was also a key factor behind declining academic quality. Initially, the universities established in India, were based on the London model and performed purely examining function instead of teaching. In such scenario, it was natural that

A glance at the history of English education in India would prove the fact that neither the missionary who actively endeavoured, nor the governmental

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<sup>1</sup> Report of the Universities' Conference held at Simla from May the 19th to the 24th, 1924, Government of India Central Publication Branch, Calcutta: 1924, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the National Planning Committee on General Education and Technical Education and Developmental Research*, Vora & Co. Publishers LTD, Bombay: 1948, p. 39.



authorities who supported them, were actuated by any altruistic desire to educate the Indian peoples in order to mould them into an Indian nation.<sup>3</sup>

The adverse impact of founding the examining university was realised with the turn of nineteenth century, consequently the demands of establishing teaching University became strong and Indian intellectuals started to react against the system in which teaching unduly was subordinated to examination. The recommendations of Indian Universities Commission (1902) did not prove path breaking in resolving the problem, however a series of debate began to find the solution. The colonial government passed a resolution on education policy in 1913 and it resolved to develop the teaching faculty at the seats of existing universities.<sup>4</sup> In order to give effect to the resolution, government appointed the Calcutta University Commission 1919 to inquire into the matter. Subsequently, an era of reform commenced in the history of university education, where the wide changes were introduced in the old universities and innovations were accepted in a limited sense while founding new universities. With this short introduction, the chapter will describe the functioning of examining university and some major issues which led the transformation of the universities from examining type to teaching type. It would also include the recommendations of different commissions and committees, reforms in the teaching and examination system which took place after 1919 and further issues and challenges.

## **THE FUNCTIONING OF EXAMINING UNIVERSITIES AND KEY ISSUES**

The higher education institutions were founded in India with the broad objective to control and regulate the diffusion of education in order to make colonised as subordinate partisans of the Raj. The constituted universities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras in 1857 were not the teaching universities. As the Preamble of the Indian Universities Acts 1857 stated that

It has been determined to establish the university for the purpose of ascertaining by means of examination, the person who have acquired proficiency in different

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<sup>3</sup> K. M. Panikkar, *Essays on Educational Reconstruction in India*, The Cambridge Press, Madras: 1920, p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Resolution on Indian Educational Policy 1913*, Superintendent Government Printing, Calcutta: 1915, p. 34.

branches of literature, science, art, and of rewarding them by academical degrees as evidence of their respective attainments.<sup>5</sup>

These universities were the highly administrative bodies under the strict control of government. It was no surprise that the colonial masters did not realise the need of a teaching university. In their mind,

Neither Oxford nor Cambridge nor the Scottish Universities in the 1850s were suitable as paradigms. The University of London was the only institution with administrative experience relevant to India's needs. As an examining machine it was a good model, but it could give little guidance over quality of teaching, and even as an examining machines it offered no safeguard of standards of achievement.<sup>6</sup>

The Indian universities performed the teaching function through the affiliated colleges and these colleges were dependent on the approval from Governor General in Council in case of Calcutta University and by Governor in Council in case of universities of Bombay and Madras. In this regard, the Acts of 1857 stated that,

Except by special orders of the Senate no person shall be admitted as a candidate for a degree unless he shall present to the university a certificate from an institution authorised in that behalf by the Governor General or Governor in Council to the effect that he has completed the course of instruction prescribed by the university in the by-laws to be made by them under the power in that behalf given by the acts.<sup>7</sup>

The system of affiliating and examining universities soon proved unsuccessful in controlling and supervising the advancement of university life and teaching process. In such condition, the growing number of students and the inadequate facilities to incorporate them into the system in a large part of India became a challenge for the colonial government. Without altering the existing structure and function of universities, the educational enhancement of Indian people was at stake. Initially, the government did not perceive seriously the highlighted defects in the higher education institutions and later on

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<sup>5</sup> R. Littlehales, *Ninth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1922 – 1927, Volume I*, Government of India Central Publication, Calcutta: 1929, p. 52.

<sup>6</sup> Eric Ashby and Mary Anderson, *Universities: British, Indian and African: A Study in the Ecology of Higher Education*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London: 1966, p. 141.

<sup>7</sup> R. Littlehales, *Ninth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1922 – 1927, Volume I, Op. Cit.*, p. 52.

founded two universities at Punjab and Allahabad in 1882 and 1887 respectively. The constituting Acts of these Universities were also based on the IUA1857 and like earlier three universities; these universities were also the examining corporation.<sup>8</sup> In the beginning of twentieth century, a tendency of establishing the privately managed colleges grew after owing to the recommendations of first education Commission 1882. The universities had a little control over such colleges and the IUC 1902 dealt this dangerous tendency. Consequently, by the IUA 1904, the Indian universities of Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Punjab and Allahabad were reconstituted. According the new Act,

The universities in India were deemed to have been incorporated for the purpose of making provision for the instruction of students, with power to appoint university teachers and to maintain university libraries, laboratories and museums and to make regulations relating to the residence and conduct of students.<sup>9</sup>

The Act of 1904, in this way cleared the path to introduce wide range reforms in the existing five universities. While the required changes could not be introduced in all universities except the University of Calcutta, which started to perform teaching function and “To ensure that their students should be subjected to discipline and reside in places approved by the authorities of the affiliated colleges under general instruction issued by the university.”<sup>10</sup> After the ineffective implementation of the 1904 regulation in other four universities, government reiterated their promise of founding the teaching university through the Resolution on educational policy 1913. It warned that “The dangers inherent in this unrestricted expansion and suggested that it was necessary to limit the area of affiliating universities and also to create new teaching and residential university.”<sup>11</sup> The approval of English government to Banaras Hindu University Act 1915 can be assumed a forward step for establishing teaching universities. But, the government could not maintain consistency in their project of reforms while building numerous other new universities at Patna, Nagpur, Delhi etc. Meanwhile, the publication of Calcutta University Commission

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. pp. 52 – 53.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p. 53.

<sup>11</sup> *Interim Report of the Indian Statutory Commission: Review of the Growth of the Education in British India by the Auxiliary Committee (Hartog Committee)*, Government of India Central Publication Branch, Calcutta: 1929, p. 121.

report in 1919 noted in its assessment various defects in the examination function of the Calcutta University in particular and other universities in general. The reply of witnesses to the commission provided a glimpse of spreading outrage against the examination function of the universities. On the question, 'whether teaching is unduly subordinated to examination', the commission received the reply of 213 witnesses. Out of them, 169 had replied in positive, 14 were classified as doubtful and only 30 had replied in the negative.<sup>12</sup>

The responses of Indian intelligentsia significantly highlighted the numerous problems in the examining function of the universities and their protesting voice emphasized to find an effective solution in order to enhance the system of higher education in India. The issue of foremost concern was the declining teaching standard and the situation became worse after exerting more pressure on narrow examinations. As a result, for students, the important questions and notes acquired a greater place rather than real learning and teaching. The insensibility of some teachers was also responsible for this condition, who concentrated only on the completion of syllabus instead of teaching in detail. As the principal of Rajshahi College, Rai Kumudini Kanta Banerjee Bahadur said that

All teaching is done with a view to secure successful results in the university examinations. The teacher who can best coach and who can give notes most suitable for answering probable questions in the examination is considered to be the best teacher. These notes are crammed.<sup>13</sup>

The students and college authorities were blamed for promoting examination system by putting unavoidable pressure on teachers for giving good result. Thus, the examination success became criteria of judging a good teacher in the private as well as government colleges. However, the role of teachers was not so defensive while the authors of CU Commission tried to defend it by stating that

The main pressure on the teachers is exerted by the students themselves, whether directly or through the college authorities.... The students, with the rarest of exceptions, think and care for nothing but examination success and that they believe that under the existing system of examination their success

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<sup>12</sup> *Calcutta University Commission, 1917 – 1919, Report, Volume 2, Part I, Analysis of Present Conditions*, Superintendent Government Printing, Calcutta: 1919, p. 145.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, p. 147.

will be endangered if the lecturer wastes time by teaching outside that syllabus.<sup>14</sup>

Adverse impact of the examining function of universities was also felt on the encouragement of creativity and original thinking in students. In a mechanical teaching environment, the students had no choice of extensive reading; and even for regular study, they had to prefer exam oriented material. The university education in this way cultivated the memory not the mind and examiners also fulfilled their responsibilities by judging the memory of students instead of their capability of dealing the questions. A professor of Mathematics in Presidency College gave emphasis on this problem and said,

With the object of securing distinctions in the examinations, the students read a fixed number of text-books, or rather some portions of text-books-portions which are likely to be set in examinations, and this type of intellectual slavery which is popularly known as cramming stifles the growth of original thinking in the minds of the students, and when they come into the actual field of work they make a poor show of themselves by reason of their not having any power of imagination and original thinking.<sup>15</sup>

The main reason for leading this situation was the pursuance of incorrect definition of examinations by students. They considered the qualification of examination as a passport to government service and the other hand; the poverty enforced some students to study for searching livelihood.<sup>16</sup> On the issue, Mr. Purnachandra Kundu then Officiating Principal of Chittagong College, wrote to the commission that

The University education (even in non-technical subjects) is the only entrance to a professional career or service under government. The vast majority of students do not care much for learning and intellectual progress; their aim is to pass examinations only after which can they expect to earn a living. The prospects of earning a decent living serve as the incentive to University education.<sup>17</sup>

The system of examining university also failed to facilitate the large number of affiliated colleges in India. The colleges were the main centre of teaching and were situated

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 148.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p. 153.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p. 150.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p. 151.

in a vast territory. Some of them were founded away from the metropolitan area for spreading the benefit of higher education to maximum students. But, these colleges proved inefficient in perpetrating the teaching work and suffered in isolation. The over burden of students, lack of library and laboratory facilities, insufficient funds and moreover the absence of coordination in lecturing between the different colleges etc were some of the important causes responsible for the declining teaching standard in the colleges. In whole system, the teachers of colleges were over loaded with work and consequently, the quality of teaching compromised. It was observed that teacher had neither time nor energy for special studies of his own. He was like a gramophone that replayed the old records.<sup>18</sup> However, the universities could not make the adequate arrangements to secure the reasonable conditions of salary and tenure for the teachers. Under the service system, it was also made liable for teachers “To be transferred from one college to another, or from teaching to administrative work or inspection, according to the need of service.”<sup>19</sup> Like government colleges, the missionary colleges and private colleges were also miscarrying the task of imparting higher education. The low salaries of teachers, tenure and service were generally the most unsatisfactory areas and required immediate attention for wide reforms.

After the enactment of IUA 1904, the universities had all power to comprehend, supervise and control the academic and administrative work of the colleges. Despite the inefficiency of universities in securing the competent teaching system for college students, the Indian universities were dead in all respect to adopt, promote and enhance the uniformity in the education curricula. The CU Commission found in its observation that

It is true that a student may attend another college in a subject in which his own knowledge is not affiliated. But this could not be done in English, or any of the more popular subjects, because in these subjects the accommodation is already strained.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> *Calcutta University Commission, 1917 – 1919, Report, Volume 1, Part I, Analysis of Present Conditions*, Superintendent Government Printing, Calcutta: 1919, p. 361.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* p. 371.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* p. 379.

The university and colleges were also unsuccessful in providing the choice of subjects and the combination of subjects at the time of admission. This was a procedural methodological defect due to which a student suffered widely. The Commission noted that

....The University gives him no guidance; it allows him a wide latitude of choice, but gives no indication as to the best groupings of subjects. If the college helps his choice it is only by limiting it by offering him only a restricted number of subjects.<sup>21</sup>

Other side, the colleges were rigidly controlled by the university and it may be considered as a fundamental cause of unhappy uniformity and conflict with whom on which the uniformity was enforced. Evidently, the personal friction between university and colleges can be seen when the university started to maintain post graduate departments. The university appointed best teachers from colleges in order to establish post graduate faculty in the university. The appointed teachers in university initiated to get away from their earlier above described position. From this step of the university, the colleges were severely affected and

The result necessarily was to weaken still further the teaching strength of the colleges concerned, and to make the other colleges teachers feel, however unreasonably, that their status had been still further reduced by the formal and practically permanent limitation of the colleges to an inferior sphere.<sup>22</sup>

Thus, the examining function of universities proved disastrous for developing and promoting the higher academic culture in India. The various issues demanded the urgent attention of the Government to reform the whole system.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS, TRANSITION AND GENERAL PROGRESS**

The CU Commission had a great responsibility of reforming and transforming the rigid and complex system of examining university in one hand and the other to create an environment for the smooth transition of the examining university to teaching university. But, it was not an easy task and the difficulty of the commission can be imagined from its assessment that the Indian universities

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 386.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p. 381.

...Were not corporations of scholars, but corporations of administrators; they had nothing to do directly with the training of men, but only with the examining of candidates; they were not concerned with learning, except in so far as learning can be tested by examinations.<sup>23</sup>

In such odd scenario, the priority of the commission was to promote the teaching system and to make arrangements for strengthening the colleges. It was quite clear for the commission that the college system was deeply rooted in Calcutta and it would be convenient to make the college system strong by extending cooperation and supervision of university over colleges.<sup>24</sup> This time, the commission did not suggest to import an alien model, but proposed the structure that neither superficially resembling the Cambridge and Oxford nor the reconstructed University of London. It was a synthesis of significant characters in which

The University will not be something outside of an apart from the colleges, as it now is, but the colleges will be in the fullest sense member of, and partners in the University. It must be a system wherein the university will be really responsible for the character of the teaching given in its name, and will realise that it is the training given to students which is of primary importance, and that the examinations which test this training are of subsidiary importance....<sup>25</sup>

Most importantly for raising the teaching standard in colleges, it was also advised to maintain the strength of students up to 1000 and the ratio of teachers in the proportion one to twenty five should be fixed.<sup>26</sup>

The commission also concentrated to ameliorate the teaching quality by offering innovative ideas such as extending the duration of graduation courses over three years and post graduation courses was recommended to make of two years.<sup>27</sup> Further, it also advised to bring uniformity in the education curricula and to introduce some changes in the courses of honours and pass degree. For serving the purpose, it was stated “That honours course,

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p. 57.

<sup>24</sup> *Calcutta University Commission, 1917 – 1919, Report, Volume 4, Part II, Recommendations of the Commission*, Superintendent Government Printing, Calcutta: 1919, p. 253.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 254.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p. 301.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p. 258.



should be organised, distinct from the outset from pass courses; and that these honours courses should not in all cases be highly specialised or limited to a special subject.”<sup>28</sup> Similarly, the pass courses were also suggested to organise and bring flexibility in the system of selecting subjects and provide facility to students for changing honours courses to pass and vice versa.<sup>29</sup> The necessity of reforming the methods of instruction was also realised by the commission and it was proposed to abandon the practice of requiring the compulsory attendance at full courses of instruction in every subject of study. Instead of this, the colleges should play vital role in certifying the systemic instruction to students and their qualitative work. It should be the choice of students to attend a certain number of lectures, given by the recognised teachers as defined by the regulation.<sup>30</sup> The colleges should also make arrangements to provide individual tutorial guidance, lectures and other instruction in order to meet the special need of the students.<sup>31</sup> Along with these reforms, the commission also advocated to promote research in the university as well as colleges. It guided to provide special facilities for independent work. Teachers should play their crucial part in the encouragement of research in the university. Library and laboratory facilities should provide and “If possible with the aid of government, should provide scholarships or maintenance allowances for those advanced students those are not only fired by zeal for exploration, but show capacities which promise that they will explore to real purpose.”<sup>32</sup>

The reforms in examination system were also essential to create healthy conditions for a teaching university. Therefore, the commission paid attention on the overhauling of the whole examination mechanism. First place, the periodical inspection of the examining machine was considered important and the commission proposed to set up a special examination board with inspecting and advisory powers. Moreover, “Its duty would be to review the working of the examination system in all its aspects and to report periodically to

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p. 265.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, p. 275.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p. 280.

the academic and executive councils.”<sup>33</sup> In the name of reviewing the examination function, the duty of the board should not only to produce criticism of the existing system but it should also give suggestions for dealing the problems, improvement and making new departure. In the purview of its inspection, the subjects must include from setting of questions, conduct of examinations and declaration of results up to the examination finance.<sup>34</sup> Second place, it was also recommended to organise a boards of examiners for setting the question papers, correction of answer seats and conducting viva. They would be the non permanent bodies and be included the teachers of the university and external examiners.<sup>35</sup> The commission also favoured to encourage the viva-voce examinations, provision of an alternate questions and examination by compartments in one hand and on the other, it was strongly recommended to strengthen the system of scrutiny of marks, re-examining the papers of borderline candidates etc.<sup>36</sup> Thus, these some valuable and important recommendations of the CU Commission prepared a ground for modifying the old universities and establishing new one on the bases of these recommendations. The success of the commission in transforming the university system was dependent on the appropriation and introduction of the recommendations by the government.

The significant attempt of implementing the recommendations of the CU commission was made initially, when the proposed Dhaka University was constituted in 1920. It became the first university founded on the line of the CU Commission. It adopted the revised constitution, unitary teaching system and provided library and laboratory facilities.<sup>37</sup> It further became a role model for organising old universities as well as for establishing new one. At the same year, the university of Aligarh and Lucknow were established on Dhaka model. The Aligarh University was the extension of the Muhammadan Anglo Oriental College and its constitution assigned functions that

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<sup>33</sup> *Calcutta University Commission, 1917 – 1919, Report, Volume 5, Part II, Recommendations of the Commission*, Superintendent Government Printing, Calcutta: 1919, p. 2.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, p. 3.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, p. 9.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 13 – 16.

<sup>37</sup> J. A. Richey, *Eighth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1917 – 1922, Volume I*, Superintendent Government Printing, Calcutta: 1923, p. 55.

The academic council, however, has the power to frame ordinances on academic matters for direct submission to the Court. The local government is represented in the University by a Visiting Board consisting of the Governor, the members of the Executive Council, the Ministers, one member nominated by the Governor and one member nominated by the Minister in charge of Education.<sup>38</sup>

The case of Lucknow University was quite different because in its foundation the Governor of The United Provinces, Harcourt Butler took interest and the financial assistance was made by the local people of Oudh. The nucleus of the University “was formed from the Canning College, King George’s Medical College, and the Isabella Thoburn College for Women.”<sup>39</sup> Subsequently, the demand of science teaching remarkably grew in the province and finally, the expansion of the laboratory facilities took place, for instance the Lucknow Christian College had spent three lakhs rupees on the Hadley science block. The tutorial work was a significant feature of the new teaching university and it was practised in the Canning and the Arts College of the Lucknow University and the Dhaka University.<sup>40</sup>

The gradual transition in the work of some old Universities can also be advocated; earlier Calcutta University introduced various changes in the administrative and academic areas in order to perform purely teaching function. But, after the CU Commission Report, the Calcutta University was least affected from the recommendations and did not adopt a comprehensive scheme of reforming the existing system. It continuously performed valuable teaching and research functions in old manner through the post graduate departments. Initially the excessive number of staff in departments and discrimination in choice of students were some critical areas where special attention was not given.<sup>41</sup> In addition, due to financial stringency,

The numbers of students largely declined, the staff had to be reduced and departments of study closed. But in August 1925 the Legislative Council of Bengal sanctioned a recurring grant of Rs. 3 Lakhs for the post-graduate

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid, p. 56.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, p. 57.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, pp. 69 – 70.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, p. 62.

department of the university and, in consequence the finances of the university have been placed on more stable bases.<sup>42</sup>

Subsequently, the financial condition of the university started to improve due to considerable increase in the fee income. For finding the concrete solution of the financial problem, the government had to come forward to assist the university. They agreed after negotiation to give Rs. 3,60,000 annually for balancing the budget.<sup>43</sup> However, this aid was inadequate to strengthen the fiscal condition of the university as well as to implement the contemplated reforms. Thus, till the end of colonial rule in 1947, some new courses and departments were introduced while the University of Calcutta was not expanded and reconstituted according the suggestions of the CU Commission.

The Madras University showed enthusiasm in embracing the reforms and took incentive for altering the old structure. In a meeting of Senate held in 1922, it adopted the resolution

That there should be established a teaching and residential university at Madras with constituent colleges within the limits of that university, as soon as arrangements have been made for the simultaneous establishment of similar teaching and residential university at other educational centres with the sphere of the university of Madras as constituted prior to the commencement of the act.<sup>44</sup>

The amending University legislation was passed in 1923 which proposed the expansion of the Senate with an elective majority, the formation of an Academic Council and the Council of affiliated colleges and the appointment of a full time Vice-Chancellor.<sup>45</sup> Some years after of this arrangement, the Madras University Act was again amended in 1928 for removing the ambiguity of previous legislation. The new amended Act of 1928 abolished

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<sup>42</sup> R. Littlehailes, *Ninth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1922 – 1927*, Volume I, *Op. Cit.*, p. 60.

<sup>43</sup> John Sargent, *Eleventh Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1932 – 1937*, Volume I, *Manager of Publications, Delhi: 1939*, p. 56.

<sup>44</sup> R. Littlehailes, *Ninth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1922 – 1927*, Volume I, *Op. Cit.*, p. 61.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

the Council of Affiliated Colleges and strengthened the Academic Council.<sup>46</sup> Thus, it clearly defined the power and function of different administrative bodies. The university took incentive to enhance teaching standard and made effort to facilitate the students of arts and science degree courses. The research was also promoted by the university and for the purpose, the library and laboratory facilities were provided. The important development of the age was the sanction of the Government to the establishment of Science Research Institute for the advance study and research in botany, zoology and bio-Chemistry. The university also took prompt action in replacing an old Government Students Advisory Committee with newly setup Advisory Bureau.<sup>47</sup> In due course of time, the various changes were also accepted in examination system and courses of study. The University of Madras consisted of a University Students' Union and University Examination Boards etc.<sup>48</sup>

The expansion of the Madras University was not confined only to the colleges and departments, but it also gave place to the foundation of new university. Influencing from the recommendations of the CU Commission, the university Senate adopted the resolution in 1920, "That the time has come when the increasing demands for liberal education in this presidency should be met by the establishment of more Universities and by the redistribution of the territorial areas of the existing university so as to provide as far as practicable. At least one university for each principal linguistic area within the presidency; and the establishment of a university for the Andhras should be taken in hand without further delay."<sup>49</sup> For giving real shape to this resolution, the Andhra University Act was passed by the Madras Legislative Assembly in 1926. During the discussion, it was emphasized to establish a unitary university as widely distinct from affiliating university, like the University of Madras. "But, in effect, the new Andhra University Act lies merely

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<sup>46</sup> Sir George Anderson, *Tenth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1927 – 1932, Volume I*, Manager of Publications, Delhi: 1934, p. 64.

<sup>47</sup> R. Littlehales, *Ninth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1922 – 1927, Volume I, Op. Cit.*, p. 62.

<sup>48</sup> John Sargent, *Eleventh Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1932 – 1937, Volume I, Op. Cit.*, p. 58.

<sup>49</sup> J. A. Richey, *Eighth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1917 – 1922, Volume I*, Superintendent Government Printing, Calcutta: 1923, p. 59.

created a number of teaching centres in which the organisations of the colleges and the teaching imparted is controlled not by the University but by the individual separately managed colleges.”<sup>50</sup> Since beginning, the university received strong financial support from government and princely states; therefore the work of building construction was finished on time. The College of Arts was opened in 1931 which provided instruction up to honours standard and in next year, the College of Science and Technology was opened to impart education up to B. S. C. Honour’s standard and conduct examination in physics and chemistry. The University progressively adopted Telugu language as a medium of instruction and promoted research in the field of science and arts.<sup>51</sup> Unlike Madras University, the University of Bombay did not take effective steps to renovate the old system immediately, however it exercised control over the courses and curricula and performed teaching function largely through affiliated colleges.

The Bombay University appointed a university committee in 1922 for revising the scheme of post-graduate teaching. Two years later of its suggestions, “The M.A. degree was thrown open to research and all post-graduate training, including the University School of Economics and Sociology, was placed under the control of a board of management.”<sup>52</sup> This system was not functioning satisfactorily, so the Syndicate instituted another committee in 1926 for further innovation. The new University legislation of 1928 provided to reconstitute Bombay University for higher teaching and research and exercise control over the teaching work of the colleges. The noteworthy changes were also introduced in the supreme governing body, the Senate was made more responsible by increasing the number of elective members. The Academic Council was declared as the chief academic body which consisted of the members from different field of education. The statutory grant of Rs. 1,17,000 was provided to the university but, this financial aid was not sufficient to

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<sup>50</sup> R. Littlehailes, *Ninth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1922 – 1927*, Volume I, *Op. Cit.*, p. 59.

<sup>51</sup> John Sargent, *Eleventh Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1932 – 1937*, Volume I, *Op. Cit.*, p. 61.

<sup>52</sup> R. Littlehailes, *Ninth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1922 – 1927*, Volume I, *Op. Cit.*, p. 60.

undertake the new teaching work as suggested in the Act.<sup>53</sup> Though, the university made considerable progress and “A good deal of research work was also carried on in the University Departments and in the affiliated colleges are recognised post-graduate institutions.”<sup>54</sup> The Punjab University experimented to create a teaching system. The most notably, it introduced the system of honours schools and also conducted post-graduate teaching in the subject of economics.<sup>55</sup> Some years later, the university appointed a committee to proposed recommendations for promoting quality research. On its suggestions, the provision for granting scholarships was made and it was decided “To send selected college teachers overseas for study and research.”<sup>56</sup> Afterwards, a number of buildings were constructed in the University including chemical laboratory, Law College and oriental college. Like the University of Madras, the Punjab University also set up an Advisory Bureau in place of old Government Students’ Advisory Committee.<sup>57</sup> While, the reforms in the Senate could not be introduced immediately though, the control of academic council was increased over the higher teaching and research in 1928 without amending the University legislation.<sup>58</sup> The progressive steps for reconstituting the Allahabad University were taken. The University Constitution was reframed and by the amendment of the Allahabad University Act in 1921, the university was characterised as a teaching and residential university. Despite this, it was assigned the external responsibility of administering a large number of colleges which were situated in United Provinces, Central Provinces, Rajputana and Central India. Other side, the intermediate classes were got

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<sup>53</sup> Sir George Anderson, *Tenth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1927 – 1932, Volume I, Op. Cit.*, pp. 64- 65.

<sup>54</sup> John Sargent, *Eleventh Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1932 – 1937, Volume I, Op. Cit.*, p. 58.

<sup>55</sup> J. A. Richey, *Eighth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1917 – 1922, Volume I*, Superintendent Government Printing, Calcutta: 1923, pp. 61 - 62.

<sup>56</sup> R. Littlehailes, *Ninth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1922 – 1927, Volume I, Op. Cit.*, pp. 61 - 62.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> Sir George Anderson, *Tenth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1927 – 1932, Volume I, Op. Cit.*, p. 68.

separate from the academic work of the Allahabad University and their control was transferred to the newly constituted Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education.<sup>59</sup>

In the descending decades various other new universities were founded to fulfil the popular demand of higher education. But, the colonial government did not provide their complete financial support to these new universities and moreover, exercised the arbitrary control over the academic function of the universities. For example, the Nagpur University was established in 1923 as an affiliated university. The nucleus of the NU was formed from the colleges which were spread in the large territory of Central India. It consisted of the faculty of arts, law, education and agriculture, but it did not assign directly the responsibility of teaching except in the law department.<sup>60</sup> Despite being an examining university, the attraction of the students of affiliated colleges grew towards the central city Nagpur that severely affected the colleges and finally weaken them. The principle of Robertson college Jubbulpore expressed his concern over the matter, who did hard work “To maintain the traditional standard of the College in face of the steady decline in the quality of students. He observed that the superior’s attractions of Nagpur have caused the abler students to gravitate the headquarters of the university.”<sup>61</sup> Instead of amending the Nagpur University Act, the numerical expansion of the colleges took place as the number of colleges in the university was almost doubled, “Having grown from 8 in 1932 to 15 in 1937, while the number of students has risen from 2,354 to 3,767 during the same period.”<sup>62</sup> The case of Delhi University is also needed to mention here, because it was established as a unitary, teaching and residential university one year before the Nagpur University. In the absence of Government’s active support, the character of the University

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<sup>59</sup> J. A. Richey, *Eighth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1917 – 1922*, Volume I, Op. Cit., p. 57.

<sup>60</sup> R. Littlehales, *Ninth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1922 – 1927*, Volume I, Op. Cit., p. 57.

<sup>61</sup> Sir George Anderson, *Tenth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1927 – 1932*, Volume I, Op. Cit., p. 70.

<sup>62</sup> John Sargent, *Eleventh Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1932 – 1937*, Volume I, Op. Cit., p. 60.



was changed decisively and in place of unitary and teaching university, it became an affiliating and examining body.<sup>63</sup>

Initially, the DU consisted of several constituent colleges under the private management. The Three first grade colleges offered instruction up to degree standard and other three second grade colleges provided education up to intermediate level. The university was completely depended on these colleges for teaching function therefore, it did not appoint teachers in large number and did not make residential arrangements for the students.<sup>64</sup> the adequate financial resources and the active Government support was essential for the transformation of the DU. In 1934, the Government gave signal to organise the University on federal lines by stating that

The original intention in constituting; the University of Delhi was to create a university which would be freed from the inevitable defects of a purely affiliating institution but at the same time to give its constituent colleges ample scope to develop their resources in co-operation with each other and with the university itself.<sup>65</sup>

Almost a decade later of this declaration, the Central Legislative Assembly passed an amendment in the Delhi University Act in 1943. According that the degree course of 2 years was made of 3 years and the university should have a permanent full paid vice-chancellor.<sup>66</sup> Despite this, the insensibility of the colonial government in implementing the recommendations of the CU Commission proved disastrous for the development of Patna University which was founded in 1917 after the bifurcation of the territory of Bihar and Odessa from Bengal in 1912. The PU was constituted to reduce the burden of Calcutta University and to undertake the work of post-graduate and science teaching. But, the fund of the university was spent exclusively on the promotion of the education of engineering and medicine and immediately, no attention was paid on the transformation of the

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<sup>63</sup> R. Littlehales, *Ninth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1922 – 1927*, Volume I, *Op. Cit.*, p. 67.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> John Sargent, *Eleventh Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1932 – 1937*, Volume I, *Op. Cit.*, p. 66.

<sup>66</sup> Sir John Sargent, *Decennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1937 – 1947*, Volume I, Central Bureau of Education, Delhi: 1948, p. 51.

university from examining type to teaching type.<sup>67</sup> Consequently, the quality of education started to deteriorate as the facts provided that the 3,760 students appeared for matriculation in 1927 – 1928, of whom, 1,557 passed while in 1931 – 1932, 1,782 passed from out of 5,342, showing a dip in the passing percentage. The number of B. A. passed candidates also reduced from 278 to 195 during the same period.<sup>68</sup> Thus, the Act of Patna University was amended in 1932 and the new legislation ensured the representative character of Senate and Syndicate and pure federal type of university.<sup>69</sup>

## **THE NATIONALIST CRITICS AND NEW IDEALS FOR A TEACHING UNIVERSITY**

The Indian intelligentsia was engaged in criticising, suggesting and reforming the higher education system in India. In their view, it is essential to remove the control of government over the University for its smooth functioning. They were also disappointed from the incentives of the colonial government for enhancing teaching standard. After the introduction of Indian Universities Act of 1904, a leader of Indian National Congress, Ambalal Desai resisted over its enactment and proposed a resolution in the annual session of 1906 that

The official control over high schools and Universities shall be removed. In the time of the late viceroy, measures were introduced for officialising education. Under the name of discipline, rules were introduced which restricted secondary education, and, in the name of introducing better teaching, a new Universities Act was passed, which, by actual experience, is found to be directly impeding the cause of higher education.<sup>70</sup>

The influential intellectuals of Swadeshi Movement unsuccessfully attempted to impart higher education on nationalist line through National Council of Education in 1906.

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<sup>67</sup> R. Littlehailes, *Ninth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1922 – 1927*, Volume I, *Op. Cit.*, p. 64.

<sup>68</sup> Sir George Anderson, *Tenth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1927 – 1932*, Volume I, *Op. Cit.*, p. 69.

<sup>69</sup> John Sargent, *Eleventh Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1932 – 1937*, Volume I, *Op. Cit.*, p. 60.

<sup>70</sup> Document No. 28, Resolution proposed by Ambalal Desai from Ahmedabad protesting government's policy in the area of higher education and asking for better provision for education at the 1906 session of the Indian National Congress in Sabyasachi Bhattacharya *et al.*, (Eds.), *Educating the Nation: Documents on the Discourse of National Education in India (1880 - 1920)*, *Op. Cit.*, p. 74.

In due course of time, its objectives aided in shaping the nationalist plan of education and one of its objective provided a significant idea –

To create and maintain a high standard of qualification, intellectual as well as moral, in teachers by providing, where necessary, advanced instruction in all subjects included in a liberal education, by supplying a training in the principles and practice of educational methods, and by instituting examination for testing such qualification and granting certificates to successful candidates.<sup>71</sup>

The Indian intellectuals did not project and promote the University system for narrow nationalist end. For them, it was a source of spreading consciousness among country men and regenerating Indian society, culture and religion. They were aware of achieving their objectives easily by assimilating the university education with the life of this nation. A prominent educationist, Asutosh Mookerjee expressed his ideas in this regard at the occasion of Calcutta University Convocation in 1922. He said,

It has ever been our ambition to bring the university in intimate touch with the nation, because of the supreme part that it must play in the national consciousness, pointing out by its attitude towards the things of life, through the whole wide range of human intelligence, the true direction of national safety and national progress. The university should thus be alive and progressive, not a passive and inactive force in the life of the community of which it is not only a part but a participant. The university would be dead to the nation, if it were made to stand on a height of its own, isolated on the community. On the other hands, if the activities of the university were more and more assimilated with the life of the nation, it might then be even more determinate as a teacher, and more dominant as a leader than it has ever been before....<sup>72</sup>

Meanwhile, another intellectual and poet Rabindranath Tagore showed his disagreement with the colonial policy of education. He observed that the system of examining university hindered the development of Indians' mind and destroyed their capabilities by engaging them into petty public services. In his words,

Mind, when long deprived of its natural food of truth and freedom of growth, develops an unnatural craving for success; and our students have fallen victim

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<sup>71</sup> Document No. 4, "Memorandum of Association" of the national Council of Education, Bengal dated 23 May 1906 in Sabyasachi Bhattacharya *et al.*, (Eds.), *Educating the Nation: Documents on the Discourse of National Education in India (1880 - 1920)*, *Op. Cit.*, p. 10.

<sup>72</sup> Document No. 15, Asutosh Mookerjee desires University Education to be "assimilated with Life of the Nation" in his address as Vice-Chancellor at the Convocation of the Calcutta University, 18 March 1922 in Sabyasachi Bhattacharya *et al.*, (Eds.), *Educating the Nation: Documents on the Discourse of National Education in India (1880 - 1920)*, *Op. Cit.*, p. 40.

to the mania for success in examinations. Success consists in obtaining the largest number of marks with the strictest economy of knowledge. It is a deliberate cultivation of disloyalty to truth, of intellectual dishonesty, of a foolish imposition by which the mind is encouraged to rob itself. But we are by means of it made to forget the existence of mind, we are supremely happy at the result. We pass examinations, shrivel up into clerks, lawyers and police inspectors, and we die young.<sup>73</sup>

Tagore set the high ideals for constructing a teaching university. In his view, the teacher acquired a significant place in the process of imparting education. He further rejected to adopt any methodology for teaching and emphasized to maintain tied bond between teachers and taught. As he said,

A teacher can never truly teach unless he is still learning himself. A lamp can never light another lamp unless it continues to burn its own flame. The teacher who has come to the end of his subject, who has no living traffic with his knowledge, but merely repeats his lessons to his students, can only load their minds; he cannot quicken them. Truth not only must inform but inspire. If the inspiration dies out, and the information only accumulates, then truth loses its infinity.<sup>74</sup>

Instead of offering a theoretical framework, he experimented at Santiniketan to liberate the children from the burden of examination and to provide them an environment for their all-around development. But, his mission could not succeed due to pressure of affluent classes for introducing examination system in order to generate the feeling of healthy competition. Though, he opened another school in 1924 with the name ShikshaSatra to vindicate his educational concept, unfortunately his desire remained unfulfilled. The provocative ideas for constituting a teaching university were offered by Dr. Babasahib B. R. Ambedkar in a written reply to the University Reforms Committee in 1924. In the context of Bombay University, he practically proposed that a University cannot be a teaching university by merely engaging the agency of its own staff in the work of teaching. Moreover, it also required to have a system of authoritative direction of the academic business of the university in the hands of scholars. Thus, “A teaching University

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<sup>73</sup> Document No. 16, Rabindranath Tagore in a speech in USA in 1922 elucidates his idea of an “Eastern University” as a centre of the “Intellectual Life of the People” in Sabyasachi Bhattacharya et al., (Eds.), *Educating the Nation: Documents on the Discourse of National Education in India (1880 - 1920)*, Op. Cit., p. 42.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, p. 43.

is a teachers' University."<sup>75</sup> The reflection of his ideas can be observed on the amending Act of Bombay University 1928, after its implementation wide changes were introduced in the administrative functions of the university. The Academic Council was declared as the supreme academic body, consisted of members from the field of education and entitled to take decision on academic matters.<sup>76</sup>

All the universities of India did not have a same fate and position in adopting reforms. The process of modification varied province to province, because the central and provincial governments gave preference to their administrative ease and comfort rather than to consider the subject of education on priority bases. They treated much more the whole education system like a step child and also made discrimination at the time of fund allocation. Many of the old universities and the founded new universities were largely handicapped in adopting essential reforms due to financial stringency in one hand and on the other, the established authority failed to generate employment for the young graduates, therefore, the quality of higher education was also compromised. In this regard, the Report of Central Advisory Board noted that the University education in India was over crowded and many students, who should be not be in the universities, were there. As statistics provided that

There are 4,54,140 pupils in the upper stage of the high schools in British India, there are 1,63,408 students in the universities. Many of these are there not because they have been found fit for higher education or have a thrust for knowledge, but because they found no opportunities for employment on leaving schools and their parents gambled for the chance that their sons might discover successful career after obtaining a university degree.<sup>77</sup>

Consequently, the horrific picture of Indian universities as noted by the Calcutta University Commission in 1919 was not much different even after the passing of thirty years to its recommendations for constituting a teaching university. The Report of National Planning Committee on general and technical education observed in 1948 that in the

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<sup>75</sup> Hari Narke, (Ed.), *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches, Volume 2* (Eddited and Revised), Dr. Ambedkar Foundation, New Delhi: 2014, p. 299.

<sup>76</sup> Sir George Anderson, *Tenth Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in India 1927 – 1932, Volume I, Op. Cit.*, pp. 64- 65.

<sup>77</sup> *Report of the Central Advisory Board of Education (Sergeant Committee Report)*, Manager Government of India Press, Simla: 1944, pp. 29 - 30.

present existing conditions, “Indian universities are little more than examining machines working on a mass scale, to standard pattern, producing by the thousands graduates and post graduates, who are more often than not misfits in life through no fault of their own.”<sup>78</sup> This nationalist projection of the University system cannot be considered as exaggerated, because in the absence of essential teaching facilities, the number of fail students grew. The government report of CAB provided the number of failures of students in British university examination which supported the argument, out of 20,502 students, who appeared for the B.A. and B.Sc. examinations in all the British universities in (1940 – 1941), only 11,185 students could qualify.<sup>79</sup>

After the independence of India in 1947, the newly appointed government consisted of veteran leaders of the national movement, opted to continue the process of reforms in the existing superstructure of the University education instead of founding the new base. For serving the purpose, the University Education Commission submitted its report in 1949. The recommendations of the commission covered the range of subjects from teaching to examination system and considerably assisted the government in formulating higher education policy. The recommendations of the commission firstly gave emphasis on to ameliorate the condition of teachers and to provide them a respectable position in the academic arena. It suggested an image of a teacher,

Who, possesses a vivid awareness of his mission. He not only loves his subject, he loves also those whom he teaches. His success will be measured not in terms of percentage of passes alone, not even by the quantity of original contributions to knowledge—important as they are, but equally through the quality, of life and character of men and women whom he has taught.<sup>80</sup>

The Indian universities were widely suffering from lack of finance and consequently the teachers were not given their salaries and allowances on time. This led their poor condition and affected their pride and prestige. The commission believed that a teacher is the key stone of the arch of education. In the age of market economy, it is essential to

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<sup>78</sup> *Report of the National Planning Committee on General Education and Technical Education and Developmental Research*, Vora & Co. Publishers LTD, Bombay: 1948, p. 39.

<sup>79</sup> *Report of the Central Advisory Board of Education (Sergeant Committee Report)*, Op. Cit., p. 30.

<sup>80</sup> *Report of the University Education Commission (December 1948 – August 1949)*, Volume I, (Reprinted), Ministry of Education, Government of India Press, Delhi: 1962, p. 69.

provide him sufficient finance for maintaining dignified position in society.<sup>81</sup> In the rapidly changing world of knowledge, the commission suggested to make merit the only criteria of promoting a University teacher. For assessment, the research work, his contribution in the area of teaching, experience and scholarship should be considered rather than seniority on the chair.<sup>82</sup> On the bases of merit, it was also recommended to adopt the hierarchical division of the University teachers into three categories: Professors, Readers and Lecturers, if essential Instructors (on US model).<sup>83</sup> The commission also advocated to promote the Indian universities as research universities and suggested to retain engage fine research students in the research work by providing the extra teaching and other research duties after the expiry of their term of scholarship and it was also opined to designate the research students as ‘Research Fellows’.<sup>84</sup>

The UEC further focused on to enhance teaching standard and expressed the desire to give universities and teaching a level which is internationally competitive. According to it,

Our universities should maintain the academic character of the work on a level recognised as adequate by the universities of other countries. Universities are our national institutions, and to keep up our national prestige, our degrees must be such as to command international recognition.<sup>85</sup>

For serving the purpose, it primarily recommended reforms in the school and intermediate level because the young students, who were seeking admission in the universities, were ill prepared to take the advantage of the University education. The chief cause of this situation was the poor maintenance of the schools and intermediate colleges. It was noted that they were congested and understaffed and the teachers were paid low salaries therefore, the graduates, who could not get success in entering other profession,

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid, p. 71.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, pp. 71 – 72.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, p. 72.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, pp. 84 – 85.

take the school teaching as a last resort.<sup>86</sup> On the other hand, the second reason of being the declining university teaching standard was the lower standard of university entrance exam. For resolving this, it was recommended that

The standard of admission to the universities should be the present intermediate examination, to be taken by a student after completing full 12 years of study at a school and at an intermediate college, normally at the age of eighteen.<sup>87</sup>

The commission also instructed to establish well equipped intermediate colleges and occupational institutes for students and to organise and reform the refresher courses for the intermediate and high school teachers.<sup>88</sup> The numerous reforms in the teaching methods were also suggested, the lecture method was considered the sole method of teaching in the colleges and universities which would be supplemented by the library, tutorial work and written exercise. There would be no prescribed compulsory text books for any course of study and all institutions should provide tutorial instruction to students of both pass and honours courses compulsorily.<sup>89</sup> It was also realised to upgrade the library and laboratory facilities.

The urgent necessity of reforming the examination system was also expressed by the UEC. After the recommendations of Calcutta University Commission, the number of students grew, but the character of examination system remained unchanged. The new commission profoundly believed that

The tests and examinations should be designed chiefly with educational ends in view. They should help in the choice of students, in the counselling and guidance of students, in measuring their progress, in diagnosing present conditions and in devising remedial measures and finally in assessing educational achievement.<sup>90</sup>

It suggested to take advantage of different available models of examination in world and to adopt them, after modifying in order to furnish the need of Indian universities.

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid, p. 86.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, pp. 89 – 90.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, pp. 92 – 95.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid, pp. 103 – 108.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, pp. 329 - 330.



According to it, the most suitable model was the 'objective tests' and when the number of students were growing rapidly, there was no other alternative. This type of test can make possible to ask questions of wide range and students can feel ease and comfort in solving them. Moreover,

By eliminating all personal whim and fancy, mood of the moment, or widely varying standards of expectancy among the examiners, the objective tests are immune from errors due to the subjectivity of scoring. An objective test can be scored repeatedly by the same person without variation in the score or by a number of persons without any disagreement in the scores. The scoring can, indeed, be done by the machine which is not a respecter of persons. No errors or irrelevant factors can enter into the result. There is only one variable involved, namely, whether the answer is correct or incorrect.<sup>91</sup>

The commission was also aware of the defects of the objective type of examinations, therefore it recommended to supplementary use of essay type of examination altogether.<sup>92</sup>

For the efficient working of the whole examination system, it was also recommended to appoint one or two experts in the Ministry of Education for the advice and assistance of universities on examination matters. Each university was also advised to appoint a permanent full time examiners Board with small staff for aiding in clerical and routine works. It was also further emphasized to develop the system for conducting objective tests in the language of the medium of instruction and such tests can be successfully employed in job analysis and personnel selection.<sup>93</sup> Instead of offering a new structure, the commission seek the solution of the old ills. For stopping the young graduates to treat the university degree as a passport to get public service, it recommended that "A university degree should not be required for government administrative services. Special state examinations for recruitment to the various services should be organised and should be open to whosoever cares to take them...."<sup>94</sup> Thus, the University Education Commission gave valuable suggestions for reforming the teaching and examination system. It adopted an idealistic approach for solving many unresolved crude questions and broadly analysed the techniques and models of teaching and examination system which were popular in western world. Despite of being a progressive institution, the commission was an advisory

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid, p. 331.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid, p. 332.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid, p. 334.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

body. Therefore, the recommendations of it cannot be enforced without the will and desire of the government. In short, the power of developing and making changes in the structure of higher education was completely in the hand of government.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

This chapter provided the description about the functioning of the examining and teaching universities and subsequently reforms were introduced in such universities on the bases of the recommendations of the different commissions and committees, appointed by the government time to time. The universities, which were established by the colonial Government in the mid of nineteenth century, were the examination corporation based on London model. The most important function of teaching was performed by the affiliated colleges and these colleges were completely dependent on the alien government for their approval. In due course of time, the colonial policy of higher education remained unchanged; however the two more examining universities at Punjab and Allahabad were established on the line of Indian Universities Act of 1857. With the turn of nineteenth century, an era of reforms commenced in the history of university education where wide changes were introduced in the old universities on one hand and on the other, the new universities were founded with slight modification. The first attempt for investigating the university system was made by Lord Curzon, who appointed the Indian Universities Commission in 1902 and later on the bases of its recommendations passed Indian Universities Act in 1904. Afterwards, the significant changes were made in the administrative function of the Calcutta University and the post-graduate departments were also instituted which led the transition of university from examining to teaching. But, the other old universities did not get this privilege and their system started to reform gradually after 1919, though the CU Commission showed the urgent necessity of reforming the existing structure of higher education.

The CU Commission observed the deteriorating impact of the examining function of the University on the evolution of the higher education culture in India. As a result of it, students started to give more emphasis on the examinations. The important questions and notes acquired the place of real learning and teaching. The role of teachers was also explained in this context and it was highlighted that the examining function affected the

prestige of teaching profession. The performance of the teacher was judged on the basis of their ability to give good notes for the preparation of exam and the passing percentage of the students, who qualify the exam. Moreover, the excessive emphasis on the examination badly affected the creative thinking and imaginative ideas of the young and they much more treated the University degree as a passport to get public service. The condition of the affiliated colleges was also critical and they were widely suffering from the lack of teaching staff, absence of library and laboratory facilities, inadequate finance and inability to accommodate a large number of students. Equally, the situation of the college teachers was disappointing and even they did not get sufficient amount of salaries and allowances to live an average life. Due to work load, the college teachers did not get time to refresh their knowledge and consequently, the quality of teaching compromised. The condition of the private and missionary colleges was not much better in comparison to government colleges. The most complex situation arose, when after the fifty years of university education, the University could not make arrangements to provide unified teaching curricula. During the admission of students in colleges, there was not a mechanism to guide them about the best grouping of subjects. In addition, the University exercised rigid control over the colleges and after the establishment of the post-graduate departments, the personal friction of the colleges and university came on surface when college teachers were appointed as permanent faculty in post-graduate departments. Thus, these some complex issues led the urgent need of reforming the examining function of the Indian universities.

The CU Commission proposed detail recommendations for transforming the system of examining university into teaching university. The commission suggested to take advantage of the deeply rooted college system and to treat colleges as a partner or a member in the University. It was required initially to enhance the quality of teaching and for the purpose, the structure of the pass and honours courses were advised to reorganise. The need of reforms was also felt in the methods of instruction and it was recommended to provide individual tutorial guidance, special lecture facility and abandon the system of compulsory attendance at full courses of instruction in every subject of study. Along with teaching, the commission also suggested to promote research in the universities as well as in the colleges and to provide scholarship, library and laboratory facilities. The introduction of reforms in the examination system was also the prime concern of the commission.

Therefore, the special examination board and the Boards of examiners were recommended to set up for the reorganisation of the examination machinery. For bringing transparency in the system, it was proposed to conduct viva-voce examination and strengthen the system of scrutiny of marks, re-examining the papers of the borderline candidates etc. on this bases, the process of transforming the university system began in India after 1919. The Dhaka University was the first university founded according the recommendations of the CU Commission in 1920. In the same year, other two teaching universities were established at Aligarh and Lucknow on Dhaka model.

The Calcutta University was the least affected university from the CU Commission report. The University's programme of reform suffered largely due to inadequate finance. Though, the government tried to give financial aid to the university, but it was insufficient to reconstitute the university. The forward steps for reforming the old university system, were also taken by the University of Madras. It not only reorganised the administrative and academic bodies, but also gave place to the foundation of other universities, thus, the Andhra University came into existence in 1926. The universities of Bombay, Punjab and Allahabad also took progressive measures to transform the old system. The colonial government did not showed same enthusiasm and anxiety in reforming and assisting all universities equally. In this context, the case of Patna University was analysed, which was working as an examining machine since its foundation in 1917. Without altering the character of the University, it was facilitated to impart the education of engineering and medicine; this was only major reform which was introduced in the University of Patna. The some newly constituted universities were also unfortunate in getting the financial support of the government. Consequently, either the university performed purely examination function or the character of the University changed from teaching type to examining type. In this regard, the special case of Nagpur and Delhi University was also elaborated. Hence, after the thirty years of the CU Commission report, the working system of the Indian universities was not transformed successfully from the examining university to teaching university. Similarly, the colonial government was failed to provide the basic facilities of library and laboratory in all universities and colleges which was essential for standard teaching and research. The arbitrary attitude of the government can be realised from the facts that the number of failure students grew rapidly and equally the number of courses dropout rate.

The Indian intellectuals sharply criticised the incentives of the colonial government and offered valuable suggestions for making desired changes in the higher education system. They were against the official control over the universities and for condemning this move of the government, a resolution was adopted in the annual session of the Indian National congress in 1906. The remarkable contribution in opening the gates of higher education for Indians was made by Asutosh Mookerjee. Who suggested to assimilate the university education with the life of this nation at the convocation address of the Calcutta University in 1922. Meanwhile, Rabindranath Tagore criticised the existing examining university system and emphasised on the role of teachers in developing a teaching university. He took an extreme stand by completely rejecting the whole examining process. For vindicating his educational philosophy, he did two unsuccessful experiments at Santiniketan and ShikshaSatra. The most notable suggestions for reforming the university system were made by Baba Sahib B. R. Ambedkar, who had a clear-cut idea that a teaching university is a teacher's university. After some time, the reforms were introduced in the Bombay University according his advice and the Academic Council was strengthened by appointing the academicians. But, all universities did not get equal benefit of reforms and consequently, at the time of independence, the condition of Indian Universities was very critical. It was also explained that the newly appointed government of free India adopted the bureaucratic mechanism of the colonial government. Instead of taking immediate action, they also waited for the recommendations of another commission. The University Education Commission submitted its report in 1949 which recommended reforms in the teaching and examination system rather than the construction of the new structure. The recommendations of the commission covered the range of subjects, including the respectful position for teachers, advancement of teaching and research, promotion of schools and colleges, up gradation of library and laboratory facilities, special arrangements for lectures and tutorial, introduction of objective tests, the appointments of one or two experts in the ministry of education and the Board of Examiners in the universities etc. thus, the colonial government did not take serious steps for firmly establishing the higher education in India. They used the system of commissions and committees only for diluting the subject of education. After the independence of India, the government, led by nationalist leaders, also

started to work with the same system. In short, the success and failure of commissions depend on the desire and incentive of government for implementing reforms.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

The University provides us with the best brains of the country. We found that almost in all the provinces the universities are pulling in different directions; there is no unity of purpose. We found that sometimes they are following policies which are highly provincial and detrimental to the cause of unity. We found that many of the universities were being made tools of state politics. We were convinced that education should be free from all taints of provincialism, that our universities should train a number of high class workers, brain workers, in the interests of the country as a whole...<sup>1</sup>

-Meghnad Saha (1952).

These were the words of an eminent scientist, educationist and parliamentarian, Meghnad Saha (1893 – 1956), who spoke in the Lok Sabha, about the three years of existence of the report of University Education Commission of 1949. In his emphatic voice, he raised numerous issues regarding the reconstruction of higher education system and the inability of the government of free India towards implementing the valuable recommendations of the UEC for resolving key issues. He demanded adequate budgetary allocations for the independent growth of universities and to make higher education a subject of Concurrent list so that a uniform progress of universities could be maintained while simultaneously guarding institutions that provide higher education from being used as a political tool by the provinces. The present study has deeply analysed and discussed the condition of higher education during colonial times, when the then Government in 1920 declared education as a provincial transfer subject under the charge of the Minister responsible to the Legislative Assembly. The focal point of the study is the recommendations of different commissions and committees which were appointed or had published their reports during the period 1919 – 1949. The incentives of the Government for implementing the essential suggestions were also examined in great detail and the reaction of Indian intellectuals was also highlighted in order to understand the nationalist issues, vision and mission for developing modern higher education system in India.

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<sup>1</sup> Rakesh Batabyal, (Ed.), *The Penguin Book of Modern Indian speeches: 1877 to the Present*, Penguin Books India PVT. LTD, New Delhi: p. 754.

In Chapter 2, focus has been given on the curricula of science and humanities and it was shown that the alien government failed to arrange a unified curriculum or the adequate facilities for teaching the existing curriculum even till the end of the Raj in 1947. A critical situation arose when a great proportion of young students started to perceive higher degree as a passport to public service which resulted in increasing drop-out rates. Towards the beginning of the twentieth century, the Government, then in the hands of imperialist viceroy Lord Curzon, took incentives to reconstitute the higher education system. For this purpose, he passed an Indian Universities Act in 1904 which gave more emphasis to the reforms in Senate and other administrative units. However, the key issues of curricula, medium of instruction and examination reforms remained unresolved. Soon, the energetic nationalist intellectuals started to organise education in order to enlighten and empower their fellow countrymen. They were influenced by the Swadeshi Movement and strove for the foundation of National Council of Education in order to practice their ideals of education. Due to lack of Government's financial and moral support, this experiment of Indian intellectuals could not succeed. However, it left a deep impression on Indians to prepare a nationalist plan of education for the spread of modern education on nationalist lines. Thanks to the philanthropic Indians such as TarakNathPalit, Sir Rash Bihari Ghosh, Sir Asutosh Mookerjee and others for contributing to the foundation of College of Science and the post-graduate departments in the University of Calcutta in 1915.

The changes in the curricula of higher education were observed after the recommendations of the CU Commission in 1919. Accordingly, the Dhaka University was established in 1920 which offered teaching instruction in arts and science subjects. Library and laboratory facilities were also provided to promote original research work. Soon, the Dhaka University emerged as a role model for developing other universities and consequently, the Universities of Aligarh and Lucknow were founded on the lines of the Dhaka Model and the appropriate changes were introduced in the University of Allahabad too. For organising the post-graduate departments, the Calcutta University attracted attention by offering new disciplines such as Anthropology, Ancient History and Culture and Indian Vernaculars. Subsequently, the University suffered widely due to financial rigidity and could not make the required changes as proposed by the CU Commission. The Government showed generosity to offer financial aid, but this help could not change the



fate of the University and finally, it failed to provide the variety of courses in the curricula as well as the teaching facilities in comparison to the Western counterparts. Thus, the quality of education had been severely compromised. The condition of other old universities was quite different from CU. For example, the Bombay University revised its curricula and gave more emphasis on the study of applied science and technology as compared to humanities. The Madras University emerged as a progressive institution which imparted education and promoted research in various subjects of science and humanities. The Punjab University also initiated reforms and expanded the curricula by instituting honours courses in certain subjects.

Some pioneer Indian Intellectuals also took steps to impart higher education. The special cases of Banaras Hindu University, Osmania University and Annamalai University have been discussed. These institutions tried to adopt the curricula suited to Indian needs and conducted teaching in arts and science subjects for graduation, post-graduation and research degree. The departments of oriental studies and theology were maintained by them and a special subject on music was included in the curricula. All universities did not get the benefit of reforms equally and it varied according to the interest of the colonial Government. The Patna University was the victim of such a discriminated treatment. The budget of the university was spent on the promotion of professional education such as law, medical and engineering. But, the examination character of the university remained unchanged till the last decade of the colonial rule and consequently, the academic standard of the Universities suffered widely. Similarly, the suggestions of the CU Commission were not accepted while establishing new universities of Nagpur, Andhra and others. As a result of this discriminatory higher education policy, though the alien Government was successful in spreading a secular network of higher institutions, but they failed to manage a unified education curriculum according to the needs of the Indian students. The quality of teaching declined and the Indian universities could not match the development pace of the foreign universities. The Indian system of higher education and scholarship schemes was frequently criticised and thus, foreign educated young Indians were considered superior and better to those, who had obtained higher degrees from Indian universities.

The nationalist intellectuals played an important role in criticising the colonial incentives and proposing an alternative model of education. The debate on the conception of a 'nationalist university' provided a glimpse of their ideas. Considerably, they wanted to develop a nationalist system of education exclusively under the control of Indians. The curricula of teaching comprised of the knowledge of their mother country, its literature, history and philosophy. The unassailable ideals of the West were also a part of the curricula. Aurobindo Ghose was the champion of this nationalist school of education. His vision was to establish a nationalist university on the nationalist line and under the nationalist control. But after the failure of NCE, Indians had already learnt the lesson that in order for their project to be successful, it is essential to have the support of the colonial government. In order to make some head way, initially they would need to compromise with their rigid nationalist ideals. Hence, this idea was accepted for the establishment of the Banaras Hindu University in 1916. The discussion on this issue continued for long and the thoughtful ideas of several other intellectuals supplied the subject matter useful to the Indian policy makers. The report of National Planning Committee on general and technical education and later on, the report of UEC, guided to evolve a nationalist system of higher education. Both the reports did not suggest to constitute a new base, but to continue the then present series of reforms. The UEC recommended to include the subjects of science and humanities in the education curricula which were marginalised due to discriminatory education policy of the colonial Government to promote the education of applied science and professional courses. Further, it also suggested to make honours courses for 3 years and post-graduation courses for 1 or 2 years for the students of honours and pass degree respectively. It also provided for the foundation of post-graduate departments and to give maintenance grants to them. Most notably, it emphasized the need of improving the quality and quantity of research in science and humanities and to provide scholarships to research students.

The question of medium of instruction was another debateable terrain in the higher academic circle. The colonial system of education was principally based on the ideas of T. B. Macaulay, who advocated the use of English language as a compulsory medium of instruction in order to make educated youths, Indian in blood and colour, but British in their taste, opinion and intellect. His thought was accepted while finding the three presidency

universities in 1857 which not only used English language as the sole medium of teaching and examination, but also offered English as a compulsory subject. In addition, English literature and European science too secured space in the curricula of study. By the turn of the nineteenth century, it was realised that modern higher education could not spread beyond a limited population and consequently, the Indian society became divided into two groups: the English educated elite and the common masses. This partition continues to exist till date. For resolving the language question at higher level, both the colonial government and Indian intellectuals made efforts which took shape of a powerful language discourse that was dealt with in Chapter 3. The description provided that adverse impact of the discriminatory English education policy was felt on the lower caste people, who unfortunately could not acquire mastery over English language and were thus discriminated in their access to knowledge of science and technology despite the fact that they were the first to have gained access to Western education. On the other hand, the colonial policies and administrative decisions sealed the faith of many popular languages and consequently, the linguistic landscape of the country started to shrink. Initially, the English educated intelligentsia did not contribute to the revival of declining vernaculars because for them, English language was a tool to enter and gain access to the public services. But for the youth, English language did not prove to be a boon and on the contrary, it resulted in the decline of the academic performance of university students. So much so, that in a convocation address of Calcutta University in 1902, the then viceroy Lord Curzon admitted the fault of British education policy pursued in the country that cultivated and addressed the memory and not the mind. His appointed Indian Universities Commission had observed the critical condition of higher education system and the impact it had on the young graduates due to this alien medium of instruction. However, the commission did not propose any final solution to the language problem.

In due course of time, the government unsuccessfully tried to resolve the language issue with the help of the University regulation of 1906. But the powerful representation of Indians and their organisations in the commission of 1902 signified a change in the mood and thought of English educated generation. Most importantly, NagriPracharniSabha, Kashi suggested inclusion of Sanskrit in the University curricula. While on the other hand, intellectuals like Lala Hans Raj and Goroo Das Banerjee effectively raised the demand of

promoting vernacular languages as a medium of instruction for higher learning. Later, the NCE, in its Memorandum of 1906, also emphasized the use of vernacular as a medium of education. Meanwhile, Hindi and Urdu emerged as the two popular languages in large part of North India. In order to avoid the concerns of people using language as a political tool and also for the free growth of two most popular languages: Hindi and Urdu, Mohammad Shibli Numani, in the Text-Book Committee of United Provinces in 1911, viewed to keep the separate entities of Hindi and Urdu languages instead of mixing the two. Subsequently, the two languages got recognition in higher education academia and thus, the BHU under the guidance of Acharya Ramchandra Shukla initiated the promotion of Hindi as a medium of instruction while the Osmania University, in 1918, adopted Urdu as a medium of instruction for higher studies. The Government appointed CU Commission also investigated the language question and its empirical evidence highlighted the sharp division of Indian opinion on the matter. The majority of representatives were in favour of upholding the present system of English education. Therefore, in the detailed part of the recommendations, the commission did not explicitly support to impart higher education through vernacular languages. Despite this, the commission recommended to provide education up to matriculation standard through vernaculars with an option of writing all other exams except English and Mathematics, either in vernaculars or in English. For the intermediate and degree courses, English was considered as the only medium of instruction.

Despite the clear emphasis of the colonial government towards promotion of English language for higher studies, many newly founded universities adopted vernacular languages as teaching instruction. The Annamalai University and Andhra universities were the then popular examples of such a scenario. On the contrary, the old established universities of Calcutta, Punjab and Patna made gradual progress for introducing vernaculars as a medium of instruction only up to the matriculation stage. In promoting the vernacular languages, one of the most fundamental obstacles before the Indian intellectuals was the unavailability of vernacular text-books and an appropriate mechanism for translation of Standard English books. In the second Inter-University Conference held in Delhi in 1929, the pro Vice-Chancellor of BHU, A. V. Dhruva proposed a solution to this problem by suggesting that the representatives of the universities should maintain a publication department in their universities for the continuous supply of standard books and

latest researches in the vernacular languages. The University such as BHU, OU and Annamalai University and others followed his advice and maintained such departments. In the last decade of colonial rule, a discussion took place at policy level and the report of CAB recommended that mother tongue should be used as the medium of instruction in higher education. Later, the Inter-University Board passed the resolution in this regard in 1945. Soon, the universities of Allahabad, Lucknow, Nagpur and Patna made changes in their language policy. But these changes were insufficient for the transformation of the whole system as well as for finding the ultimate solution to the language question.

During the stormy national movement, the question of language became very complex and its stable solution was a dream for the nationalist intellectuals. And the reason was that, in India, language was not a homogenous entity, therefore it was natural that one or two popular literary languages received special attention and the leaders of freedom struggle got the opportunity to utilise these languages as instrument of forming collective identity and political unity against English imperialism. Intellectuals and leaders like AbulKalam Azad, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Lala Lajpat Rai, Mahatma Gandhi, P. C. Ray, Rabindranath Tagore and others made unsuccessful attempts to resolve this issue. Their efforts symbolise the unity of thoughts and objectives because they suggested to make Indian languages as the medium of instruction instead of English. They also recognised the practical utility of English for propagating modern knowledge. The complexity of the language debate further increased when the two languages, Hindi and Urdu were emphasized to unite the different religious communities. Gradually, potent gender symbols were attached with Hindi such as 'MatriBhasha' which led to a conflicting situation. The supporter of Urdu language opposed the superiority of Hindi language and subsequently, the Indian society started to divide into two language speaking groups (Hindi and Urdu) on the basis of religion, Hindu and Islam, respectively. Thus, the triangular partition of India on the basis of Hindi, Urdu and English languages was a tragic one and bigger than the territorial division. It not only vitiated the Indian society, polity and common relations but also proved disastrous for the constant growth of a vibrant educational structure. Initially, the report of NPC and UEC had the responsibility to bridge the gaps between Indian societies and seek a solution to the long neglected language problem. The former asserted adoption of child's mother tongue as a medium of instruction at the primary level but for

higher level, it did not give any suggestions. The latter tried to find a permanent solution by offering the three language formula. Accordingly, the regional languages, federal language and English were considered important for learning as well as for usage at administrative work of provinces and the federation. Hence, the authors of UEC did not emphasise English and with these thoughtful recommendations, they tried to guard the unity of India and promote the variety of Indian languages.

Despite the issues of curricula and medium of instruction, some significant changes were also required to transform the rigid examination function of the universities and develop teaching universities. Chapter 4 provided a description in this regard. Evidently, the Indian system of higher education was completely based on an imported Western model. Its working mechanism was similar to the examining University of London where the University was an examination corporation and it performed the function of defining curricula and supervision of colleges up to the conduct of examinations. The most important teaching instruction was provided by the affiliated colleges. The colonial masters introduced such a system of control and regulation for the diffusion of higher education and to treat the educated Indians as subordinate partisans of the Raj. For this purpose, the government exercised its strict control over the colleges. Colleges had to take approval of the Governor General in Council in case of the Calcutta University and that of the Governor in Council in case of Bombay and Madras. In due course of time, the alien government did not alter their education policy and consequently, the founding Acts of earlier presidency universities were not amended and the other universities were established later, on the same ideals, at Punjab and Allahabad. When the examining character of the London University was altered in 1898, strong demands were raised in India for the creation of teaching universities. The Commission of 1902 investigated the matter and widely suggested to develop teaching universities and to make appropriate modifications in the examination system. Accordingly, with the Act of 1904, the process of reforming the function of Calcutta University began and subsequently, post graduate departments were instituted in the University for teaching and research. The other existing universities, however, could not be modified. As the CU Commission inquired such a scenario, the faults and shortcomings of the examining function of the universities came into light. The

urgent necessity of overhauling the whole system was realised in order to maintain educational quality and to improve the teaching standard.

The critical situation which led to the transition of universities from examining type to teaching type was precisely mentioned in the discussion. As a result of the examining function of the universities, teaching was unduly subordinate to the examinations. The important questions and notes acquired a more important place than true learning and effective teaching. This endangered the evolution of creative thinking and imaginative insight of the young students. Students started to consider university degree as a passport to get public service so; they too preferred exam oriented literature even for their regular studies. The corrupt examination practices promoted this attitude because the examiners assessed only on the basis of the memory of the examinees rather than their capabilities of dealing with the questions. In such circumstances, the examination success became a criteria of judging a good teacher. However, the condition of teachers was very poor, they had to spend their valuable time and energy in administrative services and other non-teaching responsibilities, thus they had no time to revise their old knowledge and gain new one. In addition, the low salaries and allowances also affected their status and dignity in the society. Another side of this was that the examining universities also failed to control and facilitate the large number of affiliated colleges. These colleges were the main centres of teaching but they were overburdened with students and suffered from unavailability of fund and basic facilities of library and laboratory etc. After the establishment of post-graduate departments in the University, the personal friction of the University and colleges came to the surface, when college teachers were appointed as permanent faculty in the departments of these universities. These were some of the major issues responsible for deterioration of academic quality.

The CU Commission suggested the creation of teaching University and for this objective, it recommended to strengthen the existing college system. The pass and honours courses were also advised to be reorganised and other essential modifications were offered for the methods of instruction. Along with teaching, it also concentrated upon promotion of research in the University through arrangements for scholarships and adequate facilities of library and laboratory etc. Reforms in the examination system were also suggested. The

special Examination Board and the Board of Examiners were recommended to be constituted in order to reorganise the examination machinery. Transparency in the system was the prime concern of the Commission, and thus it was proposed to conduct viva-voce examination and to make advance the system of scrutiny of marks and re-examining the borderline candidates etc. With some of these suggestions, the process of transformation of higher education system began in India after 1919. The Dhaka University was the first teaching university which was established on the basis of the recommendations of the CU Commission in 1920. Later on, the Dhaka model was followed for development of the Universities of Aligarh and Lucknow. The Calcutta University was the least affected by the CU Commission. However, it suffered gravely due to financial stringency, thus resulting into failure of introduction of some of the basic reforms. Unlike Calcutta University, the Universities of Bombay, Madras, Punjab and Allahabad got an upper hand and took effective steps to reconstitute the old system. The same interest and enthusiasm wasn't shown by the colonial Government in reforming all Universities or while establishing new ones. Hence, either the universities performed a purely examination function or changed the character from teaching type into unitary examination type. In this context, the cases of Patna, Nagpur and Delhi universities were specially mentioned.

The nationalist intellectuals also focused on the problems of examining universities even though since the very beginning, their desire had been to constitute teaching universities. They strongly believed that without removing the official control over the universities, a sound higher academic system could never be built. In order to oppose the arbitrary legislation of 1904, a resolution was adopted by the Indian National Congress in 1906. At the same time, the importance of spreading higher education beyond the metropolis was also felt by the Indian intelligentsia. In this direction, contribution of Asutosh Mookerjee and others is worth mentioning. In a convocation address of Calcutta University 1922, he emphasised for the assimilation of University education with the life of the nation. Rabindranath Tagore took a very different stand on the function of examining universities. He widely opposed the notion of examinations and unsuccessfully experimented at Santiniketan and Sikshasatra, a practice of his ideas. In this regard, the most assertive thought was expressed by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, who considered that 'the teaching university is a teacher's university.' Later on, reforms were introduced in the



Bombay University on his suggestions, where the Academic Council was strengthened by appointing academicians. But the system of all universities had not been organised efficiently and to a great deal, the ignorant attitude of government in implementing the recommendation of the commission was responsible for this. Even after thirty years of the report of CU Commission in 1949, the University system could not be transformed successfully and the condition remained unchanged on the ground. Further, the UEC focused on the reforms in the existing system. The detailed recommendations suggested to maintain the respectful position for teachers, development of teaching and research, promotion of schools and colleges, up-gradation of library and laboratory facilities, special arrangements for lectures and tutorial, introduction of objective tests, the appointments of at least one expert in the Ministry of Education and the Board of Examiners in the universities. Thus, after independence, the nationalist government started to work with the same colonial structure with slight modifications. However, the role of commissions and committees was only advisory and the power of enforcing the valuable recommendation was completely in the hands of the Government and the highly bureaucratized administration. Returning to the words of Meghnad Saha, who at the very start, had reminded the first elected government of newly independent India, that is, to fulfil its promises with regard to the higher education and alteration of the working mechanism of administration in order to satisfy parental expectations.

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