

**INDIGENOUS EDUCATION IN THE BENGAL PRESIDENCY  
DURING 1765-1854**

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## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled "Indigenous Education in the Bengal Presidency During 1765-1854", by Gouri Srivastava, is in fulfilment of eight credits out of the total requirements of twenty-four credits for the degree of Master of Philosophy of this University. This is her own work and has not been submitted for any other degree of this or any other University.

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

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*Gouri*  
GOURI SRIVASTAVA

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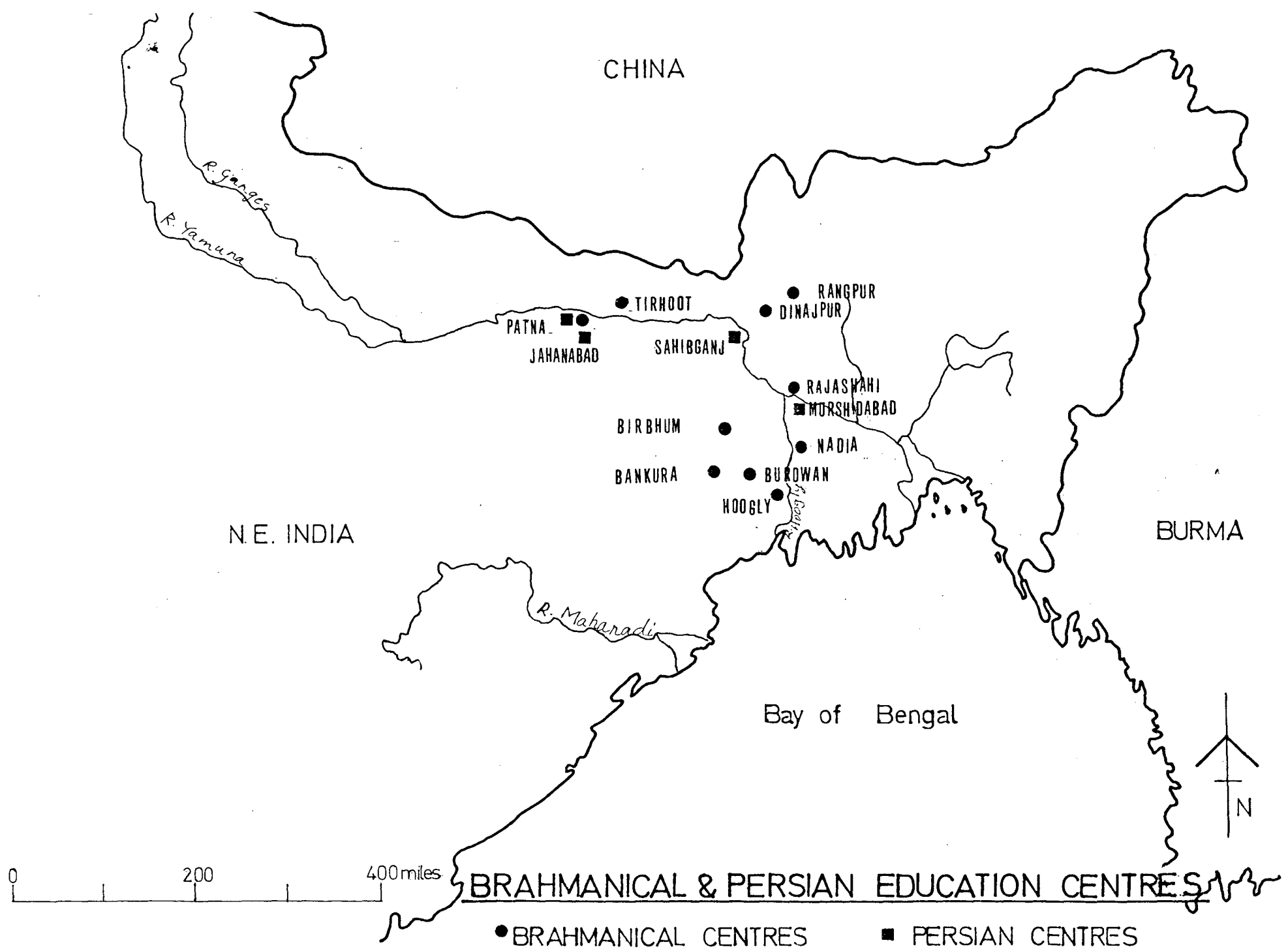
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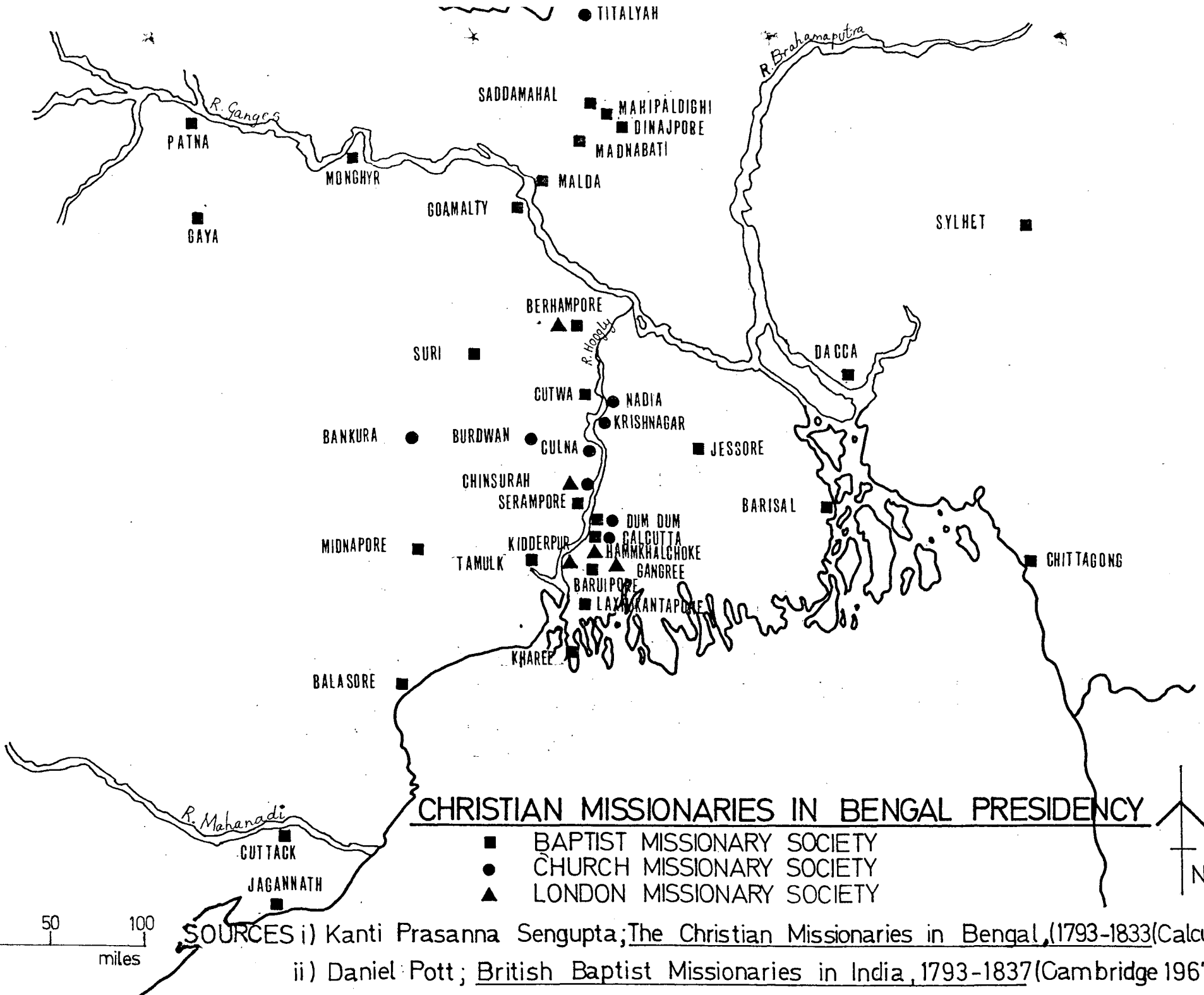




SOURCES i) Daniel Pott; British Baptist Missionaries in India, 1793-1837 (Cambridge 1967)

ii) Joseph E. S. Schwartzberg; A Historical Atlas of South Asia (Chicago. London. 1978)

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SOURCES i) Kanti Prasanna Sengupta; The Christian Missionaries in Bengal, (1793-1833) (Calcutta 1971)  
 ii) Daniel Pott; British Baptist Missionaries in India, 1793-1837 (Cambridge 1967)

## CHAPTER - I

### INTRODUCTION

(Indigenous system of education in the Presidency of Bengal during our period, had three aspects - classical, vernacular and vocational. By classical is meant the Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit or the Brahmanical system of education. Vernacular education mainly consisted of Bengali and Hindi medium of education. Vocational education, on the other hand, refers to scientific and technical knowledge, exercised by the artisans, in the production of commodities. Unlike the classical and vernacular education, vocational education was not institutionalized. This kind of education was inherited and acquired, and was passed on from generation to generation. Therefore, classical, vernacular and vocational education together formed the indigenous system of education.)

The Presidency of Bengal is the region on which the study focuses. It consisted of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, the Diwani rights (or right of collecting revenue) for which was obtained by the East India Company from the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II in 1765. This gave immense power to the Company and further the grant of Nizamat right (or defence and criminal justice) made them virtually the rulers of Bengal. The transition in political authority, from the Nawabs to the East India Company, had far reaching consequences. Its effects were greatly felt on the educational system, sustained

and promoted by the Nawabs. Also the new economic regulations i.e. the Permanent settlement, further weakened the political authority of the ruling classes. Though, by this settlement the zamindars or the traditional ruling classes, were given ownership rights in land, they could not pay the exorbitant amount of revenue to the Company. Thus, on account of revenue arrears, the Government confiscated their estate and put them to auction. This weakened the traditional social order. In fact, the political developments during this period adversely affected indigenous education, particularly classical education which depended on the patronage of the Nawabs and the ruling classes. Similarly, with the establishment of the British Raj, there was a gradual diffusion of liberal and democratic ideas. Their educational system which got firmly rooted in Bengal propagated these ideas. This was bound to influence the indigenous system of education.

Therefore, (the main objective of my study is to examine in detail the various political, economic and social factors which influenced the course of indigenous education during the mid eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The study would also focus attention on the subject of the decline of the indigenous system of education in the nineteenth century. The important themes which would be examined are:

- (a) The curriculum in indigenous educational institutions.

- (b) Section of society which benefited from education.
- (c) Role of the State regarding Indigenous education.
- (d) Activities of the Christian missionaries vis-a-vis indigenous education.
- (e) Policy of the East India Company vis-a-vis indigenous education. )

A detailed examination of these themes would help us in understanding the various factors which were responsible for its continuance in the present day, as well as factors which led to its decline. In fact, this study would enable us to clearly understand the background of the present educational system. Moreover, a study like this would also help us in comparing the degree of changes in indigenous education, from the Mughal rule, to the East India Company's rule, and from the Company to the present day. Thus, the indigenous system of education, during the mid eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, would help us in understanding the evolution of present system of education. Perhaps it would also help in getting a clear insight into some of the social problems which continue to plague the present system of education. For example, problems like the lower participation of women in education, lesser percentage of the lower castes acquiring education, and so on can be traced to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Two recent important works on indigenous education are Dharampal's The Beautiful Tree and Joseph Dibona's One Teacher One School. The former work is a collection of Reports on education, not only in the Bengal Presidency but in the whole of India. While dealing with Bengal, the author has mainly relied on Adam's Reports. There is nothing original which the author has to say about indigenous education. He also does not indicate the various trends and developments regarding indigenous education. Moreover, there is no reference to the various social, economic factors which influenced education in the mid eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. There is also no reference to vocational education. Similarly, the latter work is also based on Adam's Reports. In fact, the author has just re-edited Adam's Reports. Like Dharampal there is nothing original in his work. However, D.P. Sinha's The Educational Policy of the East India Company in Bengal to 1854, does throw light on the development of indigenous education but then the author lays more emphasis on the East India Company's educational policy in general. Importance is mainly given to the progress of English education. David Kopf's British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance: The Dynamism of Indian Modernization, 1775-1835, on the other hand, provides useful information regarding the philosophy of the age which influenced the East India Company's policy towards education, as well as its

influence on the Bengali intelligentsia. It also throws light on the development of classical and vernacular literatures during the mid eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Though the author provides valuable information, he fails to examine the various internal factors which influenced the destiny of indigenous education. The effect of the philosophy of the age is seen on the Company's policy, and on the Bengali intelligentsia, rather than on indigenous education.

Most of the secondary works on the subject listed in the bibliography<sup>1</sup> provide partial information on indigenous education. They do not cover the entire period of mid eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Moreover, books on indigenous education mainly deal with classical education; they fail to give any account of vernacular and vocational education. In fact, vocational education has been neglected by most of the secondary works. It is only Irfan Habib's articles on Economic History of Delhi Sultanate, and The Technology and Economy of the Mughal India which provide detailed information on the techniques used in production of commodities, and thereby throw light on vocational education. K.M. Ashraf has also given some information on techniques used by the artisans, as well as organizations which promoted vocational education, e.g. the existence of

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1. See Bibliography.

guild system, the organization of workshops or karkhanas for promoting technical and scientific education and so on. Thus, from his work, Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan, one can draw inferences about vocational education.

The primary sources for my study are the District Gazetteers, Educational Records and other important contemporary works like William Adam's Report on the State of Education in Bengal 1835-38. These sources provide valuable information regarding indigenous system of education during our period. The district gazetteers help us in constructing the educational history of each district from the ancient to the modern period. Educational records on the other hand give a detailed account of the East India Company's educational policy. In fact, they provide us with all minute facts which are very important to understand the policy of the Company vis-a-vis indigenous education. However, Adam's Reports are most valuable in constructing the development of indigenous education during this period. The Reports provide vital information on the curriculum existing in traditional educational institutions as well as vernaculars. They also give a detailed statistical information regarding the section of society which benefited from traditional and vernacular education. They also throw light on the various prejudices which existed against female education. Apart from providing valuable statistical information, the Reports give detailed accounts of the activity of the Christian Missionaries regarding indigenous education. The Reports also critically



examine the educational policy of the Company.

Despite providing valuable information, there are certain lacunae in Adam's Reports e.g. there is no reference to vocational education. Also, his Reports fail to give statistical accounts of classical and vernacular education in the early period i.e. prior to 1835. Therefore, it is difficult to examine the degree of changes taking place in indigenous education. Also, the figures presented by Adam seem to be slightly exaggerated, because he did not personally survey all the districts of the Bengal Presidency. He mainly depended on the information of officials he had appointed. Though steps were taken to get accurate information, we do find certain discrepancies entering into the data collected. Similarly, the absence of a similar kind of source during this period does not help us in checking the accuracy of Adam's findings. Thus, it is difficult to ascertain the complete accuracy and precision of his findings. In fact, his Reports do not throw light on the indigenous education in the entire Bengal Presidency; only a few districts are examined.

Like Adam's Reports, the District Gazetteers and Educational Records have some limitations. The Gazetteers provide factual information on indigenous education without analysing the influences of political, economic and social factors on education. The Educational Records on the other hand concentrate mainly on the educational policy of the East India Company.

Despite these shortcomings, a combined study of these primary sources, along with the useful secondary works would enable us to construct the history of indigenous system of education during this period.

The second chapter highlights the Brahmanical and Persian education. In this chapter a detailed account of the curriculum in classical institutions are given. Emphasis is placed on the section of society benefiting from classical education, the role of the state vis-a-vis classical education, and also the factors which led to its gradual decline.

The third chapter consists of vernacular, female and vocational education. In this chapter detailed accounts of the origin of vernacular education is given. The section of society which acquired vernacular education and the curriculum in vernacular schools are also examined. Apart from vernacular education, female education is examined. While examining the female education, emphasis is placed on its development during this period as well as the prejudices of the people which was responsible for its limited character. The chapter also deals with vocational education. A detailed account of the scientific and technical skill acquired by the artisans, who benefited from this education is examined in great detail. Also, the role of the state regarding vocational education is discussed.

The fourth chapter is devoted to the contribution of Christian missionaries, to the development of indigenous education, particularly vernacular education. In this chapter

a detailed account of the educational activities of various Christian missionary societies are given. While dealing with the activities of the missionaries, emphasis is laid on their motives in promoting indigenous education particularly vernaculars. Emphasis is also placed on the section of society which had the benefit of education imparted in missionary schools. A detailed account of the curriculum in missionary schools is also discussed. Also an attempt is made to see whether schools established by the missionary were in any way different from the traditional pathshalas.

The fifth chapter highlights the various forces which influenced the Company's policy towards indigenous education, which in fact was an inherent part of its general policy towards education in the Presidency of Bengal. The vital force that operated during our period was the philosophy of the age. The Orientalist philosophy influenced the educational policy in the initial stage and gradually the utilitarian philosophy became pre-dominant. Among the other forces which influenced the formation of education policy were the Bengali intelligentsia and Christian missionaries. A detailed discussion of these forces in relation to education policy is undertaken in this chapter.

And finally, the last chapter or the conclusion summarizes the findings of the investigation made on the state of indigenous education in the Presidency of Bengal

during our period. It is hoped that by a careful and discretionary use of the materials available on the subject, the work will be able to throw new light on some of the aspects of the indigenous education already mentioned above.

## CHAPTER - II

### BRAHMANICAL AND PERSIAN EDUCATION: IDEAS AND INSTITUTIONS\*

During our period the traditional Brahmanical education which was deeply embedded in the soil of Bengal continued to play a vital role. The chief vehicle through which knowledge was imparted was Sanskrit. Apart from Brahmanical education, Islamic education was established by the Turks, and later by the Mughals, who ruled Bengal during the first half of the eighteenth century. Under the independent Nawabs of Bengal, Islamic education continued to be patronized.<sup>1</sup> Knowledge imparted in Islamic centres of learning, i.e., Maktabas (primary education institution) and Madarsah (higher centre of education) was Persian and Arabic.

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\* For details about the location of the various centres of Brahminical and Persian education in the Presidency of Bengal, see Map I.

1. The middle of the eighteenth century forms an important epoch in the history of Bengal subah. It witnessed great political changes. With the accession of Alivardi Khan to the masnad of Bengal in 1740, began the rule of really independent Nawabs of Bengal, as imperial authority at Delhi had by that time been practically reduced to insignificance... The Nawabs and the Muhammadan grandees were not devoid of the love of knowledge and many were great patrons of Persian language and literature. The Seir-ul-Mutakherin has supplied us with a list of learned men in the court of Alivardi Khan: (1) Maulavi or Doctor Nassyr, a native of Shahpara and descendant of Shems-eddin "the complaint-promoter, whose tomb and monument are in great repute in the province of Oudh", (2) Daudali Khan, better known under the name of Zair-hosseini-khan, (3) Mir Mahmed Alim, one of the most virtuous and most venerable persons of Azimabad (Patna), as well as a disciple of Mirza-moezmoosevi-khan, the poet, etc. were patronized by the rulers and nobles. See K.K. Datta, Studies in the History of Bengal Subah 1740-70, p.19.

Political changes in Bengal influenced education. We find that with the establishment of the Mughal rule, an alien system of education, i.e., Islamic education, was established in Bengal. Though Islamic education was patronized by the Nawabs of Bengal, the Brahmanical education continued to flourish and also receive patronage. After the battle of Plassey in 1757, and that of Buxer in 1764 followed by the grant of Diwani<sup>2</sup> in 1765, the political authority of the Nawabs passed into the hands of the East India Company. Politically it did bring significant changes, but these changes did not initially affect education. During the early years of the Company's rule, education was left untouched. We find that between 1765 and 1813, the policy of the Company was to encourage traditional learning in Sanskrit and Arabic. This policy followed by the Company led to the establishment of Calcutta Madarsah by Warren Hastings in 1781. The policy of the Company gradually changed and we find that by the Resolution of 7 March 1835, English education was encouraged. It was decided that the funds appropriated for the purpose of education, would be employed on English education alone.<sup>3</sup> This affected the Brahmanical as well as

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2. According to one of the clauses of the treaty of Allahabad, which was signed in 1765, after the battle of Buxer, Shah Alam II, the Mughal emperor granted the Diwani rights (or right of collecting revenue) to the East India Company. The Company could collect the revenue from Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. This gave immense political power to the Company.
  3. For details about the Company's policy towards education, see Chapter V.

the Persian education, which witnessed a gradual decline during our period. However, they continued to exist in Bengal, and formed an important part of the indigenous education during our period.

While examining the Brahmanical and the Persian education it would be important to know -

- (a) What was the curriculum in the Brahmanical and the Persian educational institutions?
- (b) What ideas were imparted to the pupils receiving education?
- (c) Which were the important centres of education?
- (d) Which section of the society received education?
- (e) Role of the state regarding Brahmanical and the Persian education?
- (f) Did Brahmanical and Persian system of education decline in the nineteenth century?

✓ The Brahmanical educational institutions and the curriculum existing in them, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, had its roots in the Vedic period. Primary education was imparted in the pathsalas. It was the custom to send the child to the pathsalas for his primary education, at the age of five. The curriculum in the pathsalas during our period, is derived from Manikram Ganguly's accounts. He describes how Lousen, the hero of the Dharmamangala-kavya, had his first lesson at the age of five. First he was introduced to the letters of the alphabet and then he wrote them with a

straw on sand.<sup>4</sup> This was called Hate-Khadi.<sup>5</sup> The ceremony of Hate-Khadi formed an important and interesting rite when a boy first entered his student life. The course of primary education generally consisted of acquiring a knowledge of the alphabet, knowledge in spelling, reading and a working knowledge of arithmetic. Generally a pathsala would be held in some spacious building attached to a rich man's house.

Most of these pathsalas were maintained by teachers who were known as Gurus. In the town of Dinajpur and Malda the average number of scholars to each Guru was about 20. The fees paid by the students varied from 4 annas to 8 annas a month, but in the rural areas the rate of fees was considerably low.<sup>6</sup>

Higher education was imparted in the tols and the Chatuspathis. Most of the tols and Chatuspathis could be found in many important towns and villages. The medium of instruction in the tols was Sanskrit. These Chatuspathis were cosmopolitan in nature and welcomed teachers and scholars from different parts of the country. Ramaprasada had left a description of Chatuspathis in Burdwan, where scholars from Dravida, Utkala, Kasi and Tirhoot (Tirabhukti or Mithila)

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4. Quoted in Anjali Chatterjee, Bengal in the Reign of Aurangzeb 1658-1707, p.237.

5. Writing alphabets with straw on sand is called Hate-Khadi.

6. Jatindra Chandra Sengupta, West Bengal District Gazetteers - Malda - December 1969, p.203.



were assembled.<sup>7</sup>

The curriculum in these tols and Chatuspathis is given in great detail in Adam's Second Report. The Second Report deals with the district of Rajshahi where Adam had concentrated on thoroughly examining the state of education in one sub-division of the district, viz., Nattore. In this sub-division most of the students were instructed in general literature, grammar, lexicology, rhetoric, poetry and drama, the chief object of the whole being the knowledge of language which was an important instrument, for the communication of ideas.<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, the students in tols and Chatuspathis were given instructions in Vyakarana (grammar), Nyaya (logic), Sahitya (literature), Jyotisha (astrology), Ganita (mathematics), Smriti (law) and Ayurveda (medicine).<sup>9</sup> The students studying medicine were required to acquire a knowledge of Sanskrit grammar and general literature, in some school of learning, taught by Brahman pundits, after which they commenced a course of medical reading in this institution. The works read were Nidana, a standard medical work, commentary on Chakradatta by Yasodhara, and Patyapatya, a work described as variously treating the cause of disease diagnosis, the

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7. K.K. Datta, op.cit., p.3.

8. William Adam, Reports on the State of Education in Bengal 1835-38, ed. A. Basu, p.176.

9. Amiya Kumar Banerji, West Bengal District Gazetteer Hooghly, October 1972, p.518.

practice of medicine and so on were read.<sup>10</sup>

There was no regular building where higher education could be imparted. The teachers very frequently accommodated their pupils in Baithak-khanas and Chandi-mandaps. The Chandi-mandap, which was of the nature of a chapel, belonged to one of the principal families in the village, and in which, besides the performance of religious worship on occasion of the great annual festival, strangers were also lodged and entertained.<sup>11</sup> In the district of Nadia, the tols consisted of a thatched chamber for the pundits and the class, and two or three ranges of mud hovels in which the students resided.<sup>12</sup> This clearly indicates that there was no regular building for imparting higher Brahmanical education.

The ideas imparted in the Brahmanical centres of learning were mainly religious. The Vedas, Puranas, Smritis, Upanishads continued to be taught to the students. The education imparted to the students was nearly similar to that which had existed for long traditionally. Adam, in his Third Report, states that there was no mutual connection or dependence between vernacular and sanskrit schools:

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10. For details regarding various works read in grammar, logic, poetics, literature, astrology, law etc. see William Adam, op.cit., p.176-180.

11. Ibid., p.260.

12. Ibid., p.78-79.

"They are two separate classes of institutions, each existing for distinct classes of society - the one for the trading and agricultural, and the other for the religious and learned classes."<sup>13</sup>

This clearly indicates that Brahmanical education was mainly religious, for it existed for the religious and learned classes of society. The teachers and the students of sanskrit school held a very high position in society on account of their learning. ✓

The students after completing their education in the tols were qualified to assume the title of Pandit. This title was conferred in an assembly of five to ten Pandits, who bestowed a name on the new doctor. Some time this title was conferred in the presence of the Raja, e.g., the Raja of Darbhanga, who was a brahman, gave attention to the education of Pandits on his estate. When a student had finished his education, and wished to assume the title of Pandit, an assembly was held before the Raja, who when the new name was conferred, gave a dress and placed a mark on the forehead of the candidate.<sup>14</sup> The acquisition of this title i.e., Pandit was a mark of honour and great prestige for the student. Those students who acquired this title held a very high place in society, Adam, in his Third Report,

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13. Ibid., p.273.

14. Francis Buchanan, An Account of the District of Purnea in 1809-10 (ed.), by V.H. Jackson, p.176-77.

states that:

"The teacher and the students of sanskrit school constitute the cultivated intellect of the Hindu people, and they command that respect and exert that influence which cultivated intellect always enjoy... the purity of their personal character, the hereditary sacredness of the class to which most of them belong, the sacredness of the learning that distinguishes them, and the sacredness of the functions they discharge as spiritual guides and family priests."<sup>15</sup>

Therefore, the pandits on account of their religious learning and the various kinds of functions they performed e.g., as family priests, as teachers or Adhyapak<sup>16</sup> in the tols, gave them an important and prestigious position in society.

" During the eighteenth and nineteenth, centuries hundreds of handwritten manuscripts on country-made papers, palm leaves, etc. recovered from several centres of learning in the Presidency of Bengal, testifies to the wide diffusion of education during this period. The most important seat of Brahmanical education was Nadia. Nadia had a fairly long and continuous tradition of cultivation of learning. It was the capital of Hindu principality prior to the Mahomedan conquest, and in more recent times it has been a seat of Brahmanical learning. The princes of Bengal and later, the Raja of Nadia, endowed the teachers with land. The support given to the pandits and pupils attracted a number of Brahmans to settle

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15. William Adam, op.cit., p.274-75.

16. In the district of Purnea the term Adhyapak (title given to the teachers in tols) were not confined to those who taught metaphysics, law and grammar, but was also given to those who diffused the knowledge of astrology and magic. For details see Francis Buchanan, op.cit., p.176.

here and gave a reputation to the district.

Nadia was an important seat of formal logic called Navya-nyaya. Navya-nyaya was nurtured and elaborated till the first decade of the twentieth century. In 1818 Mr. Ward enumerated 31 schools of learning at Nadia containing in all 747 students. This figure stated by Ward clearly indicates that a fairly large number of students had acquired education. However, the figures stated by Ward in this particular case may be doubted. The important subjects that were taught were logic and law and there was only one school for general literature, one for astronomy and one for grammar.<sup>17</sup> In 1821 the junior member and secretary of the General Committee of Public Instruction, H.H. Wilson, in a special investigation on which he was deputed collected some information on the state of learning at Nadia. During that period, Nadia contained 25 established centres for education. They were called tols and consisted of a thatched chamber for the pandits and the class, and two or three range of mud hovels in which the students resided. Many students joined the tols. The greater portion consisted of the natives of Bengal, but there were many from the remote parts of India, especially from the South. There were some from Nepal and Assam and many from the eastern districts, especially Tirhoot.<sup>18</sup> There were many Pandits who

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17. William Adam, op.cit., p.77-78.

18. Ibid., p.78-79.

had contributed significantly to learning in this district. During the middle of nineteenth century, Madhavchandra ✓ Tarkasiddhanta was a great scholar from this district. He was the last mentionable author that Navadwip school of Navya-nyaya had produced.<sup>19</sup>

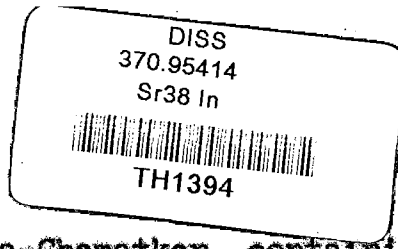
Apart from Nadia the other centre of education was Bankura. Important seats of learning in the district were Vishnupur, Chhabra, Paikpara, Patrabakhra, Jaykrishnapur, Kakilya Patpur, Chakdaha village was a famous centre of ✓ astrological learning. Similarly Peno, Maliara were places, ✓ were all the manuscripts found date from the first quarter of the eighteenth to the second quarter of nineteenth century. ✓ Apart from these places, the village of Mathura, Dwarika, Avantika, Belthya, etc. were renown seats of learning.

The most important among the medieval men of letters who flourished within the limits of Bankura district was Ananta Badu Chandidasa. Ramai Pandit, the author of the theo- ✓ logical text Sunya-Purana and Sarkar Kavichandra Chakrabarti, who composed the Mangal-Kavva ballad in seventeenth century, etc. flourished in this district.<sup>20</sup> Beerbhoom was another important centre of Brahmenical education. Among the learned teachers of this district few had attained distinction in their works. Jagaddurlabha Nyayalankara, dwelling at Nandur in the Sakalyapur thana, had written four works in Sanskrit:

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19. Durgadas Majumdar, West Bengal District Gazetteers - Nadia, April 1978, p.341.

20. Amiya Kumar Banerji, West Bengal District Gazetteer - Bankura, September 1968, p.430-33.



they were Uddhava-Chamatkar, containing 175 slokas, second a commentary on the preceding; third Pratinataka, a drama divided into seven parts, containing 532 slokas on the history of Rama and fourth commentary on the preceding.<sup>21</sup> Apart from him, there were many others who significantly contributed to Sanskrit learning.

Hooghly was another important centre of learning. The oldest seat of Sanskrit learning in the district appears to be Khanakul-Krishanagar and Guptipara. Gangadhar Vidyaratna born in 1830 A.D. was a well known logician of Guptipara.<sup>22</sup> Tribeni was also an important centre of learning in this district. Burdwan, South Bihar and Tirhoot were also important centres of learning. West Dinajpur, Rangpur and the subdivision of the district of Rajshahi, viz., Nattore were other centres of learning during this period.

Many scholars examining the Brahmanical system of education portrayed that the brahmins were the only beneficiaries of the Sanskrit education. However, a detailed examination of Sanskrit education clearly indicates that education was not confined to the brahmins. Even in the early period, it was evident that some of the non-Brahmins attained a high degree of proficiency in Sanskrit education. There was, for example, a certain King Janaka, of Videha,<sup>23</sup> who was referred

21. William Adam, op.cit., p.259.

22. Amiya Kumar Banerji, op.cit., October 1972, p.518-19.

23. Quoted in F.E. Keay, Ancient Indian Education, p.58.

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in the Brahmanas and Upanishads as gaining distinction in debates with learned Brahmanas. Kshatriyas and Vaisyas also acquired knowledge of Vedas during the early period. (Adam, in his Third Report, gives a detailed account of the section of society receiving Sanskrit education.) According to him in the district of Burdwan, the students receiving Sanskrit education were from different sections of society. He states that:

"In 190 Sanskrit schools there are 1,358 students averaging 71 to each school of the total number 590 are natives of the village in which the schools are situated and 768 natives of the other village. They are distributed in respect of caste - Brahmans - 1,296, Vaidyas - 45, Daivajnas - 11, Vaishnavas - 6."<sup>24</sup>

These figures portrayed in Adam's accounts show that though the brahman students were in majority in Sanskrit schools, the students belonging to other castes also attended them. Daivajnas, degraded class of brahman students, and Vaidyas acquired education. Some of the Kayasthas (writer caste) also acquired knowledge in the centres of Sanskrit learning.

The Mughal rulers and later, the Nawabs of Bengal patronized Sanskrit education. Some of the Rajas in Bengal were great patrons of Sanskrit learning. Adam in his First Report states that the teachers in brahmanical centres of learning, were given endowments by the Rajas. In Nadia, which was an important centre of learning, the princes of

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24. William Adam, op.cit., p.266.



Bengal and later Rajas of Nadia endowed certain teachers with land. The support given to Pandits and pupils attracted a number of Brahmans to settle here and gave a reputation to the district.<sup>25</sup> Similarly Guptipara, an important seat of Sanskrit learning in Hooghly, consisted of scholars who were patronized by the Rajas and Zamindars. The patrons of the scholastic families of Guptipara were the Rajas of Burdwan, Nadia and Bansberia and the Zamindars of Raipur and Patmahal in Hooghly district, of Hatiagarh and Kumarhatta in 24 Parganas, and the Sabarna Chaudhuris of Calcutta. Their munificence enabled the scholars to run their schools and to devote their simple lives to the attainment of high erudition.<sup>26</sup> Thus, most of the teachers' and scholars' were patronized by the ruler as well as individual Zamindars who gave endowments for the advancement of Sanskrit education. In the district of Moorshedabad, Adam states that the teachers had a pension of Rs.60 per annum originally bestowed by Rani Bhawani and paid through the government. In another case it was stated that ten to twelve years ago an endowment of Rs.60 a year, established by Rani Bhawani and paid through the government was discontinued. Though it was discontinued the main purpose of these endowments was to encourage learning.<sup>27</sup>

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25. Ibid., p.76-77.

26. Amiya Kumar Banerji, op.cit., p.519.

27. William Adam, op.cit., p.254-55.

Apart from these endowments, most of the teachers supported themselves from the resources of their own family, or supported themselves by farming. In the district of Tirhoot, Adam states that some of the teachers, of which six were independent of patronage, were either supported from the resources of their own family or they supported themselves by farming. The following are the sources of income of remaining fifty teachers:<sup>28</sup>

30 teachers received in the form of presents	- Rs. 1,165
4 teachers received proceeds of endowments	- Rs. 535
3 teachers received as officiating priests	- Rs. 134
2 teachers received by divination	- Rs. 100
1 teacher received annual allowance	- Rs. 4
5 teachers received presents of money and proceeds of endowments	- Rs. 297
4 teachers received presents of money and by divination	- Rs. 250
1 teacher received as officiating priests and by divination	- Rs. 30

The remuneration received by the teachers in this district, as portrayed in Adam's Third Report, indicates, that apart from endowments, which were by far the most

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28. In the district of Tirhoot Adam states that there were 56 sanskrit schools, of which one village contains 5, 4 villages contains 3 each, 6 villages contain 2 each, and 27 villages contain one each. The number of teachers is the same and their average age is 47.3 years. They are all Brahmans, 50 Maithila Brahmans, three Sarajupariya, two Kanyakubja, and one Sakadwipi. Ibid., p.271.

important source of income to the teachers, there were other sources; i.e., presents received by teachers, on various occasions. Similarly by officiating as priests, they also received presents and money. These sources of income also helped in the promotion of education.

Though the teachers received endowments and remuneration from different sources, they were by and large living in a state of poverty. Adam gives a detailed description of the conditions in which the brahman teachers lived. He states that:

"The humbleness and simplicity of their character, their dwellings and their apparel, forcibly contrast with the extent of their acquirements and the refinement of their feelings. I saw men plain and simple in their manner, and although seldom, if ever offensively coarse, yet reminding me of the very humblest class of English and Scottish peasantry."<sup>29</sup>

Adam later states that learning did not have any practical influence upon the physical comfort, even to its possessors for their houses were rude, confined and inconvenient as those of the more ignorant. The pathways of Brahman villages were narrow and dirty and generally resembled those inhabited by the humble and most despised Chasas and Chandals.<sup>30</sup> Thus, most of the brahman teacher lived in poverty.

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29. Ibid., p.170.

30. Ibid., p.184.

A very important factor which was responsible for the poverty of brahman teachers in the nineteenth century, was the frequent resumption of endowments. The breaking of the great zamindaris, and the withdrawal of the support which their owners gave to the cause of learning, not only affected the economic condition of the teachers, but also affected Sanskrit education. Private efforts to promote education declined during this period. This phenomena retarded the development of Brahmanical education during this period. The resumption of most of the endowments at Nadia had diminished the attraction of the site, but it still continued as a place of learning and extensive repute.<sup>31</sup> Most of the teachers and scholars greatly suffered. This is already evident from Adam's Reports who gives a detailed account about their miserable condition. Though this phenomena was not universal it was generally felt during this period.

Apart from the resumption of endowments, the policy followed by the East India Company further retarded the progress of Sanskrit education. Though during 1765 and 1813, the principal object of the educational policy of the Company, was to encourage traditional oriental learning in Sanskrit and Arabic, this policy gradually changed and we find that by the Resolution of 7 March 1835 and later, the Education Despatch of 1854 emphasised on the promotion of English education. In fact, after 1835 it had become evident that

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31. Ibid., p.76-77.

the government would promote English education and not traditional education i.e. Sanskrit. Despite these developments, Brahmanical education continued to form an important part of indigenous education during this period.

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We may now turn to a discussion of the other aspect of traditional education in the Presidency of Bengal, that is, Islamic education which played a vital role during our period. During the medieval period, the Mughal rulers greatly patronized Persian and Arabic education. The Mughal court had become an important centre of literary activity and many of the learned scholars were associated with the court. Most of these scholars gave detailed accounts of the rulers, their administration, personal life, warfares, details about the court, and so on which enable us to construct the history of the Mughal period. Scholars from different parts of the world flocked to the Mughal courts. This indicates that the Mughal rulers were great patrons of learning.

This tradition of the Mughal rulers were kept up by the Nawabs of Bengal. Though politically they retained autonomy, socially and culturally they remained integerated with the Mughal empire. The educational system which developed in the Mughal empire had also developed in Bengal. In the

Seir-ul-Mutakherin,<sup>32</sup> by Sayyid Ghulam, we find that Alivardi Khan greatly promoted men of learning. Mir Qasim also encouraged men of learning. Therefore, by encouraging learned men, the Nawabs did a great service regarding the promotion of Islamic education in Bengal. It also indicates the importance they gave to education.

✓ The tradition of Muslim education which had developed under the Abbasids of Baghdad was the nucleus of the Muslim educational system in India. It was transplanted in India by the literati and scholars of Muslim land after the Mongols had overrun them.<sup>33</sup> The basic feature of the Muslim educational system was that it was traditional in spirit and theological in content. The theological content of the Islamic education can be examined from one of the sayings of the Prophet:

"Acquire knowledge because he who acquires it in the way of the Lord, performs an act of piety; who speaks of it, praises the Lord; who seeks it, adores God; who dispenses instruction in it, bestows alms; and who imparts it to its fitting objects, performs an act of devotion to God. Knowledge enables its possessor to distinguish what is forbidden from what is not, it lights the way to heaven, it is our friend in the desert, our society in solitude, our companion when bereft of friends... With knowledge the

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32. Sivarul-Mutakherin, Written by Sayyid Ghulam gives detailed account of the reign of Alivardi Khan and Mir Qasim, the Nawabs of Bengal and the promotion of education during their reign.

33. P.N. Chopra (ed.), The Gazetteer of India - History and Culture, Vol.II, p.429-30.

servant of God rises to the heights of goodness and to a noble position, associates with sovereigns in this world, and attains to the perfection of happiness in the next."<sup>34</sup>

The Prophet attached great importance to education, and in another saying of the Prophet we find: "The ink of the scholar is more holy than the blood of the martyr."<sup>35</sup>

This indicates that Prophet Muhammad had great regard for men of learning. The acquisition of knowledge, ilm, was given a lot of importance in Islam. Importance was attached to ink, pen and paper. "The Qoran was the source and foundation of Muslim learning. The main aim of education was "to understand the relation of man with God as revealed in the Holy Qoran". All the educational activities of the Muslim were governed by this aim though it has been approached by different ways and means."<sup>36</sup>

The curriculum was broadly divided into two categories: the manqulat and the maculat, the former dealing with traditional and the latter with rational sciences. Exegesis (Tafsir), Traditions (Ahadith), Law (Fiqh), History and Literature came under the category of traditional sciences; Logic (Mantiq), Philosophy (Hikmat), Medicine (Tibb),

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34. Quoted in S.M. Jaffar, Education in Muslim India 1000-1800 A.C., p.9.

35. Ibid., p.92.

36. Mansoor A. Quaraishi, Some Aspects of Muslim Education, p.3.

Mathematics (Riyadi) and Astronomy (Haiat) were treated as rational sciences.<sup>37</sup> In the early stages, the study of the traditional sciences was emphasised, but gradually the rational sciences began to receive great attention. Therefore, the traditional and later, the rational aspects were emphasised regarding Islamic education. ✓

Primary education was imparted in Kuttab or Maktabs.<sup>38</sup> Most of these maktabs were attached to mosques. Usually when a mosque was built, the building of the maktab was also constructed along with the mosque. Maktabs were the chief places, where primary education was imparted to children. Though some of the well to do families would engage teachers, to teach their children at their own houses, yet the majority of the children of a locality would assemble in the Maktab and received regular education. The Musalmans formally initiated their children into the study of letters.

"When a child is four years, four months and four days old, the friends of the family assemble and the child is dressed in his best clothes, brought into the company and seated on a cushion in the presence of all. The alphabet, the form of letters used for computation, the introduction to the Qoran, some verses of Chapter LV, and the whole of Chapter LXXXVII are placed before him; and he is taught to pronounce

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37. P.N. Chopra (ed.), op.cit., p.430.

38. The term 'maktab' is derived from Arabic 'Kutub' and it means a place where writing is taught. P.L. Rawat, History of Indian Education, p.89.



them in succession. If the child is self-willed, and refuses to read, he is made to pronounce the Bismillah, which answers every purpose, and from that his education is deemed to have commenced."<sup>39</sup>

✓✓ At school, he was taught the alphabets. The forms of the letter were presented to him in writing, and the student was required to repeat it, till he was able to connect the names and the forms with each other in his mind. The pupils were made to read the thirteenth section of the Qoran, the chapters of which were short and were generally used at the time of prayer. Much attention was paid to the correctness of pronounciation. Hence the children were taught the Pandenamah of Sadi, a collection of moral sayings.<sup>40</sup> The children were not required and expected to understand it. This was followed by the teaching in the art of writing and the scholars were taught to write the letters to join vowels and consonants. The next book was the Amadnameh, exhibiting the forms of conjugating the Persian verbs, which was read to the master and by frequent repetition was committed to memory. Afterward the Gulistan and Bostan were taught and explained. These works were also written by Sadi.

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39. William Adam, ed., op.cit., p.149. See also N.N. Law, Promotion of Learning in India, p.128; and P.L. Rawat, op.cit., p.90.

40. William Adam, op.cit., p.148-49. See also P.L. Rawat, op.cit., p.90-91.

Elegant penmanship was considered a great accomplishment. The scholars wrote on wooden slate called Lauh or ✓ Takhti (oblong board). The master traced on it letters of alphabet with the point of a qalam<sup>41</sup> without any ink. The pupil was then made to go over them dipping his qalam into the ink. While thus forming the letters, the child learnt its name by heart.<sup>42</sup> After writing on board, the students then wrote with a finer pen on pieces of paper pasted together, and last of all, when they had acquired considerable command of the pen, they began to write on paper in single-fold.<sup>43</sup> In the elementary institutions, the pupil were also taught certain poetic works e.g., Yusuf and Zulekha, Laila and Majnu and Sikandarnamah, the account of the exploits of Alexander the great and so on.

✓ Adam states that the systematic use of books, in manuscript form, particularly in the Persian schools was a great step in advance. It had accustomed the minds of the pupils to forms of regular composition,<sup>44</sup> to correct their language and to train their thoughts in such a way that it would aid and stimulate the intellect and form the taste in reading. Thus, the use of manuscripts in the elementary

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41. Qalam is a persian word which means pen.

42. Mansoor A. Quaraishi, op.cit., p.15.

43. William Adam, op.cit., p.150.

44. Ibid., p.151.

school, according to Adam, was a great step in advance. In the primary stage, the curriculum also comprised of elementary arithmetic. Thus, the students acquired some practical knowledge after they had completed their primary education.

✓ Higher education was imparted in the Madarsahs. The student, having finished his Maktab career, was eligible to seek admission in Madarsahs. On this occasion, no formal initiation ceremony was held. Generally the Madarsahs flourished in the towns and cities. Rulers and nobles maintained higher centres of learning. One generally comes across the following type of institutions during this period: Those established by the ruler and nobles; those established by an individual scholar with the help of public donation and state assistance;<sup>45</sup> those run by an individual scholar without any outside help; those attached to mosques and financed from mosque funds; those attached to the tombs and financed from their endowments and those attached to the hospices (Khanqahs) of Sufi saints. These were the different type of institutions of higher learning during our period.

✓ The curriculum in the higher centres of learning i.e., the Madarsah as stated earlier consisted of rational and traditional sciences. The traditional subjects included Exegesis, Law, History and Literature which came under the

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45. P.N.Chopra (ed.), op.cit., Vol.11, p.430.

category of traditional science; Logic, Philosophy, Medicine, Mathematics, etc. were treated as rational science. During the early period traditional science was emphasised, but gradually rational science received great attention.

However, the emphasis on rational sciences did not lead to the development of experimental and inductive methods, which alone could pave the way for scientific and technological advancement. The absence of experimental and inductive methods also explained the static nature of technology during this period.

✓ Instruction in Madarsahs was based on memorization, discussion and writing out the lessons that were taught. Seminars were considered an integral part of education and students of the higher classes had to master the art of casuistry.

✓ The ideas imparted to the students receiving Islamic education, at primary and at higher levels, can be examined on the basis of the curriculum. The Qoran, i.e., the teaching of the prophet, formed an important part of the curriculum in the primary and higher centres of education. It was the foundation of Muslim learning; scholars were required to read it and even memorize certain portions. Apart from the Qoran, the students, especially in Madarsahs, were required to study the traditions of the prophet (Ahadith).

Thus, the curriculum in the primary and higher educational institutions indicates that by and large religious

ideas had enveloped education, and acquiring this education, i.e., religious was considered to be essential for every musalman. This is because as we have already mentioned before, the Prophet Muhammad had laid great emphasis on education and on the acquisition of knowledge. Those who acquired religious knowledge, were known as alim, and they held a very high position in society. Therefore, it became essential for every musalman to acquire knowledge.

∨ Apart from religious ideas, rational ideas were also imparted to the scholars pursuing Islamic education. The knowledge of medicine, mathematics, astronomy etc. enabled the students to acquire rational ideas. Emphasis on rational ideas gained importance during the period under review. Therefore, though religious ideas were imparted in educational institutions, rational ideas were also imparted. As Mansoor A. Quaraishi in his book, Some aspects of Muslim education points out :

"This idealistic religious aim of education in Islam should not lead one to conclude that it did not attach any importance to such other knowledge as is necessary for the discharge of civic duties. Islam has not only allowed the study of sciences useful for civic and social purposes, but at times it has made it obligatory and has never interdicted their study on religious ground."<sup>46</sup>

Thus, religious as well as rational ideas were imparted to the pupils.

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46. Mansoor A. Quaraishi, op.cit., p.7-8. "Some Aspects of Muslim Edu."

// The important centre of Islamic education during this period was Azimabad (Patna), Gulam Husain Khan depicts that "there were in those times at Azimabad number of persons who loved science and learning and employed themselves in teaching and being taught."<sup>47</sup> The district of South Bihar was also an important centre of Islamic education. Two Maulavis (teachers) in this district were highly distinguished for learning and they were both authors of important works. Maulavi Gholam Hossein, dwelling at Sahebgunge thana, had written in Persian a compilation called Jam-i-Bahadur Khani, from various Arabic works on arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and the nature of science with addition of his own. Similarly, Maulavi Mohiyuddin dwelling at Erki in the thana of Jehanabad, had composed in Persian Sharh-i-Abdul Rasul, a commentary on the work of Abdul Rasul on Arabic syntax, and Jawab Chabbis Musair,<sup>48</sup> a treatise on Mahomedan observance. Apart from the district of South Bihar, the districts of Tirhoot and Moorshedabad were significant centres of Persian and Arabic education.

// The knowledge of Persian and Arabic was vital during the medieval period because Persian language was necessary in the administration of justice and in the collection of revenue. It was absolutely necessary for those who wished to

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47. K.K. Datta, op.cit., p.20.

48. William Adam, op.cit., p.286.

acquire a fortune in the courts of law. In majority of cases, the chief patrons of Persian education were Hindu landholders or farmers who had no conceivable motive to teach this language to their children except with a view to the use of which they thereafter applied it in conducting suits in the Courts established by the Company.<sup>49</sup> Thus, the knowledge of Persian was important even in the Company courts. Most of the Hindu landholders in the sub-division of the district of Rajshahi viz., Nattore, expressed the desire to have Persian instruction for their children. Since the knowledge of Persian was essential in getting employment in the administration and in the law courts, it was widely acquired by the students belonging to the various castes. In his Third Report, Adam gives a detailed account of the Hindus who pursued Persian education. In the district of Burdwan, for example, Adam states that there were many Hindus belonging to the various castes, pursuing Persian education:<sup>50</sup>

Kayastha	-	172	Rajput	-	1
Brahman	-	153	Teli	-	1
Sadgop	-	50	Napit	-	1
Aguri	-	42	Chhatri	-	3
Suvarnabanik	-	8	Sunri	-	3

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49. Lord Cornwallis (Governor-General of India, 1786-93) established four provincial courts at Calcutta, Murshidabad, Dacca and Patna. The final court of appeal were Sadar Diwani Adalat, for civil cases and Sadar Nizamat Adalat, for criminal cases. In these courts Persian language was used.

50. William Adam, op.cit., p.281-83.

Vaidya	-	4	Kaivarta	-	2
Gandhabanik	-	2	Tanti	-	1
Kumar	-	2	Mayar	-	1
Swarnakar	-	2			

✓ These figures, given by Adam, clearly shows that the majority of students who had acquired the knowledge of Persian and Arabic, were the Kayasthas (writer caste) and the Brahmans. Even students coming from lower castes, e.g., Telis, Napits, Mayars, as stated earlier in the table acquired Persian education. The increasing participation of the lower caste also indicates that they had realised the utility of acquiring Persian education, which was very essential in gaining employment in the courts of law, and various posts in administration. Persian education was therefore widely diffused during the period under review.

✓ Majority of teachers teaching in Persian and Arabic schools were musalmans. In the elementary Arabic schools at Nattore, the teachers were all Kath-Mollas, i.e., the lowest grade of Musalman priest.<sup>51</sup> Most of these Mollas taught the pupils formal reading of the Qoran. Apart from the Musalman teachers many Hindus taught in the Islamic centres of education. Most of the teachers were Brahmans and Kayasthas. Very often the teachers did not take any fees from the students. They were generally paid in the form of fixed monthly allowance with perquisites. The monthly allowance varied from

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51. Ibid., p.152.



one rupee eight annas to 4 rupees and they were paid by one, two or three families who were the principal supporters of the school. The total remuneration of the teacher varied from 4 to 10 rupees per month, averaging about 7 rupees.<sup>52</sup>

Most of the teachers were given endowments and Adam states that the only public institution of Mahomedan learning of which he could discover in the district of Rajshahi was situated at Kusbeh Bagh, in the thana of Bilmariya. The madarsah at Kusbeh Bagh was an endowed institution of long standing. The property originally consisted of two portions, which were stated to have been bestowed by two separate royal grants (sanads).<sup>53</sup> In the madarsah both Persian and Arabic were taught. Generally the chiefs and zamindars, patronized many teachers and made rich endowments.

It was very common in the Presidency of Bengal, that landed proprietors should maintain men of learning, at their own cost, for the benefit of the children of the poor in the neighbourhood. Therefore, the greater number of maktabs and madarsahs had their origin in such trusts, founded either by the wealthy Chiefs or Zamindars.

As pointed out earlier, the Mughal rulers and later, the Nawabs of Bengal patronized education. Promotion of education was considered to be a pious duty by the Mughal

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52. Ibid., p.148.

53. Ibid., p.161-63.

rulers and the Nawabs. The courts of these rulers became centres of men of learning; their literary work is often the mirror of the age in which it flourished. In fact, their accounts enable us to trace the political, economic and even educational developments during the period when they wrote.

We find that despite the absence of printing press, volumes of literary works were composed and written during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Sanskrit, Persian and even Bengali literature flourished under the patronages of the rulers.

Apart from patronizing learned scholars, the very rationale behind the existence of the State, during medieval period, was the protection of its subjects and the maintenance of the Shariat (the Islamic code of conduct and morality). The Muslim rulers had to see that all the muslims were truly muslims and that they followed Muslim law. When we say that it was the duty of the Muslim ruler to protect Muslim law, it was implied that he had to do two things, viz., he had to propagate the knowledge of the Shariat and to enforce the laws within his state. In order to effect the first, he had to maintain a class of scholars who pursued the study of the Shariat and were devoted to teaching and spreading of its knowledge.

✓ The class of scholars who were associated with the teaching and spreading of the knowledge of the Shariat were

the Ulama. They were held in high esteem on account of their religious learning and their knowledge of the Shariat in particular. The Ulama also provided religious and moral support to the rulers and thereby strengthened the position of the rulers. The rulers had to appoint from among them, scholars who were pre-eminent in their knowledge and piety, as his advisor on all state affairs. The one chosen from the Ulama for the enforcement of law was known as the Shaikh-ul-Islam.<sup>54</sup> He was the upholder of the Shariat and spokesman of the Ulama. He was the head of the ecclesiastical order and the custodian of Muslim law and director-general of education. He generally kept an eye on the Ulama, examined their capacity as teachers and exercised control over the teaching of all kinds of knowledge.

The Ulama, therefore, played a very vital role during the medieval period. Their service was indispensable because they provided moral and religious support to the ruler and exercised immense power in administration.

The Nawabs of Bengal patronized the Ulama by giving them endowments. The endowments consisted of dwelling houses, shops, land and even whole villages. The land endowments were called madad-i-maash. Initially these land grants were not hereditary, but gradually by the end of

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54. Mansoor A. Quarashi, op.cit., p.139-40.

seventeenth century they became hereditary.<sup>55</sup> Apart from the Ulama, endowments were given for the upkeep of the mosques and madarsahs. Stipends were given to the students mainly from the royal treasury. Rewards were given to the teachers and men of learning. Therefore, these rewards, stipends, and endowments gave great impetus to learning during this period. The Chiefs, Zamindars and Jagirdars, followed the example of the rulers and they patronized education by giving endowments to men of learning and repute.

The breaking of the zamindaris and resumption of many endowments had also affected Persian and Arabic education. Their resumption did not give incentive to the scholars and therefore Islamic education suffered and its progress was stunted. Many ancient seats of Muslim learning declined for want of patronage. The political developments during the period also had an adverse effect on education. As stated earlier after the grant of diwani rights in 1765, the power of the Nawabs passed into the hands of the Company. Therefore, scholars and educational institutions which depended on the direct support of the rulers also witnessed a decline which reached its climax by March 1835 when by a Resolution it was decided that all the funds available for education would be employed, for the advancement of English education.<sup>56</sup> However, Persian education, despite its gradual decline,

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55. In the 34th year (1690) Aurangzeb issued a farman and made the madad-i-ma'ash completely hereditary and we find even in most of the provinces, it gradually became hereditary.

56. For details, see Chapter V.

continued to form an intrinsic part of the indigenous education system during the nineteenth century.

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✓It is now clear that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries ideas imparted by the Brahmanical and Persian education which formed a significant part of the indigenous system of education in the Presidency of Bengal were mainly religious. In the Brahmanical institutions of learning, the curriculum that existed had its roots in the ancient past. Similarly, the curriculum of the Persian education during this period retained the traditions of muslim education which had developed under the Abbasids of Baghdad, and this was propogated in India by the scholars.

Thus, both the Brahmanical and Persian education had a long tradition, and both systems of education, laid emphasis on religious education. No changes were made in the curriculum at any stage during our period and therefore, many historians considered that education imparted in these institutions was static in nature. Learning in these institutions was not designed to develop among students an aptitude for investigation into the world of nature and for the few eighteenth century rulers who possessed some scientific interest, there was little social manifestation for this. We do not find, for instance, evidences of any societies for encouragement of scientific studies during our period.

Therefore, the chief function of Brahmanical and Persian education was to conserve, organize and sanction the existing social, political and economic order and provide philosophical and religious enlightenment to the ruling classes rather than to contribute to our knowledge. This is evident from the occupation of traditional scholars. Many Hindus pursued Vedic studies, and Muslims, Islamic religious studies; some became priests and others specialized in astrology, astronomy and so on. Though Brahmanical education was open to many castes, it was by and large confined to the Brahmans and Vaidyas (medical caste). Similarly, Islamic education was mainly acquired by the Musalmans, and among the Hindus, the Kavasthas (writer caste) and Brahmans, largely benefited from the Islamic system of education.

Political developments in the Presidency of Bengal, in the mid eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as mentioned earlier, retarded traditional education and many important centres of learning declined for want of patronage. However, the immediate challenges that were faced by the Brahmanical and Persian education came from the emergence of the new education in the Bengal Presidency. One aspect of this new education was the development of vernacular education discussed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER - III

### VERNACULAR, FEMALE AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Vernacular education, in the Presidency of Bengal formed an important part of the indigenous system of education. Knowledge was imparted to the pupils in Bengali and Hindi.<sup>1</sup> Vernacular education is also referred as popular education, because knowledge was communicated to the pupil in their own language. It was meant for the common people at large. Adam, in his Third Report, states that there was no connection or dependence between vernacular and sanskrit schools. They were two separate groups of institutions, each existing for distinct classes of society, the one for the trading and agricultural classes, and the other for the religious and learned classes.<sup>2</sup> The latter favoured Brahmanical and Persian educational institutions, while vernacular educational institutions, were popular among agricultural and trading groups who formed the bulk of population during our period.

Female education also formed an important part of indigenous education. Though it was not very popular, it was

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1. The language employed in communication of vernacular instruction are chiefly Bengali in Bengal, and Hindi in Bihar districts. In the district of Midnapore Oriya language is employed as medium of education. Though Urdu had become a popular language in Bengal it was not used as a medium of education. Therefore, Bengali and Hindi were the chief medium through which knowledge was communicated to the pupils. For details see William Adam, op.cit., p.248-50.

2. Ibid., p.273.

significant during this period.

Apart from female education, vocational education played a crucial role during this period. Since it was not imparted in educational institutions, many scholars have failed to examine it. Even Adam, in his Reports, does not give an account of vocational education. This kind of education was inherited and acquired, and was passed on from generation to generation. Vocational education refers to scientific and technical knowledge, exercised by the artisans in the production of commodities. Vocational education played a vital role especially during the mid-eighteenth century and its significance continued in the nineteenth century. The commodities produced by the artisans, who had the benefit of this education, were in great demand throughout the world, for their workmanship.<sup>3</sup>

The vernacular education which developed during this period had its seeds sown in the Bhakti movement or the Vaishnavite movement in Bengal during the sixteenth century. Chaitanya popularized Vaishnavism in Bengal. He popularized Bhakti, i.e., devotion to God with love and affection, he

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3. We have a detailed description of the works of silvermiths in Bengal. Many contemporary accounts e.g. Stavorinus Voyage, testifies to their superior skill and workmanship. Similarly in the cotton textile sector, the weavers of Bengal manufactured superior muslin cloth which were plain, chequered, figured or coloured; beautiful embroidery on them testifies to the great skill attained by weavers in Bengal. Coarse variety of cotton was also produced. Cotton textile of various kinds were in great demand in the markets of England and other European and Asiatic countries. Thus the commodities of Bengal especially textiles enjoyed a wide market throughout the world. Quoted in K.K. Dutta, op.cit., p.425-427. See also K.M. Ashraf, Life and Condition of People of Hindustan, p.121-23.



denounced the caste system and rituals practiced by the Hindus. He preached in the language commonly understood by the people, i.e., Bengali, and to a lesser extent in Hindi. Most of his followers wrote volumes of poetry, dramas and rhetoric and theological texts. They were inspired by Chaitanya and his teachings. D.C. Sen in his book, History of the Bengali Language and Literature, depicts that Vaishnava literature, however, is essentially a literature of the people.<sup>4</sup> Vaishnava literature had brought many Hindi words into Bengali. In fact, a large number of songs in old Vaishnava literature were composed in what is called Vrajevalli - a sort of Hindi current in Durbhanga. Bengali was thus raised to the same literary status by the Vaishnavas, as the Pali language was by the Buddhists.<sup>5</sup> If we take the statistics of religious writings of that period we find that there were 252 Vaishnava nibandhas or religious texts, 30 Krishnalila Kavyas and 60 Padavali Kavyas.<sup>6</sup> Vaishnavism therefore gave great impetus to Bengali language and literature.

Apart from Vaishnavite movement which gave impetus to Bengali language and literature, the Muslim rulers of Bengal, also contributed to its development. The elevation of Bengali,

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4. D.C. Sen, History of Bengali Language and Literature, p.400.

5. Ibid., p.577.

6. Quoted in Anjali Chatterjee, op.cit., p.227.

to a literary status, was brought about by several influences, of which Muhammadan conquest was undoubtedly one of the foremost. If the Hindu kings had continued to enjoy independence, Bengali would scarcely have got an opportunity to find its way to the courts of the kings. Thus the appointment of Bengali poets, to the courts of Hindu Rajas, grew to be a fashion after the example of the Muslim chiefs, and we find most of the works of poets were dedicated to the kings and noblemen, who patronized them. Raja Jay Chandra employed the poet Bhabani Das, for compiling a translation of the Ramayana and many other valuable Sanskrit works were translated into Bengali under the auspices of the kings of Tippera.<sup>7</sup> Similarly Alwal, a Muhammadan poet, translated the Hindi poem, Padmavat, into Bengali, and wrote several poems on Radha and Krishna in the seventeenth century. Therefore, the patronage and favour of the Muhammadan Emperors and chiefs gave the initial start towards recognition of Bengali in the courts of Hindu Rajas, and to establish its claim on the attention of the scholars. Thus, the Vaishnavite movement, and the patronage of Muslim rulers, gave a great encouragement to Bengali language and literature, which gradually became an important medium through which education was imparted.

✓ In Nattore, a sub-division of Rajshahi district, Adam

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7. D.C. Sen, op.cit., p.14.

states that in 1836, there were ten Bengali schools containing 167 scholars, who entered the school at the age of five to ten years and left it at the age varying from ten to sixteen.<sup>8</sup> Generally the period spent at school varied with the statement of the different teachers. The vernacular schools were open to both boys and girls. The benefits resulting from vernacular schools were small, owing partly to the incompetence of the instructors and partly to the early age at which, due to the poverty of the parents the children were removed from the school. Thus, the benefits of vernacular schools were minimum.<sup>9</sup>

In the elementary Bengali schools, there were four different stages in the course of Bengali instruction. In the first stage, the scholars learned to write the letters of alphabets on the ground, with a small stick or slip of bamboo. The second stage, which extended from two and a half to four years, according to the capacity of the scholars, was distinguished by the use of the palm-leaf as the material on which writing was practiced. The master, with an iron style, wrote on the palm-leaf letters of a determinant size and in proportion to each other, and the scholar was required to trace them on the same leaf with a reed-pen and charcoal-ink.<sup>10</sup> This process was repeated over and over again on the

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8. William Adam, op.cit., p.136-37.

9. Ibid., p.6-7.

10. Ibid., p.143. See also Francis Buchanan, op.cit., p.169-70.

same leaf till the scholar no longer required the use of a copy to guide him, and he was then made to write on another leaf without the assistance of a copy. The student was then taught to write and read Cowrie table, which he was required to memorize. He was also required to learn the Numeration table till 100, Katha table (a land measure), and Ser table (a dry measure table). After learning these tables the student completed the second stage of Bengali instruction.<sup>11</sup>

✓ The third stage of Bengali instruction extended from two to three years. During this stage, the students wrote on plantain leaf. The earliest exercises that was taught on plantain-leaf was to initiate the scholars into the simplest form of letter writing, to instruct him to connect words in composition with each other and to distinguish the written from the spoken forms of Bengali vocables. During this stage, the scholar was taught rules of arithmetic, beginning with addition and subtraction, but multiplication and division were not taught as separate rules - all arithmetic process hereafter mentioned being affected by addition and subtraction, with aid of multiplication table was extended to twenty. This table was committed to memory. The students were also taught agricultural and commercial accounts. The rules applied to agriculture accounts explain the form of keeping debit and credit accounts, the calculation of the value of daily or monthly labour at a given monthly rate, the calculation of

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11. Ibid., p. 144.

the area of land and so on. Agricultural accounts were very helpful to those whose occupation was farming. Commercial accounts explained the mode of calculating the value of a given number of Sers at a given price per maund; the interest of money; and the discount chargeable on the exchange of the inferior sort of rupees. <sup>12</sup>

Commercial accounts were chiefly acquired by class of money-lenders who played an important role in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They provided money to farmers, artisans and even to traders. They were banias by caste, and therefore felt the necessity to impart the knowledge of accounts, to their children. This knowledge of accounts was also acquired by traders who worked in different capacities as dallas and brokers (middle men), who purchased commodities for the East India Company and gave money advances to the weavers. Some of the merchants were bankers. They provided credit to the East India Company. Very often, these merchants also issued bills of exchange which continue to survive till this day. They were known as hundis. <sup>13</sup>

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12. Ibid., p. 144-45.

13. Hundis - The Hundis served as an instrument for raising short-term credit repayable at another place. In the early period it was used to transmit money from one place to another. It performed the function which in our days devolve upon cheques. If a person wished to despatch money without incurring the risk of the way, and the cost of transit, he generally went to a merchant and deposited money with him. In return he received hundis addressed to the agent of the merchant at the other place. English factors in India usually remitted money from one factory to another through hundis. The hundis was an order of payment for the amount deposited and though it bore no seal or signatures of witnesses, it was always honoured, and the payment was punctually made by the drawees. The existence of hundis indicates a wide diffusion of commercial accounts. For details see Irfan Habib, Banking in Mughal India, p.3.

The existence of moneylending practices, and the prevalence of indigenous bills of exchange, i.e. hundis indicates that commercial accounts, had become wide spread during the period under review. It was largely acquired by the merchants, who played a vital role during this period. Adam, in his survey of educational system in Bengal, also found that commercial accounts were widely prevalent in the nineteenth century.

✓In the last stage of instruction in vernacular schools, the students were taught composition of business letters, petitions, grants, leases, acceptance, notes of hand together with the forms of address belonging to the different grades of rank and station. When the scholars had written on paper, for about a year, they were considered qualified to engage in the perusal of Bengali works, e.g. the translation of Ramayana and Manasa-Mangal.<sup>14</sup> Thus in the vernacular schools or Bengali schools, the students were taught to write on ground, palm leaf, plantain leaf and on papers. However, in schools which imparted instruction through the medium of Hindi, in the second and third stages of instruction, a wooden board and bronze plates were employed, as material on which lessons in writing and accounts were given.

✓In the vernacular schools, during this period, no written books were used. Instructions were given orally to

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14. William Adam, op.cit., p.145.

the pupils. The principal composition which the students learned was Saraswati-Bandana or salutation to the Goddess of learning, which was committed to memory by frequent repetitions. Apart from this, Subhankar,<sup>15</sup> rhyming arithmetical rules, were also memorized. In many vernacular schools the Sanskrit verses of Chanakya, were taught. The students were also required to commit them to memory. These books used in the vernacular schools indicates that there existed a higher grade of instruction. Thus we find that though books were not used in vernacular schools, in some schools they were used, where Sanskrit was taught.

There was no specific building where vernacular education was imparted. Generally the apartments or buildings, in which the schools met were used for other purposes e.g. they were used as lodging place for the strangers. The scholars usually met in the Chandi-Mandap,<sup>16</sup> which belonged to some principal families in the village. This was like a chapel and was used for different purposes. Sometime the schools were held in the house of some respectable native inhabitants. In the district of Beerbhoom, Adam states, in one village, school-houses were built by the teachers, at the cost of Rs.1-4. In another, the school-house was built by scholars, at the cost of Rs.1-8, in addition to their own labour. These school

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15. Ibid., p.142-43.

16. Ibid., p.141-42.

houses were thatched and the walls consisted of branches and leaves, of the palm and sal trees interlaced. Several of the school houses were built by the subscriptions from amongst the parents. Apart from Chandi-Mandaps, Baithak-Khanas, Kachahris, storehouses, verandas, shops and temples were used as places of instruction.<sup>17</sup>

The remuneration of the teachers were derived from various sources. Some of the teachers received patronage from a single wealthy family and others received support from the native communities collectively. The former were the most numerous, there being rarely a village without one or more of them. The teachers seldom received more than three rupees a month from that source, he was allowed to collect from the neighbourhood as many additional pupils as he could obtain or conveniently manage. They paid him at the rate of two to eight rupees a month.<sup>18</sup> Some teachers received perquisites of various kinds consisting of quantities of rice, pulses, oil, salt, vegetables, and so on. Sometimes, the teacher got cloth from his patrons. Presents were also given to them on some religious occasion. The remuneration of the teacher was very low. Adam, in his First Report, states that teachers were poorly rewarded and that there was no encouragement for persons of character talent or learning. Their miserable condition compelled them to instruct students from neighbouring villages.

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17. Ibid., p.236.

18. Ibid., p.56-57.



✓ The teachers teaching in vernacular schools came from different sections of society. Adam gives a detailed account of the caste of the teachers in these schools. The caste of the Hindu teachers were Kayasthas, Brahmans, Aquris, Sunris, Kaivartas, Chattris, Sadgops Chandals, Malos, Dhobas and so on.<sup>19</sup> In Bengal and Bihar, the business of teaching was chiefly in the hands of the Kayastha or writer caste. In many vernacular schools students were taught by Musalman teachers. Adam found that in the district of Beerbhoom and Burdwan there were thirteen Musalman teachers teaching in Bengali schools.<sup>20</sup> Parents of higher caste did not hesitate to send their children to schools conducted by Musalmans and other low caste e.g. Chandals, Malos, Dhobas. This clearly shows that teachers in vernacular schools came from different sections of society. Both the high caste as well as low caste teachers taught the students. This important phenomena noticed by Adam clearly indicates that the lower sections of society were not without instruction or education.

Adam's Reports on the state of education in Bengal also throws light on the fact that caste system was not rigid. This can be clearly seen on examining the caste of the teachers in vernacular schools. The teachers as depicted earlier came from the higher caste, i.e. Brahmans and lower caste, i.e., the

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19. For details, regarding the caste of teachers in vernacular schools, see Adam's Third Report on the State of Education in Bengal, 1938.

20. Ibid., p.251.

Chandals and Sadgops etc. Many times the teachers of these castes co-existed together. Thus, Adam's Reports indicate that caste system was not rigid in Bengal during this period. Therefore, the theory put forth by historians about education being the monopoly of brahmans is a myth as refuted by Adam's survey in Bengal. Though Adam did not disagree with scholars that Brahmans monopolized education, he states that education, especially vernacular education, was open to all sections of society. The participation of the lower caste in education was comparatively low; but at the same time it indicates that education had penetrated to lower sections of society.

✓The students in vernacular schools came from among the Brahmans, Kayasthas, Kaivartas, Sunris, Telis, Vaishnavas, Chandals and so on.<sup>21</sup> The appearance of Doms, Keots, Haris and other caste students not only indicates that education had penetrated to lower sections of society but also shows the increasing desire on the part of the lower castes to acquire education.

✓Vernacular schools had thus become popular in the Presidency of Bengal during the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The increasing participation of the lower castes of students testifies to the wide diffusion of vernacular education. It had a popular base and had penetrated into all

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21. Regarding the caste of Hindu scholars in Bengal and Bihar, see Adam's Third Report.

sections of society. Adam in his First Report states that:

"There are 100,000 such schools in Bengal and Behar, and assuming the population of those two provinces to be 40,000,000, there would be a village school for every 400 persons."<sup>22</sup>

These figures which Adam states in his Report seems to have been slightly exaggerated, and hence not very accurate. This is because it was not possible for him to determine from his statistics the number of school-going children. Also these figures, which he states in his First Report, were not based

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22. William Adam, op.cit., p.6-7. These figures stated by Adam has become a subject of great controversy. Some historians, like Philip Hartog in his book Some Aspects of Indian Education, Past and Present, have dubbed it as a myth or a legend. These historians held the view that it was not possible, for the existence of large number of schools, in the Presidency of Bengal. Most of them interpreted school in the modern sense i.e., an institution of a permanent nature, conducted by a person who teaches a certain number of children of the locality in return for fees and perquisites from the pupils. If we accept this interpretation of school, then we can conclude that 100,000 schools in Bengal, could never have existed. It can be dubbed as a myth. On the other hand historians like R.V. Parulekar, in his book, A Source Book of History of Education in the Bombay Province, Part 1, Survey of Indigenous Education (1820-30) argued that in those days the term school was used to mean a place where instruction was given and it also included centres where domestic instruction prevailed. According to this view, families employing teachers for education of their children, and also where instruction was provided by father to his own child - was also a school as understood in those day. In support of his view, Parulekar and others pointed out that Adam in his Second Report, stated that elementary instruction can be divided into two, Public and Private, as communicated in public schools and private families. This therefore indicated that schools in those days included places where instruction was given and centres where domestic instruction prevailed. Thus, this interpretation of schools by Parulekar and others, indicates that education was widely prevalent in Bengal. According to this view, therefore, Adam's figures were almost correct.

on his survey of education in Bengal but were largely derived from the various sources he read e.g. the Reports of Dr. Francis Buchanan, Records of the General Committee of Public Instruction, Walter Hamilton's East India Gazetteer (second edition 1828) etc. Most of these sources did not throw light on all the districts of Bengal and Bihar, and the educational system existing in them.) In spite of Adam's figures being slightly exaggerated, we cannot completely disagree with him, because as shown earlier vernacular schools had become very popular during this period. His later Reports on the state of education in Bengal, testifies this fact. His Third Report is very important for it gives in detail the caste of the teachers as well as students in vernacular schools. The increasing participation of the lower castes as portrayed in his Reports, indicates that vernacular education had a wide and popular base. It has acquired by all sections of society.

Though Adam states that vernacular education had become very popular, he was very critical about them. He states that teachers in vernacular schools exercised no moral influence on the character of their pupils. According to him, the teacher for the sake of pay performed menial services in the spirit of a menial. He states that education was largely confined to accounts.

"No one will deny that a knowledge of Bengali writing

and of native accounts is requisite to the natives of Bengal, but when these are made the substance and sum of popular instruction and knowledge, the popular mind is necessarily cabined, cribed and confined within the smallest possible range of ideas and those of limited local and temporary interest and it fails even to acquire those habits of accuracy and precision which the exclusive devotion to forms of calculation might seem fitted to produce."<sup>23</sup>

This, according to Adam explained the drawbacks and imperfect nature of vernacular schools. Therefore, what was required, according to him was:

"Something to awaken and expand the mind...A higher intellectual cultivation is not all that is required. That to be beneficial to the individual and to society must be accompanied by the cultivation of the moral sentiment and habits... No material improvement of the native character can be expected, and no improvement whatever of the elementary education will be sufficient without a large infusion into it of moral instruction that shall always connect in the mind of the pupil."<sup>24</sup>

This lacuna which Adam found in the vernacular schools cannot be fully accepted because Adam was a missionary<sup>25</sup> and therefore laid stress on moral education. Finding it missing

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23. Ibid., p. 146-47.

24. Ibid., p. 147-48.

25. William Adam came to Bengal as a Protestant missionary, he however severed his connection with Serampore missionaries, for whom he had worked. Though he had severed his connections, he was greatly influenced by their ideas.

In the curriculum in vernacular schools, he felt that education imparted, was imperfect and he held the teachers responsible for it. Perhaps the views held by missionaries, during our period, that by and large Indians lacked morals had influenced Adam, who too, in his Reports felt that this was the main drawback existing in the vernacular schools. Though we cannot agree with Adam's criticism, we do find that the absence of books and greater importance attached to memorization of different texts, without understanding them, which perhaps led to the lacuna and drawbacks in these schools.

Despite these shortcomings, Adam states that vernacular education should be encouraged, because they were the fittest means to be employed for raising and improving the character of the people. He states that:

"Existing native institutions from the highest to the lowest, of all kinds and classes, were the fittest means to be employed for raising and improving the character of the people - that to employ those institutions for such a purpose would be the simplest, the safest, the most popular, the most economical, and the most effectual plan for giving that stimulus to native mind..."<sup>26</sup>

However, we find that the Company did not accept Adam's suggestions initially, when he submitted his Reports. The Government did nothing to promote vernacular education. But then, this attitude of the Government gradually changed. We find that the Educational Despatch of 1854, stated that

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26. Ibid., p.349.

the vernaculars were to be encouraged and were to be adopted at the secondary stage along with English. This not only shows that vernacular education was popular but also, Government interest in promotion of vernacular education, indicates its importance.<sup>27</sup>

✓ This discussion of vernacular education would remain incomplete without taking into consideration the domestic system of education. The domestic system of education was one where the students were instructed not in regular schools, but were instructed at the house of teachers. Every house of a Mullah, Maulana or Maulvi<sup>28</sup> and Pandit was itself the important centre of culture and provided board and lodging for students. Domestic instructions were also given by members of the family. Instruction was given by the father, to his children but quite often uncles and elder brothers gave instructions.

Those who gave domestic instruction to their children were zamindars, talukdars, shopkeepers, traders, zamindars' agents (gomashtas),<sup>29</sup> head of the village mandals and pandits. The brahmans were by far the largest section of society, who gave domestic instructions to their children.

In the families of the brahmans the students were

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27. For details, see Chapter V.

28. Mullah and Maulvi are Persian names for teachers, teaching in Islamic centres of education. Some of them gave domestic instruction to the pupils.

29. William Adam, op.cit., p.329.

taught reading and writing of vernacular language, i.e. Bengali. Farmers and traders on the other hand limited their instruction to what they best knew, and what was, to them and their children, of utility, i.e. calculation and measurements, peculiar to their occupation. Most of the Hindu families in Bengal taught Persian to their children. Adam states that domestic education was imperfect and crude as compared to instructions imparted in vernacular schools. The existence of domestic instruction indicates the struggle with ancient habits, i.e. of acquiring knowledge and the practical sense of the people who were making against their depressed circumstances.

✓ Unlike the vernacular education which had a popular base, female education was restricted and limited to a few sections of society. Various accounts on education depict that female education was limited. There were no separate schools where girls were given instruction. Despite its limited character, female education had a long tradition. ✓

Dayaram's Saradamangala, a seventeenth century Bengali work, shows that there was female education in the primary stage. The poet mentions five princes reading in pathsalas.<sup>30</sup> In Bharat Chandra's Vidyasundara, we find that princess Vidya was highly educated and she even defeated many scholars in literary debates.<sup>31</sup> The Mangala Kavyas shows that not only the

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30. Quoted in Anjali Chatterjee, op.cit., p.240.

31. Quoted in Ibid.,



daughter of zamindars received education, but even girls coming from the middle classes received education, along with the boys in the pathsalas. Adam in his First Report also states that indigenous elementary schools were open to the boys as well as girls in the nineteenth century. ✓

There are various examples which shows that educated women greatly contributed to literatures. Anandamayī, the niece of poet Jayanarayana, was a poetess of fair repute and composed Harilila in 1772 along with her uncle.<sup>32</sup> The wife of Yasovanta Raya, a Brahman of Nasipur, understood Bengali accounts and the wives of Raja Navakrishna were famed for being able to read. Many female mendicants had some knowledge of Sanskrit and a still greater number were conversant with popular poetry in the dialects of the country. This clearly indicates that not all women of the age were ignorant.

(The education of the girls was probably a matter of private, rather than public, concern. It was generally domestic, and not institutional, education. Tutors were employed by the parents at home, which aimed chiefly at equipping them with the knowledge and material necessary for domestic life.)

In his Second Report, Adam states that the zamindars by and large instructed their daughters in the elements of knowledge. The number of principal zamindars, according to

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32. K.K. Dutta, op.cit., p.26.

Adam in the district of Rajshahi was about 50 or 60, of whom more than half were females and widows, of these two, viz., Ranees Suryamani and Kamal Mani Dasi were said to possess a competent knowledge of Bengali writing and accounts.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, female education was, mainly, limited to a particular section of society i.e. the zamindars or upper classes.

Fisher's Memoir in Bengal, also gives a detailed account of Female education. In his accounts he states that girls coming from the upper classes of society i.e. zamindars received instructions. Education was, mainly, popular among them. In his accounts he depicts that -

"There are not a few Hindu ladies among the upper classes in this city (Calcutta) that can read and that do read. In such cases, when they are children they attend the instructions of a Guru-mahasai, either in their own house, or at the house of some near neighbour... By the time that is finished they are married... They are now removed from school, and for want of practice, soon forget to write. But they do not lose their knowledge of reading. Some of the matrons in the family - it may be an aunt - continue the study of Bengali with the little girl, and she soon learns to read fluently. The books, which the young women's minds are chiefly engaged are the following: Ramayan, Mahabharat, Annada Mangal Chundi, and a few other works, especially such as treat of the incarnation of Krishna, and the attributes of Sakti or Durga. The vernacular newspapers, especially the Bhaskur and Probakur, are in great demand with them. In one of the divisions of this city, called Bartollah, there are a great many printing presses employed in printing books, of which

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33. William Adam, op.cit., p.189.

many are bought by respectable Hindu ladies. The other day we learned with great pleasure and surprise that a young married lady, being obliged to visit her mother, who [was] very ill, and who lived at the distance of six days' journey from Calcutta, took with her in her palkee [palanquin] a number of books for her travelling companions, to relieve the ennui of her journey."34

✓ However, by and large girls were not educated because the notion of providing instruction to female children never entered the minds of parents. Moreover, a strong superstition existed among the people that girls taught to write and read would soon after marriage become widows. The Muslims also shared the prejudices of the Hindus against the instruction of their female children. Besides this factor, poverty was also a great handicap which did not allow parents to give instruction to their daughter. Thus, we find that female education was indeed limited. However, it formed a significant part of the indigenous system of education. ✓

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⑨ Vocational education as portrayed earlier, refers to scientific and technical knowledge exercised by the artisans in the production of commodities. This kind of education was inherited and acquired, and the skill of each particular trade was passed on from generation to generation.

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34. Quoted in K.K. Dutta, Social History of Modern India, p. 109-110.

The system of education for lads of each particular trade was a domestic one. They had particularly no choice in this matter, they were in course of time supposed to take up the trade of their fathers. Therefore, the young craftsmen from the very beginning was trained. The boy was taught generally by observing and handling real things.<sup>35</sup>

It was not the question of actual teaching but the boy would day by day absorb unconsciously the tradition and spirit of the particular craft which he was learning. In many crafts, drawing was a necessary accomplishment. This was gradually learnt by the boys, drawing first certain peculiar curves on a panel. After this, came the drawing of certain traditional ornaments and conventional figures of animal and other forms.

In a majority of occupations, the knowledge of reading and writing would not be required, for the direct purposes of the craft and would therefore, not be learnt. It was perhaps this reason which explains why scientific and technical knowledge, exercised by the artisans in the production of commodities was never recorded. In the Presidency of Bengal, villages were strongholds of traditional art and craft, but many craftsmen and artisans also lived in towns. Here, those employed in the same occupation or crafts were organized in guilds. Generally the craftsmen of a particular trade, belonged to one caste, in which case the bonds which united

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35. F.E. Keay, op.cit., p.78-79.

them were very strong and no outsider would be admitted. But where the same trade was pursued by men of different castes - the guild would bring them together, and though membership was hereditary, newcomers could be admitted by paying fees. A boy born in a particular caste learned the profession of the caste from his father and eventually took the place of his father as a member of the guild.

✓ Education of the craftsmen in India was entirely vocational. In spite of not receiving regular education, they learnt the craft through practice. It is therefore important to examine the techniques used by the artisans in the production of commodities.

The techniques which the artisans used can be traced to the Sultanate period, when the Turks had established their rule in northern India. With the establishment of their rule there was a considerable expansion of towns, there was a marked expansion in craft production and there was a corresponding expansion in commerce. The expansion in craft production was signified by a number of changes or improvements in technology during this period. The various technical devices, brought by the Turks, gradually got diffused in different parts of India. These technical devices were used by the artisans and weavers.

The techniques used in the production of textiles may be briefly described here. First of all, in the cotton textile sector the arrival of spinning wheel (charkha) was bound to increase the production of yarn manifold. This important

mechanical device is referred to, first of all, in Isami's Futuhu-s-Salatin (1350).<sup>36</sup> The spinning wheel was unknown in ancient India. During the seventeenth century the Indian spinning wheel appears to have been furnished with crank-handle.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, the introduction of cotton carders bow reached India in the twelfth century. This was however generalized only in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. There is a strong possibility that treadles, displayed in a seventeenth century miniature of Kabir at loom, were introduced during these centuries.

The introduction of these devices in the textile sector enabled the weavers to work much faster. With the spinning wheel as central innovation quickening the process of spinning yarn, it is likely that there took place a sizeable expansion in the production of cotton cloth.

✓ The Indian weaver's loom, with its horizontal frame, and foot-treadles to control the shedding mechanism, is illustrated in the seventeenth century painting of saint Kabir at work.<sup>38</sup> Such a loom was practically incapable of further development, we find that figured silks, cottons, and

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36. Quoted in Irfan Habib, Economic History of the Delhi Sultanate - An Essay in Interpretation, p.289.

37. Although its shape is not clear, a handle also appears in spinning wheel shown in a painting ascribed to Aurangzeb's time. For details, see Ibid., Changes in Technology in Medieval India, p.29-30.

38. Irfan Habib, op.cit., p.290.

brocades of the highest qualities were woven in India during the seventeenth century on draw-loom. Importation of Persian weaving devices and techniques during this period is therefore quite likely.<sup>39</sup> Indian looms and carftsman were by now sufficiently equipped to "exactly imitate the nicest and most beautiful patterns that are brought from Europe."<sup>40</sup> Technically the Indian loom, in the second half of eighteenth century was not inferior. The simplicity of the Indian looms does not mean that it was primitive. This is borne out by the fact that upto hundred and twenty implements were used in the families of weavers in the Dacca district for the production of high qualities of cotton cloth.<sup>41</sup>

The two basic methods of the multi-colour or pattern dyeing, namely, the application of resists to confine colours to patterns and or mordants to take colour, are described in seventeenth century accounts. These methods gave better results. Therefore, considering the textile industry as a whole, it would appear that technological changes during this period were by no means insignificant. The spinning wheel was given its crank-handle, fancy weaving techniques were probably

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39. Ibid., The Technology and Economy of Mughal India, p.10, Delhi, 1970.

40. Ibid., p.11.

41. A.I. Chicherov, Indian Economic Development in the Sixteenth and Eighteenth Century, p.65.

introduced from Persia and direct block-printing came in as a cost saving device.<sup>42</sup>

According to K.N. Chaudhuri, the Indian cotton industry in maintaining its existing overseas market, and in creating new ones, in the West before the period of industrial revolution, owed much to the possession of highly specialized technical skills in manufacturing as to lower the cost of production.<sup>43</sup>

x The weaving of cotton in Bengal was not merely a question of assembling the necessary raw material. The cotton industry in addition called for a detailed and empirical knowledge of the preparation and treatment of the natural fibre before it could be made ready for weaving. The production and treatment of thread was a key element in the successful manufacture of finer type of textile and often required as much time as the actual process of weaving itself. Before the invention of machine, spinning, hand spinning in Europe could seldom equal the quality of Indian yarn, and the textile fabrics utilizing cotton were widely woven in Europe with threads imported from India.

The technology of production involved many intermediate stages, and the separation of function was social as well as

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42. Irfan Habib, op.cit., p.11-12.

43. K.N. Chaudhuri, Trading World of Asia and the English East India Company 1660-1760, p.238.



technical. Most of the craftsmen in India were able to perform singly all the different stages of the production process.<sup>44</sup> Though the craftsmen in Bengal could perform all the different stages of production individually, or with the help of his family, we find that with the expansion in demand for textiles, each process of production got separated.

The production of cotton threads was one of the most important small-scale industries carried on by Indian peasants during this period. The thread was produced by women notably of the numerous agrarian castes. The production process which consisted in cleaning and beating up (or combining) of cotton and spinning was carried out by means of constructed wheel and spindle. Source material in the eighteenth century shows that peasant spinning industry was increasingly of a commodity nature.<sup>45</sup> The first stage in the transformation of domestic industry into commodity production was the manufacture of thread for the market by peasantwomen. Generally women belonging to all castes used to spin. Coarse variety of thread was produced by peasant of low caste, and the best quality of thread was produced by women of higher caste, i.e., Brahman widows. The spinning of thread required special skill which was passed from generation to generation.

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44. Ibid., p.254.

45. A.I. Chicherov, op.cit., p.45.

Therefore, the expansion of demand for textiles led to specialization and division of labour in the textile industry. Weaving gradually became a wholetime occupation.

The Indian method of textile production relied heavily on the system of commercial advances. It was quite different from the "putting out" system.<sup>46</sup> The merchants in Bengal advanced cash sums and not raw-materials to the weavers and artisans. The merchants had no role in the production of commodities. They only provided advances to the artisans and specified the commodities required by Europeans.

The commodities, especially textiles, produced by the weavers attracted European traders, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to the Indian markets. It is interesting to note that despite the Prohibition Act,<sup>47</sup> Indian textiles continued to be demanded in England. Also, Bengal's superior muslin cloth and raw silk were greatly in demand in Europe and Asia.

The looms at Dacca produced cloth of various kinds - "ranging from the fine gossamer muslin, the attire of the inmates of the Zananas of native princes down to the coarse

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46. Prior to the industrial revolution in England, the merchants used to supply raw-material and tools to the weavers. There the merchants had a very important say in production, whereas in India we find that tools were owned by the weavers and artisans. The merchant had no role or say in production of commodities.

47. The Prohibition Act of 1701 in England failed to stop imports of Indian calicoes into England.

thick wrapper worn by the poor ryot."<sup>48</sup>

The muslin cloth for which Bengal was very famous, was greatly demanded by the Europeans. Stavorinus remarked -

"Muslin are sometimes woven so fine, that a piece of twenty yards in length, and longer, can be inclosed in a cimmon pocket tobacco box. The whole is done with a very trifling apparatus and Europeans are surprised to behold the perfection of manufacture which is exemplified here in almost every handicraft, effected with so few and such imperfect tools."<sup>49</sup>

Thus, the weavers in Bengal produced superior textiles e.g. muslin, with the help of simple tools that were not sophisticated. The different varieties of cloth produced, and the large number of looms worked in Bengal, owing to the growth in demand in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, that beside the large quantity of raw cotton produced within the province, cotton had to be imported from Bombay and Surat.<sup>50</sup>

Apart from textiles, numerous articles e.g. embroidered caps, painted wares, cups, basins, steel guns, knives, scissors, white paper, gold and silver ornaments were produced. The skill, the dexterity as well as delicacy displayed in the manufacture of these commodities and the workmanship shown in the technical treatment of wood, metal and stone, the techniques of dress and ornaments, the

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48. K.K. Dutta, op.cit., p.425.

49. Quoted in Ibid., p.413.

50. Ibid., p.427.

constructive exactness manifested in preparation of these commodities - gives one a detailed idea of vocational education during this period. The production of these commodities also indicates the existence of a regular system of technical education.

The existence of innumerable karkhanas or manufacturing centres also provided technical training to those who evinced special interest in and aptitude for handicrafts. The Public Works Department, or the Shuhrat-i-Am, as it was called, was maintained by the state.<sup>51</sup> This department looked after the workshops or karkhanas in which education was imparted by the system of apprenticeship. Boys were often apprenticed with the artisans to the trade for receiving instructions in the particular art and craft. The boys began their work at an early age. They gradually acquired skill by handling the tools and watching the workmen at their task. As soon as they made little progress, they were given wages which went on increasing as they became more and more efficient.

Most of these karkhanas or manufacturing centres were generally located in the urban areas. These karkhanas were principal centres of technical or vocational training. Numerous artisans and craftsmen were trained in karkhanas. Most of these karkhanas were patronized by the Mughal emperor and the Nawabs of Bengal. These karkhanas supplied commodities

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51. S.M. Jaffar, op.cit., p.201. For details about the karkhanas, see K.M. Ashraf, op.cit., p.124-126. Berniers Travels in the Mogul Empire (ed.) V.A. Smith, p.254-55.

needed by the Courts and the ruler. The courts of the ruler, were the chief consumers of the commodities produced by the artisans.

Though the Mughal emperor and the Nawabs of Bengal were the chief consumers of the commodities produced by the artisans, they did not help in its promotion. We do not hear of any ruler promoting technical education. This is because during the medieval period, political authority was vested in the hands of those who owned land. Land was owned by the higher caste e.g. Brahmans and Kshatriyas. This also explains the feudal character of the state during medieval period. The agricultural producers and the artisans came from the lower sections of society, or belonged to inferior caste. They were by and large the producing class, and they had no say in the administration. Though they were completely dissociated from the upper sections of society, they were the backbone of the upper caste. This is because they produced essential as well as luxurious commodities required by the ruling class or higher caste. It is ironical to note that, though the ruling classes greatly depended on the services of the artisan, they never felt the need to promote technical and scientific education.

Since the education imparted in institutions catered to the upper sections of society or caste, and reflected their values, the state perhaps did not feel the need to

encourage vocational education because it was not required by the ruling classes. This lack of promoting vocational education, also explains the static nature of the techniques used in production. Innovations in technology could not be brought about, because such kind of knowledge was never imparted in educational institutions. Education imparted in the institutions was enveloped with religious ideas. This emphasis on religious education did not enable the students to develop inductive and experimental methods which was very essential for technological advancement. The traditional literati class were completely dissociated from technology. They had in short no contact with those engaged in production and manufacture.

None of the rulers during the medieval period imported the printing press. This also explained the short-sightedness of the rulers during the medieval period. In Europe, the printing press played a very vital role in disseminating new ideas, and thus helped in technological advancement. This absence of printing press in India did not help in the diffusion of new ideas or innovations which were taking place in England and Europe. The craftsmen and artisans were ignorant about the changes taking place in Europe, especially in England, in the textile sector. In fact, they continued to use the same techniques of production, implanted by the Turkish conquest.

Apart from the isolated position of the artisans, the social and economic factors proved to be an important handicap

in the development of technical education. Though the caste system was not rigid, it did not help the artisans to gain social status. The teachings of many of the bhakti saints who came from the artisan class, constantly denounced the caste system and the social hierarchy created by it. The main idea reflected in most of their teachings was the social recognition of their position. The concept of bhakti became very important in their teachings for it meant salvation was open to all irrespective of whatever caste a person belonged to. In short, anyone could attain salvation by bhakti i.e. devotion to God with love and affection. The bhakti movement was therefore a movement which originated from the artisan class, who aimed at acquiring social status in society. Despite its wide and popular base, it did not bring many social changes. The artisans continued to be regarded, as people belonging to lower caste. Though the services which they performed was vital, their status continued to remain low. Thus, social factors played a very vital role in retarding technological advancement.

✓ The economic conditions of the artisans was also a major handicap, regarding technological advancement. Most of the artisans lived in a state of poverty. This did not provide any incentive to them to improve their techniques of production. Moreover, there are various evidences which indicates the

existence of a large supply of skilled artisans,<sup>52</sup> available during the early Mughal and even later periods. Most of them living at subsistence level did not show enthusiasm to change their techniques or to use tools which would act as an substitute for their labour because for the fear of unemployment and also poverty which had already marked their economic conditions.

Therefore, apart from the lack of incentive, there existed no enthusiasm among the artisans and weavers to change their techniques of production. Most of the artisans also living at the subsistence level could not afford tools or material calling for any expense. They, therefore, tended to compensate for the lack of this by putting in additional labour and application of skill.<sup>53</sup> This substitution of tool and machine by human labour also explains the high degree of specialization attained by Indian artisans.

Thus we find that the lack of state patronage, absence of printing press, social and economic conditions of the artisans and their isolation from changes taking place in Europe, retarded

52. A "good thing in Hindustan", Babur (1526-30) had said, "is that it has unnumbered and endless workmen of every kind." Thus, Babur indicates that a large number of craftsmen existed in India. Baburnama, trs., A.S. Beveridges, ii, 520a.

53. An example of this kind of compensation is offered by the Indian weavers persisting in weaving patterns on their horizontal loom. In Dacca the weavers continued to produce the Muslin cloth which were plain, stripped and chequered and coloured, on their horizontal loom. See Irfan Habib, Technology and Barriers to Social Change in Mughal India, p. 169.



innovation in technology in India. Perhaps like Europe, industrial revolution could have taken place in India, but these vital factors as depicted earlier, retarded its development and occurrence.

Despite these inhibiting factors, the weavers and artisans could cater to the demands of Europeans in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Indian commodities especially textiles enjoyed a wide market not only in Europe but throughout the world. However, this position enjoyed by the Indian commodities in European markets gradually changed. The industrial revolution gave a setback to the Indian textile industry, which could not compete with the machine made products, which began to flood the Indian markets. Thus, the wide market which the Bengal textile industry enjoyed in Europe as well as in the indigenous markets, declined towards the end of eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>54</sup>

✓ Political developments especially after 1757 and 1765 (i.e. with the grant of diwani rights) also effected the traditional handicrafts of Bengal. The famine of 1770-72 seriously

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54. The Industrial bourgeoisie's (capitalist) interest lay in satisfying the needs for outlets for their ever increasing output of manufactured goods, e.g. textiles. Moreover, their policy, i.e. East India Company, changed their was less dependence on indigenous manufactured commodities like textiles which formed an important item of their imports in early seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. There was now a greater dependence on raw materials needed to run the machine in England. This decline in the demand for textiles in European-markets and indigenous markets gave a setback to textile industry in Bengal.

effected the weavers and artisans and thereby effected craft production and textiles. Despite these inhibiting factors, the artisans continued to supply to local needs.

✓ The Swadeshi movement in Bengal, which arose in protest against the partition of Bengal in 1905, asked the people to boycott British goods. It asked the people to use indigenous goods produced by the artisans. This also indicates that despite the challenges faced from machine made goods, the textiles produced by the artisans, continued to exist. The skill of the artisans did not die. In fact, the Swadeshi movement gave incentive to the weavers and artisans.

✓ Thus, vocational education played a vital role during this period. Though this kind of education was not imparted in educational institutions, and did not receive active support and patronage, it continued to exist in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

✓ Therefore vernacular, female and vocational education formed an important part of the indigenous system of education. Female education was not very popular, it was restricted and limited to a few sections of society. Vernacular and vocational education on the other hand had acquired a popular base. While vernacular education was imparted to the students in educational institutions, vocational education was inherited and acquired by students belonging to a particular caste. The skill had passed on from generation to generation. Despite the lack of

patronages from the Nawabs as well as the East India Company, vocational education formed a vital part of indigenous education. Similarly, though the policy of the East India Company was to encourage English education, by the Resolution of 7 March 1835, vernacular education continued to exist. Its importance was gradually realised by the East India Company, and by 1854 we find that the Educational Despatch, stated that vernacular along with English education was to be encouraged at secondary stage. Also one reason for its existence was certainly due to missionary activities in the process of the propagation of the Gospel in the Bengal Presidency which gave a new life to it.

## CHAPTER - IV

### MISSIONARY CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INDIGENOUS EDUCATION\*

The study of the indigenous system of education in the Bengal Presidency would remain incomplete without examining the role of the Christian missionaries for its development during our period. They played a crucial role in the quantitative and qualitative expansion of education, particularly vernacular education. The medium of instruction in most of the missionary schools, prior to 1833, was Bengali. However, there was a gradual shift, and we find that between 1833 and 1853, the medium of instruction was being replaced by English. Despite this development, Bengali continued to remain the medium of instruction, in most of the missionary schools.

Like the Vaishnavite movement in Bengal, the missionaries raised the status of Bengali language and literature. Unlike the Brahman pandits, they did not despise it as a vulgar language. The missionaries strongly believed that it was fallacious to use an alien language i.e. English, as a medium of instruction. They felt that instruction could be best imparted

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\*For details about the location of the various centres of the different Missionary Organisations working in the Presidency of Bengal, see Map II.

in the mother-tongue of the pupil.<sup>1</sup> Like Grant<sup>2</sup> they believed that not only Bengal but the whole of India could be generated by Western knowledge and Christianity, but whereas he had proposed that through the medium of English, Indians could help themselves to the whole store of Western learning, the missionaries preferred to translate it into the vernaculars. They strongly believed that knowledge should be conveyed to the pupils in vernacular.

The activities of the missionaries became more prominent, especially during the close of the eighteenth century and during the first two decades of the nineteenth century, which saw the decline in the political authority of the Nawabs, and which had an adverse impact on education, especially classical education. On the other hand, the East India Company was busy consolidating its political authority, and therefore, it could not pay much attention to education. Thus, in these circumstances, with the traditional sustaining forces steadily on the decline

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1. The Baptist policy towards vernacular education in general was most succinctly expressed in a pamphlet written by Marshman entitled, Hint. He asserted that it was 'completely fallacious' to hope to teach efficiently the people of any nation in a language not their own. Quoted in D. Potts, British Baptist Missionaries in India, 1793-1837, p.122.
  2. Charles Grant had come to India in 1767 and after serving in various capacities, had been made the fourth member of the Board of Trade with the superintendence of all the Company's trade in Bengal (1787). His close relation with David Brown, one of the Company's Chaplains & J. Thomas, the Baptist missionary of Calcutta and others made him promote the missionary activities in India. Grant suggested that the missionaries should adopt English as the medium of instruction in their schools. D.P. Sinha, The Educational Policy of East India Company in Bengal to 1854, p.4.

and the ruling authority maintaining an attitude of apathy and neglect, the field was left for the missionaries to step in. The missionaries took full advantage of the opportunity in carrying out their pioneering labour in education.

Prior to their educational activities in Bengal, the missionaries greatly contributed to education in England. This is because the state did not take the responsibility of education and therefore the missionaries took up the responsibility of educating the people. They provided schools which were cheap and which could be afforded by all sections of society. The missionaries made use of the Bell and Lancaster system or the monitorial system in their schools in England. This system aimed at overcoming the lack of qualified teachers by using the more advanced pupil to assist the more backward. In this way one teacher could supervise a number of classes. Most of the missionaries in Bengal made use of the Bell and Lancaster system in the schools they established. Thus, the missionaries' educational activities in Bengal had its roots in England.

Most of the missionaries in Bengal came from a middle class<sup>3</sup> background. For instance, William Carey was a shoemaker, Joshua Marshman was a school teacher and Ward was a printer. Several of them had received some kind of formal secondary education either in denominational seminaries or through tuitions arranged by their missionary society. Others generally

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3. M.A. Laird, Missionaries and Education in Bengal 1793-1837, p.41.

depended almost entirely on their own private reading and study. Most of them had some teaching experience before they came to Bengal, especially in Sunday schools.<sup>4</sup> Their working class background, and their teaching experiences enabled the missionaries to lay the foundation of an educational system that was not divorced from the requirements of the common man. Most of the missionary schools emphasised on reading, writing and arithmetic the knowledge of which was essential in day-to-day affairs. By emphasising on vernaculars, i.e. Bengali in this case, they made it clear that their educational system was meant for the masses.

Since the educational system they established catered to the requirements of the masses, most of the missionaries in Bengal learned the vernaculars. They translated important literatures of West, as well as some of the Sanskrit works, like the Ramayana and Mahabharata<sup>5</sup> into Bengali. These translations made it possible for the common man to get acquainted with literatures of the West as well as traditional literatures. Their activities thus, led to a wide diffusion of literature among the people. This is clearly evident from the fact that,

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4. In England, in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, education was not a state responsibility, no public money was spent on elementary education, which was left mostly to charity schools, village dames and to private Sunday Schools started by Robert Raikes. The main aim of the Sunday Schools was to provide cheap and useful instructions to the pupils who came from lower sections of society. In this school emphasis was laid on the teaching of the Bible as well as the knowledge of reading, writing and arithmetic was also imparted. The Sunday Schools of the eighteenth century England almost corresponded to a form of Adult Education of today.
5. Carey translated the Ramayana into Bengali publishing a five volume edition on 31 December 1803. Quoted in D. Potts, op.cit., p.98.

the books published by the missionaries were in great demand in the early nineteenth century. For instance, the Baptists at Calcutta claimed that they had published 71,000 school books in various languages by 1828, and 100,000 tracts were distributed in 1827 from Serampore.<sup>6</sup> These figures, therefore, indicate that the various literatures published by them enjoyed wide circulation among the people.

✓ During the period under review, the important missionaries in the Presidency of Bengal who promoted vernacular education, were the Baptist Missionaries of Serampore, missionaries belonging to the London Missionary Society, and the missionaries belonging to the Church Missionary Society. There was no such thing as a common missionary policy. Though the missionaries by and large worked independently, they were not isolated from each other. Each group were eager to adopt methods which the others had experimented successfully. We find May, who belonged to the London Missionary Society, borrowed the idea of pandit-supervision from Captain Stewart of the Church Missionary Society.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, the Calcutta Committee of the Church

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6. K. Ingham, Reformers' in India, 1793-1833, p.69.

7. It is interesting to note that Rev. May in one of his reports dated 10 July 1817, portrayed that he had visited Stewart school at Burdwan. He minutely studied the school system at Burdwan and on his return introduced the 'Circle Pandit' system which he had observed in Stewart's schools. Unlike the practice in Stewart's schools where one superior Pandit was appointed to supervise each village school, May placed one qualified Pandit over a circle of three schools, all circles being placed under one head Pandit. A special Pandit was appointed to teach arithmetic in all schools. Even though May differed from Stewart practice i.e. of appointing one Pandit for a circle of three schools, he had borrowed the idea from him. See N.L. Basak, History of Vernacular Education in Bengal (1800-1854), p.111.



Missionary Society sent their newly arrived missionaries Greenwood and Schroeter to Chinsura for a week to study May's system. Marshman's pamphlet Hint Relative to Native Schools impressed everyone who took an interest in education from Moira and Hyde East to Captain Stewart.<sup>8</sup> This clearly indicates that the missionaries did not work in complete isolation. Most of the schools established by missionaries used the same range of books. As Laird in his book Missionary and Education in Bengal 1793-1837 states -

"...There was rivalry as well as friendly co-operation between various groups. This was partly but by no means wholly due to denominational differences, which were much less in evidence than in the contemporary England. May, Marshman, and Thomason were probably the greatest educationalist at the time in Bengal."<sup>9</sup>

The East India Company's policy towards the missionaries during our period was not uniform. It was subject to many changes. Initially, the Company officials adopted a negative attitude towards the missionaries. They did not allow them i.e. the missionaries, to work in their territory. Similarly, they did not issue permits to missionaries, and expelled several missionaries as soon as they became active and tried to convert the people. The early policy adopted by the Company officials compelled many missionaries like Carey, who belonged

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8. M.A. Laird, op.cit., p.129.

9. Ibid., p.130.

to the Baptist Mission Society, to take shelter in Danish Settlements. Carey and his associates, Ward and Marshman took shelter in Serampore, a Danish colony. The relation between the missionaries and the officials of the Company was extremely strained, especially between 1793 and 1813.

The main reason which led the Company officials to adopt a negative attitude towards the missionaries was mainly because they did not want to antagonise the people by intervening in their religious matters. They felt that the missionaries, by preaching the message of Christ and converting the people to Christianity, would directly intervene in the religious beliefs of the people. Therefore, they tried to curb the missionary activities prior to 1813. Similarly the Company officials also realised that without the co-operation of the natives, it would be difficult to consolidate their newly acquired political authority. Therefore, the Company officials tried to discourage all those activities which would weaken their hold over the people. ✓

However, the policy of the Company changed, and we find that with the passing of the Charter Act of 1813,<sup>10</sup> the missionaries were allowed to come to India and also work in the Company's territory. This Charter contained a clause which legalised

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10. For details regarding the background of the passing of Charter Act of 1813 and the inclusion of missionary clause in it, see Chapter V.

missionary activities in India. It stated that -

"It is the duty of this country to promote the interests and happiness of the native inhabitants of the British dominions in India, and such a measure ought to be adopted as may tend to the introduction among them of useful knowledge, and of religious and moral improvement, and in furtherance of the above objects, sufficient facilities ought to be afforded by law to persons desirous of accomplishing those benevolent designs."<sup>11</sup>

Thus the Act, inaugurated a new era full of possibilities for missionary educationists. Consequently, the period from 1813 to 1833 was one of great missionary activity, not only in Bengal, but in all parts of the Company's Dominions. During this period the missionaries greatly contributed to vernacular education. Those who contributed to the expansion of vernacular education as stated earlier, were the General Baptist Missionary Society, London Missionary Society, and the Church Missionary Society. The Scottish Missionaries, however, mainly promoted English education during our period.

While examining the role of the missionaries, particularly those who promoted vernacular education, it would be important to know -

- (a) The motives of the missionaries in spreading education in Bengal Presidency.
- (b) The curriculum in missionaries' schools.
- (c) Female education undertaken by the missionaries and curriculum existing in the schools.

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11. M.A. Laird, op.cit., p.67-68.

- (d) Ideas imparted to the students.
- (e) Section of society receiving education in missionary schools.

✓ The motives of the missionaries in undertaking educational activities in the Presidency of Bengal was mainly to spread the message of Christ, and convert the people to Christianity. Missionaries belonging to Baptist Missionary Society, London Missionary Society and Church Missionary Society, and even the Scottish Missionaries firmly believed that education would help in proselytization. This is clearly evident from the fact that in most of the schools in the Bengal Presidency, <sup>the</sup> Bible was taught. Carey had translated the Bible into Bengali, Hindi and Marathi. Practical experiences had convinced the missionaries that they had to start schools as an important means of proselytization. They strongly believed that education, rather than legislation, would reform the people of Bengal. Education would help in the development of critical perspective and would enable the pupils, at the same time, to appreciate Christianity. Thus, educational activities were considered crucial in spreading Christianity among the people. As Rev. Dr. A.O. Allen, an eminent missionary of the American Board, observed -

"In commencing their operations, missionaries have generally seen the propriety and importance of establishing schools. One reason for them is to educate the minds of the people, so that they may be more capable of understanding and appreciating the facts and evidences, doctrines and duties of the scriptures. Another reason for them is to increase the influence of the missionaries

with the people, by communicating some advantages which they can appreciate, and by showing that Christianity rests on intelligent perception of its doctrines, it contains reason for the performance of all its duties. And another reason for such an education, is in its procuring means and opening ways of access to the people, and opportunities of preaching to them. One great difficulty which missionaries often experience, in obtaining access to the people, in circumstances where Christianity can be made the subject of communication or conversation. In such circumstances schools become very important, as a means of communication with different classes of people, with children and parents, and with men and women. And school-houses also become important as places for becoming acquainted with people, for social intercourse and religious workship. School-houses became chapels under the control of missionaries. Their use for this purpose is often more important than for education."<sup>12</sup>

Therefore, the missionaries realised that schools were both the cause and the effect of proselytization and that educational and missionary work had to be undertaken side by side. It is out of this realisation that mission-schools were opened not only in Bengal, but in different parts of India.

On their arrival the missionaries found that in the Presidency of Bengal, there already existed a well established system of indigenous education. There was the classical education i.e. Sanskrit and Persian and on the other hand there existed the vernacular education. While the former was restricted to a limited section of society, the latter was

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12. Quoted in Syed Nurullah and J.P. Naik, A Student's History of Education in India, 1800-1961, p.32-33.

open to all sections of society. Therefore, it had a wide base. The missionaries decided to concentrate on the latter, for they wanted to spread Christianity among the masses and therefore realised that vernacular education was best suited for their activity.

They opened vernacular schools, which were in many ways similar to indigenous vernacular schools. Most of the missionary schools retained many of the indigenous practices, e.g. Rev. May's school at Chinsurah, retained the practice of grouping pupils according to material used for writing viz., sand-board, palm-leaf, plaintain leaf and paper. Pupils wrote on paper when they reached the last stage. Similarly, the practice of using mats for sitting was retained. However, the most important development in Rev. May's schools was that the majority of teachers employed were indigenous teachers, who had earlier taught in their own traditional pathsalas. Thus, not only the indigenous practices were retained, but also indigenous teachers were employed in missionary schools.

The schools established by the missionaries were therefore not an innovation. The innovations introduced by them was regarding the teaching of the Bible, introduction of Western literature and sciences and using wide range of printed books in place of manuscripts.

The use of printed books in missionary schools was an important contribution to the wide diffusion of literature,

among the people. Most of the missionaries, belonging to various societies were great writers as well as translators. They learned the vernacular language especially Bengali, and compiled several books in this language. William Carey, who belonged to the Baptist Mission of Serampore, played a pioneering role regarding the compilation of books in vernacular. He compiled A Dictionary of the Bengalee Language in two volumes. The first volume was completed in 1815 and the second in two parts in 1825. In his dictionary, Carey introduced very simple words in the language and all the compound terms which were current or to be found in standard Bengali works. Words were traced to their origins and various meanings were given. Similarly, he published A Grammar of the Bengali Language in 1800. In his grammar, Carey dwelt on the peculiarities of the Bengali alphabets, the combination of letters, the declension and formation of nouns, adjective and pronouns and the conjugation of verbs, adverbs, propositions and so on, and finally closed it with syntax, an appendix of numerals and tables of weights and measures. These treatises raised the language to a position of respectability and made learning a practicable proposition, even for the foreigners.<sup>13</sup>

✓ Apart from the dictionary and grammar books which he compiled, he also wrote the Kathopakathan -a collection of

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13. N.L. Basak, op.cit., p.69. See also K.P. Sengupta, The Christian Missionary in Bengal, 1793-1833, p.124.

dialogues illustrating idiomatic Bengali. In this book Carey included a variety of sample of conversational Bengali (along with English translations). He wrote Itihasmala or Tales of History. It was a collection of 150 stories which was widely used in vernacular schools, during the period under review. He also wrote Naba Dharapat or New Arithmetical table which was also used in elementary schools and formed an important part of the curriculum.

Similarly, Rev. William Yates, Rev. John Mack and Rev. J.C. Marshman, like Carey, made a valuable contribution to vernacular education by printing books on various subjects. Rev. Yates compiled several useful school books in the vernaculars. Some of the important ones were Padartha Vidya Sar (1825). This work was a Bengali translation of English work entitled Elements of Natural Philosophy and Natural History in a Series of Familiar Dialogues, and was intended to teach Physics through dialogues. Jyotirvidya (1830) was a translation of Fergusson's Introduction to Astronomy and included such topics as the sun, and planets, the earth, solar and lunar eclipse. Satya-Itihas Sar (1830) and Prachin Itihas Samuchchaya (1830) were both translations from English. They were useful historical compilations suitable for use in the vernacular schools. The former contained many episodes of world history, such as those of the Greeks, Romans, the Phoenicians etc. Rev. John Mack, on the other hand, wrote the Principle of Chemistry in Bengali known as Kimiya Vidyar Sar (1834).



Rev. John Clark Marshman's most important contributions were the historical treatises compiled by him, some of which he himself translated from English into Bengali. The most useful of these were his Outline of the History of Bengal (1840), and Brief History of India Part 1, from the creation to the beginning of the Christian Era (English and Bengali) 1833.<sup>14</sup>

✓ These books compiled by the missionaries were very important because they acquainted the pupils not only with traditional literatures, but also with Western literatures and sciences. Perhaps we can also say that by providing printed books, the missionaries provided a better quality of vernacular instruction than what was available in the traditional pathsalas of the Gurumhashovs. Similarly by using large number of printed books and covering a wide range of subjects, they did away with the oral traditions prevalent in the indigenous schools. Great emphasis was now laid on written aspects.

The schools established by the missionaries had a regular building. They were in sharp contrast with the indigenous schools, which did not have a regular building. As depicted earlier, schools were generally held in the house or rich-men. Schools were sometime held in temporary constructions such as Chandi-mandaps, Baithak-khanas and so on. By establishing regular buildings to impart instructions to the

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14. N.L. Basak, op.cit., p.81-83.

pupils, the missionaries did away with the shortcoming faced by indigenous schools.<sup>15</sup>

The schools established by the missionaries in the Presidency of Bengal may be classified under five heads. The first were the Boarding schools for European boys and girls. The objective of such schools were mainly two. The first was to acquire financial gains and the other was to train future missionaries. The Baptist Missionary Society established two Boarding schools at Serampore in 1800, one for European boys and the other for European girls.<sup>16</sup>

The second type of schools, were mainly meant for those children who had lost caste on account of reading the Gospel. The third type of schools were Boarding schools for Indian Christian boys and girls. The fourth type of schools were established mainly for the Roman Catholics' boys and girls. Non-Christian students were also admitted to these schools, but their number was very insignificant. These schools established by the missionaries were limited in their operations.

In order to fulfil their objects of gaining converts, the missionaries concentrated on the establishment of the fifth type of school. This school was mainly intended to cover all local non-christian boys and girls.<sup>17</sup> The fifth type of school

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15. See Chapter III.

16. K.P. Sen-Gupta, op.cit., p.100.

17. Ibid., p.101.

was very important for it aimed at spreading the message of Christ among the people and also converting the people to Christianity. The missionaries mainly concentrated on this type of schools in the Bengal Presidency.

The missionaries were free to choose their own syllabus. The curriculum in most of the missionary schools was the same. In all the elementary schools established by Baptist Missionaries, London Missionary Society and Church Missionary Society, the medium of instruction was in the vernaculars. English was taught as a language.

The curriculum in the elementary schools mainly consisted of reading, writing and arithmetic. Apart from this, the Bible was taught in elementary schools. In the Benevolent institutions, which was founded in 1809, under the initiative of Marshman and Carey, of the Baptist Missionaries of Serampore, the subject of instruction particularly in the boys school included, beside scriptural teachings, simple and compound rules of arithmetic, English grammar, geography,<sup>18</sup> global reading and map drawing. These subjects that were taught in Benevolent institutions, were taught in all the missionary schools. Though the curriculum in Stewarts school at Burdwan, was similar to one that existed in other missionary schools, he added a Bengali translation of The Preamble to the East India Company's Regulations. This was mainly taught to the pupils to

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18. N.L. Basak, op.cit., p.67.

convince them that the Government desired to promote their well being. Thus, in the missionary schools, a synthesis of curriculum of elementary schools in England and indigenous elementary schools in Bengal existed.

Therefore, we find that though the Bible was taught in most of the missionary schools, emphasis was laid on Western sciences and literatures. This clearly indicates that missionaries were not only interested in promoting Christianity, but also genuinely wanted to improve education. This can be seen from Marshman's pamphlet entitled Hints Relative to Native School. In this pamphlet, he elaborated the educational plan which he had earlier presented in the "minute" of 1813.

In the first section, emphasis was laid on the state of ignorance and degradation to which the natives were reduced. In the second section of the Hint, emphasis was laid on the use of vernaculars as the medium of instruction. The plan he proposed for expanding vernacular education had the following features:

(a) Preparation of series of vernacular school books and tables. Marshman suggested the preparation of two series of books, one elementary, the other higher. The elementary series was to comprise a simple treatise of Bengali grammar, simple arithmetic, a vocabulary to contain 3 to 4 thousand words in general use and selection of useful words in general use and to promote a knowledge of orthography.<sup>19</sup> The higher series

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19. Ibid., p.74-75.

would include a treatise on the solar system, a treatise on ethics and morality. All these treatises were to be compiled in Bengali.

- (b) Marshman emphasised the introduction of monitorial system, both for instruction and discipline, the monitors being trained to assume the role of teachers later on.
- (c) Utilization of the service of existing indigenous teachers.
- (d) Holding periodical examinations to test the progress of the pupils.
- (e) Grant of rewards and "gratuities" on the results of the examination, and
- (f) Introduction of an organised system of superintendence.

These features mentioned in the Hint clearly indicates that Marshman genuinely wanted to improve the system of education. It was the first organised plan for the establishment of schools which had been devised in India. Marshman decided to create a new body of teachers. He proposed to adopt "the plan which had originated with Bell and Lancaster", and which was in the height of popularity in England as portrayed earlier.

On the line of "Lancaster's plan", Marshman suggested the preparation of a series of printed tables. In this were exhibited the alphabets and its combinations, words of two three or four syllables to serve as "exercise" and the paradigms of nouns, pronouns and verbs and the rules of

arithmetic with a succession of examples. These tables printed in large type and pasted on large boards, were suspended around the room and they were to be used for reading exercises. The substitution of large boards in place of small ones containing manuscripts used in the indigenous schools, was designed to help fixing the attention of the whole class, enabling 10 to 12 boys to use it simultaneously. Marshman estimated that sixty of the above tables would be needed to constitute a full course of elementary instruction.<sup>20</sup>

Like Marshman, May also used boards in his schools. All the lessons to be learnt were to be painted on boards and circulated among schools. These board lessons like Marshman's, were to be drawn up after the pattern of the "Lancaster Tables". This would contain rules of arithmetic, forms of document in use among the natives and some proverbs and moral lessons. Like Marshman, May believed that boards suspended in schools could be used by many students simultaneously. In May's schools board lessons were painted both in printed and manuscript form. Instead of using printed 'tables' and text-books, May relied on wooden boards, on which alphabets, sentences etc. were painted. May thought that this method had several advantages. It was more flexible since lessons on boards could be varied in accordance with wishes of individual schools in different localities. The method also seemed less alien to the people,

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20. N.L. Basak, op.cit., p.76. See also M.A. Laird, op.cit., p.78-79.

who were not accustomed to read anything in printed form. Apart from this, this method was fairly economical since board lessons could serve the needs of many children.

Though Marshman and May used painted boards in their schools there existed differences in their methods, for instance, May did not use printed tables and text books, which Marshman had used in his schools. In May's schools wooden boards were largely used. By 1815, he was able to report that he had a graded series of about 140 board lessons in use among his 15 schools: "They consisted chiefly of arithmetical tables, letters, leases, bonds, invitations, names of men towns, villages, birds, beasts, and so on. They also included some moral lessons."<sup>21</sup> Though these board lessons were popular with children, the curriculum was limited compared with that of Marshman's schools or Serampore Mission Schools.

However, after May's death, printed books began to be used in his schools. J.D. Pearson, who took charge of May's schools after his death, introduced printed text books. Most of these books were written in Bengali. In the Chinsurah school, instruction in class 1 started with Alphabets Bonano and Pholas (spelling) were taught in class two and elementary tables in class three. Regular reading lessons commenced in class four. In class five, students studied Pearson's English grammar in Bengali, Puttro-Cowmoodi (Letter writer) and

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21. Quoted in M.A. Laird, op.cit., p.77-80.

Bakyabali (Idiomatic exercises). Apart from these books, students were also taught Manoranjan Itihas (pleasing tales), Nitikatha (Moral Fables), Genitank (Arithmetic), Bhugol Brittant (Pearce's geography) and so on.<sup>22</sup>

Thus, we find that though "boards lessons" drawn up after the pattern of "Lancaster table" were used in missionary schools, particularly those of Marshman and May, printed books were also largely used. However, Stewarts schools at Burdwan, in connection with Church missionary society, made use of text-books and not board lessons.

✓ The missionaries realised that their schools would have a wide base among the people, only when the curriculum was relevant to the needs and wants of people. Therefore, in most of the schools established by the missionaries indigenous curriculum that was taught in the pathsalas was retained. Most of them included the local system of accountancy and forms of letters. May had compiled an arithmetic text-book based on indigenous methods, while the Serampore arithmetic included "all the Weights and Measures, and mode of reckoning in use among the natives, from Cowry to Rupees."<sup>23</sup> The history and geography that was taught to the students was centered on India. The geography books, for example, described first Bengal, then Asia and finally other parts of the world. Thus,

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22. N.L. Basak, op.cit., p.118-119.

23. Quoted in M.A. Laird, op.cit., p.88-89.



the curriculum in missionary schools was not divorced from the requirements of people. This is clearly indicated from the fact that they had become very popular with the people. The missionary schools were in great demand in most of the villages in Bengal. Marshman stated that within 12 months of the publication of Hint, i.e. by the end of 1817, as many as 45 schools were established within a circle of about 20 miles around Serampore. In these schools no less than 2,000 children received elements of knowledge in their own language. Village after village came forward to participate in the plan, as portrayed in Marshman's Hint.<sup>24</sup>

Similarly by 1819, the Baptists claimed that 7000 children received instruction in their schools, the Church Missionary Society claimed that 2500 pupils received instruction in their schools in the Peninsula and 1800 in Bengal. The London missionaries had 4000 children under instruction.<sup>25</sup> These figures indicate that missionary schools had become very popular in the Bengal Presidency. Many zamindars patronized missionary schools, e.g. in 1816, two village schools, one at Khorinam, and another at Nowpara in the Hooghly district were patronized by Raja of Burdwan and Biswambar Halidar, a rich zamindar of Hooghly. Apart from the zamindar even the Government supported some of the missionary schools e.g. the

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24. N.L. Basak, op.cit., p.78.

25. K. Ingham, op.cit., p.63.

Government granted Rs.600 p.m. to Rev. May's school at Chinsurah.

The missionary schools, unlike the tols and Madarsahs , kept the requirements of time. Their educational system catered to the needs of the people. By retaining the indigenous practices and curriculum existing in the pathsalas and gradually adding Western science and literatures in vernaculars, they did not appear alien to the people. And therefore, we find many people increasingly acquiring education in missionary schools.

In some of the missionary schools at Nadia, particularly the ones established by Church missionary in 1850 to 1852, craft and industrial training were imparted to the students. The efforts of the Church missionary society in the fifties to establish a craft and industrial school became fruitful with the establishment of industrial school at Chapra.<sup>26</sup>

The effort of the missionaries in imparting craft and industrial training in regular schools was in sharp contrast to the indigenous schools, craft and industrial training were not part of the curriculum. Knowledge in crafts were acquired through inheritance and practice. Craft and industrial training were completely neglected by the Mughal state, though it formed an important part of the economy. Thus, the missionaries by providing craft and industrial training in regular schools, played a pioneering role.

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26. Durgadas Majumdar, op.cit., p.345.

✓ Adam, in his Third Report, states that craft and industrial training were also provided in Orphanages. These Orphanages were opened by the missionaries. In the Berhampore Orphan Asylum, Adam states, that boys were instructed in English and Bengali languages. The curriculum consisted of reading, writing and arithmetic. Some books were also used e.g. the New-Testament. Apart from this, training in crafts was given to the students. They were taught to make bobbins, buggy-whips, shoes, snake-paper weights and so on.<sup>27</sup> Similarly at Burdwan, students in orphanages, were taught mechanical art such as weaving, tailoring and carpentry.

The missionary schools as well as orphanages, by emphasising on craft and industrial training, made it possible for the students to acquire vocational education in regular institutions. Students could acquire skill in any craft they wanted to learn. Earlier this was not possible and students could acquire skill in only those crafts that were permissible by their caste. The missionary schools and orphanages, on the other hand, did away with this practice by promoting great scope to those who wanted to acquire skill in crafts.

The missionary schools and orphanages by providing vocational education attracted many students to their schools. This was mainly because they provided necessary skills which enabled the pupils to earn a livelihood. It also throws light

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27. William Adam, op.cit., p.298-304.

on the fact that instructions in missionary schools were relevant to the people. In short it catered to their needs.

Most of the missionaries in the Bengal Presidency made use of the monitorial system in their schools. The Baptist pioneers like Rev. May and Stewart largely used monitorial experiments in different parts of Bengal, in the early decade of the nineteenth century. The monitorial system which is generally known as Bell and Lancaster system, was very popular in England as stated earlier. It helped the missionaries to provide cheap schools and thereby solved the problem of illiteracy. Generally the senior boys of the class helped the teachers in educating junior boys. It was thus possible to increase the number of schools with a limited supply of teachers.

Therefore, the monitorial system mainly aimed at overcoming the lack of qualified teachers. Stewart had successfully adopted the monitorial system in his schools at Burdwan. This enabled him to teach greater number of people with fewer teachers. This is proved by the fact that the Calcutta school society,<sup>28</sup> early in 1818, decided to start few regular Bengali schools on a new pattern, which deputed their superintendent to elect five Bengali teachers who had to undergo five months training at Burdwan under Captain Stewart. This is because Stewart "educated a great number of children with fewer

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28. The Calcutta school society was established in 1817.

teachers and at half the expense of old system."<sup>29</sup>

Though the monitorial system was generally used in missionary schools, it had certain limitations. It amounted to a system of drills and mechanism whereby large bodies of children could be made orderly and obedient, and by which students who knew little were made to help those who knew less. The missionaries did not rigidly follow the scheme and at times certain changes were made depending on the circumstances. We also find that this system was officially condemned in England in 1839. Though it was condemned in England, it was retained in missionary schools, especially in the Bengal Presidency, during this period. This is mainly because the missionaries constantly faced the problem of qualified teachers. Despite the fact that missionary employed indigenous teachers in their schools, this problem was acutely felt.

The other problem which the Missionary schools generally faced was regarding attendance. The factors responsible for poor attendance of the pupils in schools were poverty of the parents, natural calamities like rain, flood, disease like fever, cholera and so on. In fact, Carey had to abandon his school at Madnabati because "poverty of the native caused them frequently to take their children to work", specially during the planting and harvesting seasons.<sup>30</sup> It was also found

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29. N.L. Basak, op.cit., p.137.

30. K.P. Sen-Gupta, op.cit., p.107.

that most of the parents took away their children from schools as soon as they learnt reading, writing and arithmetic. Similarly, the recurrence of festivals, poojahs, marriages and so on also affected attendance in schools. Due to irregular attendance most of the students had forgotten all that they learned.

The missionaries tried to overcome this problem by firstly paying money to those students who attended classes regularly. Carey wrote that he was obliged to pay something to scholars to induce them to come.<sup>31</sup> Missionaries gave special prizes for regular attendance. May decided to pay teachers according to the number of students who attended their classes. This however led to some fraud practices, and to minimize it, May put emphasis on surprise inspection. He drew up a plan for regular and uniform methods of inspection, this was kept concealed so that the teacher would not be prepared for inspections. By this method some abuses were reformed. The Church Missionary Society employed physical means to enforce attendance. They employed a Hirkara [Peon] whose duty [was] to enforce attendance and search for those who were absent.

Prior to 1833, the missionaries did not pay much attention to higher education. They mainly concentrated on bringing changes in elementary schools. Despite not giving much attention to higher education, we find that in 1818, the Serampore missionaries established the Serampore college. This college was at the vertex of the educational system.

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31. Ibid., p. 108.

In August 1818, the Serampore missionaries submitted a prospectus of the college to the Marquis of Hastings, the Governor-General of India, and to the public in general, this was received with favour and approbation.

The primary object of the college was to promote the knowledge of Christianity among the people. Its purpose was to train Indians to replace Europeans completely as missionaries; and thereby create an indigenous church; its immediate aim was to give capable youth from their schools an opportunity to 'improve their minds to any extent which may appear desirable', by supplying them instruction in every branch of knowledge peculiarly suited to promote the welfare of India.

The college was open to persons belonging to all creeds. On 31 December 1834, there were in the college 10 Europeans and East-Indian students, 48 native Christian students; and 34 native students not Christians.<sup>32</sup> The European and East Indian students were taught Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Bengali and Mathematics. Students also attended lectures on Philosophy, Chemistry, and Ancient Ecclesiastical History. The native children were taught Sanskrit, Bengali and English. They were also taught Geography, Chemistry and Natural Philosophy, in vernacular i.e. Bengali.

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32, William Adam, op.cit., p.64-65. See also G. Howells, The Story of Serampore and Its College (1800), p.19. Also D. Potts, op.cit., p.131-33.

The Serampore missionaries laid emphasis on Sanskrit mainly because they believed that a thorough knowledge of Sanskrit would give the Indian Christian, a respected position in society. Similarly, it would enable them to learn the languages which were derived from Sanskrit. The Serampore missionaries were Orientalists, for they advocated that the students should be instructed in their mother-tongue. They firmly believed that it would be "vain to attempt enlightening a country through the medium of any language beside their own."<sup>33</sup> Provision was also made for students to acquire a complete knowledge of English language.

Thus, in Serampore college, the students were instructed in Oriental language and literature, as well as in Western sciences and literatures.

The second missionary college, which imparted higher education to the students, was the Bishaps College, founded by Bishop Middleton in 1820. The college was established at Shibpore. The main object of the college were to instruct the natives and other Christian youth in the doctrine and discipline of the Church. Secondly, it was meant for translating the scriptures, the liturgy and moral and religious tracts. The curriculum consisted of theology, Hebrew, Greek and Latin languages, History, both ancient and modern, ecclesiastical and civil, elements of philosophy and mathematics and so on. For

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33. K.P. Sen-Gupta, op.cit., p.114.



native students, the curriculum laid emphasis on Oriental languages.

Thus, prior to 1833, higher education was imparted in Serampore college and Bishop college. Though both these colleges laid emphasis on imparting the knowledge of Christianity, they even imparted Western sciences and literature. Some of the literatures were translated in vernaculars. Instructions were imparted in vernaculars as well as in English.<sup>34</sup> Like the elementary schools, the instruction in colleges were not divorced from the requirement of the people. We find that after 1833, the missionaries concentrated mainly on secondary schools and colleges, but then in most of the schools and colleges that were established, the medium of instruction was English and not vernaculars.

We may now turn our discussion to female education. As depicted in the earlier chapter, female education was very limited. It was by and large domestic in nature. It was the missionaries who gave impetus to female education establishing regular schools for girls. Therefore, they pioneered the cause of female education.

It would be important to know the motives which led the missionaries to take up female education. The motives for starting schools for girls was a mixture of humanitarian and evangelical zeal. In the early stages of missionary activity,

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34. Ibid., p.114-15. See also W. Adam, op.cit., p.28-29.

the former was given more importance. Similarly, an article published in 1822, in the Friend of India, not only announced the arrival of Miss Cooke and her initial efforts in education but it also summarised the benefits the Baptists anticipated from the operation of their own and other schools.<sup>35</sup> If women were taught to read the Bible, most of their problems presumably would be solved: they would, it was naively thought, become 'pious, chaste from principle, faithful and tender, and also affectionate both as consort and a mother'; and if widowed would enable to bear with patience and resignation, any hardship rather than sin against God by becoming Sati.

The content of the article published in 1822, clearly indicates that the missionaries wanted to genuinely improve the status of women. They wanted to build the personality of women and enable them to develop a critical perspective. The motives of the missionaries regarding female education, was, therefore, based on humanitarian principles, as well as evangelical.

The agencies by which the missionaries tried to promote female education were girls day schools, secondly orphans boarding establishments and thirdly domestic teaching arranged in the families of middle and higher classes.<sup>36</sup>

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35. Quoted in D. Pott, op.cit., p.40.

36. J.A. Richey, Selections from Education Record, Part II, 1840-59, p.41-42. See also K.K. Dutta, op.cit., p.125.

It is very difficult to say who took the initial step regarding the promotion of female education. The missionary movement for female education appears to have sprung up simultaneously in both Bengal and Madras presidencies in 1820. Prior to 1820 there were some schools established by missionaries, but they could not succeed mainly because of strong prejudice existing amongst the people. Despite the fact that they could not succeed, they did contribute to female education.

The earlier schools were begun by the Serampore missionaries in 1817. The classes of the boys and the girls were separated by a mat partition. The other school that was established for girls was by Rev. May of London Missionary Society. The school was established at Chinsurah in 1818. The number of scholars in May's schools were 14.<sup>37</sup> Besides girls, even adult women enrolled themselves in schools established by May. The curriculum consisted of reading, writing, spelling, grammar, arithmetic, needlework. Beside instruction in the Bible, in Rev. May's schools girls even learned to read Tables.

Though Serampore missionaries and missionary belonging to London Missionary Society contributed to female education their earlier effort were not very successful.

However, the first systematic plan for female education was taken by the Serampore Baptists. In 1819 they enlisted the support of several English ladies residing in Calcutta to form the Calcutta Female Juvenile Society. The main reason for

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37. N.L. Basak, op.cit., p.114.

forming this society was to provide education to girls in a more organized way. In 1832 the society changed its name to Calcutta Baptist Female Society for the Establishment and Support of Native Female Schools. Adam, in his First Report, states that the Thirteenth Report of this society indicates that there was one school at Calcutta, which contained 60 to 70 scholars; another at Chitpore containing 110 to 120 scholars, and one school was established at Sibpore with 20 native children. Generally, the schools established by this society were superintended by a committee of ladies. The teachers were native women, formerly in some instance scholars.<sup>38</sup>

Girls were taught reading, spelling and geography; much attention was given to religious instruction. In Sibpore school, English language was taught mainly to Christian girls. Thus, the curriculum in many ways was the continuation of that which existed in earlier missionary schools.

During this period William Ward was trying to arouse the interest of the ladies of England regarding promotion of female education in India. He published pamphlets giving accounts of the degraded position of Indian women. He attended the annual meeting of the British and Foreign school society in May 1821, and partly in consequence of his appeal regarding education of women in India, the society decided to send Miss Mary Ann Cooke to Bengal, to teach the girls. Miss Cooke arrived in November 1821, and as the funds of the Calcutta school society were

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38. William Adam, op.cit., p.46-47. See also J.A. Richey, op.cit., p.34-36.

inadequate, her services were engaged by the corresponding committee of Church Missionary Society.<sup>39</sup> In connection with this committee, Miss Cooke greatly expanded her educational work.

We find that by March 1823, she had established 15 schools with 300 girls. In the next year i.e. 1824, the number of schools increased from 15 to 24 and the number of pupil from 300 to 400. This expansion of schools under Miss Cooke indicates that it had become very popular among the people. It also throws light on the fact that despite strong prejudices, female education was gaining popularity.

The Corresponding Committee gradually found that students made rapid progress in Miss Cooke's schools. It was found that, on 23 June 1823, at the examination of Miss Cooke scholars, 110 girls acquitted themselves well in reading Bengali and needlework who 17 months earlier had no knowledge of the subject.<sup>40</sup>

The Corresponding Committee of Church Missionary Society relinquished the entire management and direction of female scholars to a committee of Ladies who formed themselves into a society called the Ladies Society for Native Female Education in Calcutta and its vicinity. The number of schools increased to 30 and that of the pupil to 600.

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39. K. Ingham, op.cit., p.86. See also William Adam, op.cit., p.46-47, M.A. Laird, op.cit., p.134-35.

40. K. Ingham, op.cit., p.90. See also J.A. Richey, op.cit., p.37.

The members of the societies realised that instead of further multiplying schools, it was necessary to concentrate them in one place. This was mainly because the missionaries faced the problem of procuring qualified female teachers. Also Miss Cooke and other European missionaries found it difficult to get girl "monitors" in sufficient numbers.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, with a limited number of qualified teachers, the missionaries decided to establish a few central girls schools instead of establishing many schools in all areas. Thus, we find a central school was established in 1828. The curriculum continued to remain the same, i.e. spelling, reading, writing, needle-work, etc. were taught. The knowledge of the Bible was also imparted to the students.

Though by the establishment of Central schools, the missionaries could overcome the problem of teachers to an extent, they were faced by another problem i.e. centralization decreased the number of students in school, the guardian were not willing to allow their girls to travel openly outside their locality. The missionaries believed that the fall in the number of female students was an important problem, but then it was compensated by advantages of continuous supervision.

During this period, day schools for girls were established at all main mission stations in Bengal: by the London Missionary Society at Chinsura and Berhampore as well as in and around

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41. K.P. Sen-Gupta, op.cit., p.111.

Calcutta, by the Baptists at Katwa, Suri, Dacca, Chittagong and Jessore; and by Church Missionary Society at Burdwan, Kalna, Bankura and Krishnanagar.<sup>42</sup>

Apart from the day schools established by the missionaries, they also established orphanages. Most of these orphanages were open to both boys and girls. Adam, in his Third Report, gives a detailed account of Orphanages established by the missionaries. He states that in the district of Moorshedabad an English Orphan girls and Infant school was established. Rev. Paterson of London Missionary Society instructed pupils gratuitously. The number of pupils in his orphanage was 13.<sup>43</sup> These students belonged to various castes. Apart from instructing the pupils in 3 Rs. the knowledge of Bible was also imparted. Scholars wrote their lessons on slate and on papers.

Most of these orphanages were superintended by the wives of the missionaries. Orphanages opened by the Church of Scotland in Calcutta however were the most important.<sup>44</sup>

The third important agency for spreading female education was "domestic education" or the Zenana system. The Zenana system was encouraged by missionaries, for it provided education to middle and higher classes. Womenfolk of respectable families generally did not go to day-schools opened by missionaries.

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42. M.A. Laird, op.cit., p.135.

43. William Adam, op.cit., p.296.

44. K.K. Dutta, op.cit., p.125.

They received instruction in their homes by visiting teachers. In order that they might conduct the system with success, Eurasian and English tutors were given necessary training in the Normal school attached to the Central school of the Ladies Society. The Zenana system conducted by Rev. Fordyce and Mrs. Mullens succeeded in getting access to some of the aristocratic families of Calcutta. Miss Toogood of the Normal school was well acquainted with Bengali, she became the first successful lady teacher under Zenana mission. She instructed the ladies in their respective home in reading, writing, letter composition and ordinary accounts besides scriptural teaching. Regular examinations were held behind the screen or purdah. Suitable rewards were given to those who were successful in the examination.<sup>45</sup>

The main advantage of this system was that even the grown up ladies could acquire the rudiments of learning without going to school. For many years the Zenana system was popular in Calcutta.

Therefore, the three agencies through which the Christian Missionaries promoted female education, helped them in gaining support from the natives. Despite gaining support from the people, the missionaries faced many problems. As depicted in the third chapter, the strong prejudice against female education always proved to be a source of obstacle. Similarly, the

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45. N.L. Basak, op.cit., p. 145-46.



emphasis on imparting the knowledge of the Bible made the people very suspicious. Many parents feared that their daughters, by going to missionary schools, would be converted to Christianity. Though the missionaries constantly faced these problems, they continued to expand their activities, regarding female education. Some of the missionaries were supported by the Bengali intelligentsia e.g. Raja Radhakanta Deb supported Miss Cooke in her educational activities.

Though the missionaries greatly contributed to female education, their activities remained confined to the lower sections of society. Adam, in his Third Report, states that he saw 175 girls in four female schools in the district of Burdwan in 1838. Of these one was Muhammadan, 36 were either daughters of Christian parents and Orphans supported by missionaries and 138 Hindus. Of the Hindu girls 58 were Bagdis, 18 Muchis, 17 Bauris, 17 Domes, 12 Haries, 6 Vaishnana, 6 Tantis, 2 Chandas, 1 Kurmis and 1 Baiti.<sup>46</sup> The various incentives which the missionaries gave to the students e.g. rewards to successful candidates, prizes for regular attendance, consisting of money and cloth, attracted many lower caste girls to female school. Even though among the higher caste, female education was not popular, we do find occasional references to girls from the Brahman caste acquiring education. Most of the girls of higher caste as portrayed earlier, received education domestically.

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46. Quoted in K.K. Dutta, op.cit., p.130. See also William Adam, op.cit., p.305.

Thus, the missionaries played a pioneering role regarding female education. They helped in breaking the age old prejudice against female education. Despite their efforts being limited, they did lay the foundation of female education during our period.

The ideas imparted to the pupils in the missionary schools were religious as well as secular. The Bible was taught in all elementary schools as well as higher educational institutions, established by the missionaries. In fact, the Bible was translated in many Indian languages, particularly Bengali. This indicates that like the traditional educational institutions, the missionary schools also emphasised on religious education. Many scholars failed to examine this similarity. Apart from emphasising on religious aspects, secular aspects were also emphasised. This is evident from the fact that students were imparted the knowledge of Western sciences and literature, and even traditional subjects were taught.

The section of the society which benefited from missionary education were generally from the lower caste. This is mainly because the missionaries imparted education in vernaculars, i.e. Bengali, the spoken language of the people. The curriculum in their schools was relevant to their requirements. Like the indigenous vernacular schools which gained popularity among the lower caste, the missionary schools also acquired a wide base amongst them. Also, the missionaries from the very beginning

were interested in undertaking their educational activities among these classes and therefore they concentrated on vernacular schools. They decided to bring changes in these schools i.e. vernacular schools. However, it is interesting to note that in some districts, the Brahmans increasingly acquired education in missionary schools as we shall indicate below.

In his Third Report, Adam states that in the district of Beerbhoom, the number of scholars was 57, of whom 10 were the children of native Christian parents and 47 were Hindus. The caste of the Hindu scholars were <sup>47</sup> -

<u>Brahman</u>	- 23,	<u>Vaishnava</u>	- 2,	<u>Vaidya</u>	- 2
<u>Suvarnabanik</u>	- 8,	<u>Kayastha</u>	- 6,	<u>Sadgop</u>	- 2
<u>Gandhabanik</u>	- 1,	<u>Muchi</u>	- 1,	<u>Dhoba</u>	- 1

These figures given by Adam clearly indicate that the Brahmans, in the district of Beerbhoom, largely benefited from missionary education. It also indicates that the Brahmans found the education received in Missionary schools more useful than theirs. They therefore increasingly acquired it. They found their own educational institutions incapable of meeting the requirements of time. The shift in emphasis from traditional educational institutions to missionary institutions by the Brahmans and other higher caste, to an extent, also explains the decline in traditional education.

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47. Ibid., p.300.

It would be a mere exaggeration to call the missionary schools a replica of the traditional pathsalas. Though they retained indigenous practices, they introduced certain changes which made them superior in many ways to indigenous schools. By introducing printed books in place of manuscripts, an efficient system of supervision, of holding regular examinations, the introduction of Western science and literature in vernacular and by giving rewards to able students, they not only improved the quality of vernacular education, but also laid the foundation of modern elementary schools.

In fact, the missionaries had brought Adam's suggestions i.e. encouraging vernacular education into practice. Like Adam, they had realized that introduction of an alien system of education would be fallacious and agreed with him that the best medium to impart knowledge would be in the mother-tongue of the people. Therefore, the missionaries encouraged Bengali.

The successful application of vernacular language as the medium of instruction in missionary schools also showed the Government that what Adam had suggested i.e. encouragement of vernacular education, could be applied in practice. It is however interesting to note that though the Government was aware of the success of Missionary Schools, it did not promote them. Instead the Government decided to promote English education by the Resolution of 7 March 1835. However, the policy of the Government gradually changed.<sup>48</sup> The Educational

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48. For details about Government policies see chapter V.

Despatch of 1854 clearly stated that vernaculars as well as English were to be encouraged at secondary stage.

Despite not receiving much help from the Government and constantly facing opposition from the people, they succeeded in establishing schools which represented a synthesis of Western and indigenous education. Like their successful educational experiments in England, i.e. providing cheap schools to the people, they provided similar kind of schools to the people in the Presidency of Bengal. In fact, the credit of diffusing education among the people should go to the missionaries during our period.

However, the greatest contribution the missionaries made was in laying the foundation of female education not only in Bengal Presidency but in the whole of India. Here also, they faced strong opposition from the people. Despite this obstacle, they continued to expand female education and thus break the deep rooted prejudice of the people. In fact they made the people realise that their prejudice had no base. Many enlightened Indians like Rammohan Roy and Rakhakant Dev, supported the missionaries in their promotion of female education.

Similarly by establishing printing press in Bengal Presidency, the missionaries did a great service in expanding Bengali language and literature. Many books, journals and

newspaper<sup>49</sup> were printed and circulated among the people. In short, literature was within the reach of common man. Books on various subjects covering from Western sciences and literatures to traditional subjects were printed mostly in Bengali and were greatly used in Missionary schools. By using printed books in their schools they cultivated the interest in reading among the people. We find that many of the Bengalis who had the benefit of education in missionary schools also began publishing books and journals in Bengali.

Thus, the encouragement given to vernacular education by the missionaries challenged the traditional Brahmanical and Persian education. As portrayed in the earlier chapter, they witnessed a gradual decline due to want of patronage and also because people belonging to the upper caste e.g. Brahmans, who had the benefit of traditional education gradually began to acquire Bengali or vernacular education. This shift from

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49. The Serampore missionaries were pioneers in publishing the first monthly Bengali Magazine, the Digdarsan or "Magazine for Indian Youth" in April 1818. The main object of the magazine was to stimulate a spirit of inquiry and diffuse information among the people. It contained various articles e.g. articles on steam boats, Newton's discovery of the Law of Gravitation, metal, Botany of India, accounts of Ancient and Modern nations, etc. Magazines, journals became popular in Bengal Presidency and the Calcutta school book society took a thousand copies for using as school text-books. The Serampore Missionaries also took the lead in publishing newspaper e.g. Samachar Darpan or the Mirror of News was published in May 1818. This paper contained useful information on the appointment of judges, collectors and so on. Like Digdarsan, Samachar Darpan also became popular among the people.

acquiring traditional education to vernacular, explains the popularity of vernacular education as well as its importance being realised by the rising Bengali intelligentsia. The popularity of vernacular education also indicates that it was open to all sections of society. The common notion held by scholars that vernacular education was not popular among the higher caste or Bhadrolok cannot be accepted. Infact, in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, educated Bengalis belonging to this class, increasingly employed Bengali as the chief medium to express their ideas to the people. Gradually its significance as stated earlier was realized by the Company officials and therefore, the Educational Despatch of 1854 clearly stated that vernacular education was to be encouraged at the secondary stage of education.

## CHAPTER - V

### THE EAST INDIA COMPANY'S POLICY TOWARDS THE INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

During our period the East India Company was busy fighting wars, signing treaties and settling debts and so it could not pay much attention to education. In fact, the educational policy of the Company was marked by series of experiments, which finally culminated in the passing of the Educational Despatch of 1854. This Despatch on the one hand decided the fate of indigenous education and on the other hand laid the foundation of modern or western system of education.

Before examining the educational policy of the Company, it is essential to know the various forces which operated during our period and which influenced its formulation. Foremost among them was the philosophy of the period. It was the Orientalist philosophy, which influenced the educational policy in the initial stages and later it was the utilitarian philosophy which got the upper hand. Among the other forces were the Christian missionaries and the Bengali intelligentsia, who were considerably responsible for the shape that the educational policy of the Company ultimately took during our period. A study of these forces would also indicate that the Company's policy was not formulated in isolation. In fact, it clearly reflected the forces of the period. Perhaps the



varying influence of each one of these forces which were dominant during a particular period did not enable the Company to formulate a uniform educational policy. It was subject to significant changes e.g. the early educational policy was influenced by Orientalist philosophy and later by the missionaries and the utilitarians. This chapter proposes to highlight the various forces mentioned here which ultimately shaped the educational policy of the East India Company. Needless to mention here that its policy towards Indigenous education was an inherent part of its general policy towards education in the Bengal Presidency during our period.

The mid eighteenth century marked an important development in the political history of the East India Company. From a trading organization it became the rulers of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. The political authority was acquired not by the battle of Plassey, but by the treaty of Allahabad in 1765. By this treaty, the Company was given the Diwani (or the right of collecting revenue) of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Gradually the grant of the Nizamat right (i.e. defence and criminal justice) made the Company the virtual rulers of these regions. In fact, this political development, had far reaching consequences, for now the Company had to formulate its policy, not as a trading organization but as rulers of the Bengal Presidency. In formulating its political, economic and educational policy, the East India Company was influenced by the spirit of the age.

The eighteenth century was the Age of Enlightenment, an age of discovery, motivated by the idea of recovering the missing links of civilization; it was an age that displayed a perfect equipoise between reverence for the past and pride for its neo-classical civilization. To the newly discovered East i.e. India, its attitude was one of wonder and discovery, even awe and reverence. Scholars who were genuinely interested in discovering the Asian civilization and promoting it were known as Orientalists. They were the products of the eighteenth century world of rationalism, classicism, and cosmopolitanism.<sup>1</sup>

The Orientalists influenced the policy of the Company from 1765 to 1813. In fact, their influence continued till 1830. Under its influence the East India Company did not bring drastic changes in social, economic and educational fields. They strongly believed that any hasty innovations in these fields would produce violent reactions in the country. Therefore, they decided to conserve the traditional practices or maintain the status-quo. Western ideas and practices were to be introduced cautiously and gradually. Regarding education they offered a plan of synthesis and indigenation, which they considered to be the only valid means of regenerating India. The diffusion of Western knowledge was a proposition involving cultural transfusion and for the transfusion to be successful and creative, the veins of native culture could not be allowed to die.

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1. David Kopf, British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance, p.5.

Therefore, the Orientalists felt that the scheme of modernising education would depend on the native foundations.<sup>2</sup>

Under its influence, Warren Hasting, the Governor General of Bengal, laid the foundation of Calcutta Madarsah in 1781. The main object of this institution was "to qualify the sons of Muhammeden gentlemen for responsible and lucrative offices in the state, even at that date largely monopolized by the Hindus."<sup>3</sup> The cost of this institution was privately defrayed by the Governor-General, but after two years he was reimbursed and the institution was handed over to the Government.

The curriculum in the Madarsah consisted of natural philosophy, theology, law, astronomy, geometry, arithmetic, logic, rhetoric, oratory, and grammar.<sup>4</sup> In fact, the curriculum in the Calcutta Madarsah retained its earlier character. The students were arranged in five classes, they received stipends from Rs.6 to Rs.15, according to the class in which they were enrolled.

Like the Mughal Nawabs and the nobility, the East India Company under Warren Hastings, patronized the Madarsah by

2. H.H. Wilson was a member of the General Committee of Public Instruction. He belonged to the Orientalist group. He believed that Westernization of India should follow a path of indigenation through native media, particularly classical languages, Sanskrit and Arabic. These languages should form an important part of curriculum. For details see, K.K. Chatterjee, English Education in India, p.135-37.

3. H. Sharp, Selections from Educational Records, Part 1, 1781-1839, p.7.

4. Ibid., p.30.

granting land of an estimated value of Rs.29,000 a year.

Apart from establishing the Calcutta Madarsah, Hastings also helped the foundation of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784. The main objective of the Society was to make available English translations of Oriental classics. The resulting journals, Asiatick Researches, became popular among the European scholars. Five volumes of the Researches were published by 1797 ✓

✓ The first President of this Society was Sir William Jones. His contribution to the Society was very outstanding. His 10 Presidential discourses to the Society were epoch making in the history of Western knowledge of the East.<sup>5</sup> He explored the language, literature, philosophy and science and laid them open to the scholars of the whole world. His knowledge of Sanskrit enabled him to translate many of the original texts e.g. the Law of Manu. This work of Jones was later developed by Thomas Colebrooke,<sup>6</sup> who finished the work begun by Jones earlier.

✓ William Jones was assisted by Nathaniel Halhed and Charles Wilkins. Halhed not only mastered the traditional or classical language but also vernaculars. In 1778 he published the Modern Bengali Grammar which greatly aided the Bengali language.

C. Wilkins, like Jones, had mastered the Sanskrit language and translated the Bhagavad Gita and Mahabharata.

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5. A. Mervyn Davies, Warren Hastings - Maker of British India, p.424.

6. H.T. Colebrooke developed the Sanskrit department of Fort William College. He had mastered the Sanskrit language and published many works in it. His important work was the compilation of the Sanskrit dictionary in 1808.

Thus, the Asiatic Society, founded by Warren Hastings greatly contributed to Oriental language and literature. ✓

Like Warren Hastings, Jonathan Duncan, the Resident at Banaras, laid the foundation of Banaras Sanskrit College in 1792. Like the Calcutta Madarsah, the curriculum in the Sanskrit College was similar to the one existing in the tols. The course consisted of theology, ritual, medicine, music, arts, grammar, prosody, sacred lexicography, mathematics, metaphysics, logic, law, history, ethics, philosophy and poetry.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, the establishment of the two classical institutions i.e. Calcutta Madarsah and Banaras Sanskrit College, clearly reflects, that the educational policy of the Company, was influenced by Orientalism. Also the contributions of the Asiatic Society bears testimony to this fact. Most of the scholars who were associated with the Asiatic Society e.g. William Jones, H.T. Colebrooke, N. Halhed, not only contributed to classical and vernacular literatures but showed keen interest in Indian civilization. They conducted detailed researches and unanimously agreed that India had a glorious cultural heritage. They also portrayed that in ancient times, Indian art, architecture, literature, government and so on, were highly developed. In fact, Indian civilization, according to them had surpassed the other civilizations. Also the notion of "Golden Age" in

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7. H. Sharp, op.cit., p.31.

Indian history originated in their writings and accounts.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, the writings of these scholars also reflected the spirit of the age i.e. Orientalism.

Apart from the philosophy of the period, the Company's educational policy was influenced by the practical requirements of the time. The Company officials realized that without the support of the people, particularly the influential sections of society, they would not be able to consolidate their newly acquired power. Being alien to the country, they realized that their dominion depended not only on their own military power, but also to a large extent on tolerance and confidence of the upper classes. Therefore, the Company officials decided to maintain the status-quo. They also needed the support of educated and influential Indians in subordinate posts in the administration. Therefore, the reasons of administrative expediency compelled the Company to encourage traditional education. This is clearly reflected in Jonathan Duncan's letter to Lord Cornwallis on 1 January 1792. In this letter he stated:

"The second principal advantage that may be derived from this Institution will be felt in its effects more immediately by the natives, though not without being participated in by the British subjects, who are to rule over

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8. William Jones in 1786, for the first time seriously considered that India's Golden period as a culture lay in a remote unchartered period in world history. For details see, David Kopf, op.cit., p.35-40.

them, by preserving and disseminating a knowledge of the Hindoo Law and providing a nursery of future doctors and expounders thereof to assist the European judges in the due, regular and uniform administration of its genuine letter and spirit to the body of the people."<sup>9</sup>

The practical requirements of the period, as well as, the philosophy of the age, also led to the establishment of Fort William College or the "Oxford of the East" on 10 July 1800. It was established by Marquis Wellesley for training young English officers into efficient devoted civil servants of British empire in India.

The students belonging to this college were taught Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit and Vernacular languages. They were also taught Islamic and Hindu Laws. Apart from this, students were instructed in the English laws, political economy, world geography and mathematics.<sup>10</sup> The sciences that were taught were natural history, Botany, Chemistry and Astronomy. Thus, the courses taught in the Fort William College presented a synthesis of indigenous and Western system of education.

The students were instructed for three years, each year being divided into four quarters. Public examination in native languages were held annually and qualified students received liberal and cash rewards. In order to further encourage the

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9. H. Sharp, op.cit., p.11.

10. David Kopf, op.cit., p.48.

students, Wellesley made it clear that: "promotion in the civil service shall be necessary result of merit publicly approved according to the discipline and institutions of the college."<sup>11</sup>

He also authorized that a sum of Rs.300 would be given every month to the students during their three years course of study. This clearly indicates that Wellesley genuinely wanted to promote Orientalism. He also assigned Rs.5000 (£ 625) to students who knew Sanskrit or Persian language and who passed difficult examination in Islamic and Hindu laws. Similarly, a student who was proficient in any Indian language was given Rs.1,000.<sup>12</sup> It is interesting to note that the incentives given to the students in the Fort William College was in sharp contrast to the traditional tols which failed to give any encouragement to their students. The lack of encouragement could also be a vital factor in hindering literary development during the early periods.

Some of the scholars associated with Fort William College greatly contributed to the classical as well as vernacular literatures. In 1803 Gilchrist had completed the translation of Aesop's Fables into Urdu, Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit, Bengali and English. After Gilchrist left Fort William, he was replaced by William Hunter in the Persian department. Hunter published

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11. Ibid., p.49.

12. Ibid., p.96-97.



works in Urdu, an Hindustani English dictionary in two volumes in 1809. The Persian department was very popular in the Fort William College. Similarly, H.T. Colebrooke who developed the Sanskrit department of the college wrote Hitopadesha in 1804. It was published with the assistance of Carey. This work was a translation based on the collation of six manuscripts. In fact, his work constituted the first attempt to employ the press in multiplying copies of Sanskrit works with a perfect Devangari syllabary. In 1810 Colebrooke also published, "The translation of two Treatises on the Hindu Law of Inheritance."<sup>13</sup> The two treatises were meant to assist graduates who were to serve as judicial officers in Bengal.

The Vernacular Department was placed under the Baptist missionary William Carey. As portrayed in the earlier chapter,<sup>14</sup> Carey had mastered the Bengali language. In 1806 Carey published the first systematic Sanskrit grammar. He divided his works into five books. The first dealt with modification of Sanskrit letters when joined. The second concerned itself with the rules of declinable and undeclinable words. In the third book, Sanskrit verbs were conjugated and then described in their derivative function. Carey discussed and examined Sanskrit Grammar, particularly nouns in the next book. The final book was devoted to syntax and to exercises for students. In the appendix an

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13. Ibid., p.88-89.

14. See chapter IV.

exhaustive alphabetic list of Sanskrit roots were given.

The association of Carey with Fort William College was very important because on the one hand it helped the College and on the other, it helped Serampore Missionaries to which Carey belonged. The entire Vernacular Department was dependent on him. This is because Carey had a thorough knowledge of the Bengali language which helped him to translate many useful works into Bengali. The Serampore Mission not only got financial help but also benefited from utilizing the fruits of the college for the ultimate purpose of mass evangelization. The appointment of Carey in this college also improved the relation between the missionaries and the Government which was strained earlier.<sup>15</sup>

Most of the scholars who contributed to classical as well as vernacular literatures were assisted by the rising Bengali intelligentsia. They assisted in compiling books, selecting materials for readers and also assisted the professors in teaching. For example, Carey was assisted by Mrtyunjay Vidyalankar, who was his Chief Pundit in the Bengali department. Apart from assisting Carey, he himself compiled a book in Bengali. His earliest work was Batris Simhasan (32 Thrones) which he wrote in 1802.<sup>16</sup> This was a translation from Sanskrit to Bengali. Also Ramram Basu helped Carey in translating sections of the Bible into Bengali. Like Vidyalankar he wrote Pratapaditya

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15. See Chapter IV.

16. David Kopf, op.cit., p.113.

Charitra (historical sketch of Raja Pratapaditya) which was also published in 1802. This work of Ramram Basu was also considered as the first piece of original prose in Bengali.

Thus, the establishment of Fort William College greatly contributed to classical as well as vernacular literatures. It also made printing and publishing in the classical and vernacular possible in India on a large scale.

Therefore, the educational institutions established by Warren Hastings and Marquis Wellesley promoted classical education. Vernacular education on the other hand was promoted by the missionaries. Despite the encouragement given to classical education we do find that between 1765 to 1813, the efforts of the Company was like a drop in the ocean. The gradual decline, which the traditional education witnessed, as a result of political change i.e. from the Nawabs to the East India Company, continued to be manifested during this period. The Company officials did very little to check this phenomena. In fact, Lord Minto, who was the Governor-General of India, from 1806 to 1813, clearly stated in his Minute, dated 6 March 1811, that classical education was gradually declining. He wrote in his Minute that:

"It is a common remark that science and literature are in progressive state of decay among the natives of India. From every inquiry which I have been enabled to make on this interesting subject, that remark appears to me but too well founded. The number of the learned is not only diminished, but the circle of learning even among those who still devote themselves to it appears to be considerably

contracted. The abstract sciences are abandoned, polite literature neglected and no branch of learning cultivated but what is connected with the peculiar religious doctrines of the people. The immediate consequence of this state of things is the disuse, and even actual loss, of many valuable books; and it is to be apprehended that, unless Government interpose with a fostering hand, the revival of letters may shortly become hopeless from a want of books or of persons capable of explaining them."<sup>17</sup>

Therefore, Lord Minto stated that greater emphasis should be laid in promoting classical education. Being an admirer of Oriental literature he also felt that its cultivation and promotion would be useful to the Western nation.

Thus, while the Governor-General and the Company officials were promoting classical education, Charles Grant, who was a servant of the Company in India, and later a Director and Member of the British Parliament, criticized the educational policy of the Company. He not only criticized the educational policy but also had a very low opinion about Indian society. His close association with the missionaries in India e.g. T. Thomas, the Baptist Missionary of Calcutta, clearly convinced him that Christianity alone would regenerate India. In 1790, he returned to England, where he established close relation with the evangelical movement. This movement was led by Wilberforce of the Clapham Sect. Wilberforce also shared the same views of Grant. In fact, Charles Grant and the Evangelical under Wilberforce proved to be a powerful challenge to the Company's

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17. H. Sharp, op.cit., p.19.

educational policy.

In 1792, Grant wrote a treatise entitled Observations on the state of society among the Asiatic subjects of Great Britain, particularly with respect to Morals; and on means of Improving it. In this treatise he enumerated the various evils which beset Indian society. The main cause of these evils according to Grant was the ignorance of the people, which could be removed, by spreading Christianity and disseminating the science and literature of Europe. In his treatise he stated that:

"The true cure of darkness, is the introduction of light. The Hindoos err, because they are ignorant; and their errors have never fairly been laid before them. The communication of our light and knowledge to them, would prove the best remedy for their disorders; and this remedy is proposed, from a full conviction that if judiciously and patiently applied, it would have great and happy effects upon them, effects honourable and advantageous for us."<sup>18</sup>

Regarding the medium through which sciences and literature were to be imparted, Grant suggested that English should be adopted as the medium of instruction. He said:

"There are two ways of making this communication: the one is, by the medium of the languages of those countries; the other is by the medium of our own. In general, when foreign teachers have proposed to instruct the inhabitants of any country, they have used the vernacular tongue of that people, for a natural and necessary reason, that they could not hope to make any other mean

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18. H. Sharp, op.cit., p.81.

of communication intelligible to them. This is not our case in respect of our Eastern dependencies. They are our own, we have possessed them long, many Englishmen reside among the natives, our language is not unknown there, and it is practicable to diffuse it more widely. The choice, therefore, of either mode, lies open to us; and we are at liberty to consider which is entitled to preference..... The acquisition of a foreign language is, to men of cultivated minds, a matter of no great difficulty.... Superior in point of ultimate advantage does the employment of the English language appear; and upon this ground, we give a preference to that mode proposing here that the communication of our knowledge shall be made by the medium of our own language..."<sup>19</sup>

Thus, the suggestions made by Grant in his treatise challenged the educational policy of the Company, which on the other hand was determined, to promote education through classical language i.e. Sanskrit and Arabic. His treatise helped in educating contemporary English opinion on the subject of education and making Parliament realize the urgent necessity of organizing the education of Indian people. In fact, the missionaries also used the treatise as a basis for asking the Parliament to promote education and allow Christian missionaries to work in Company's territories.

Grant, being the member of the Parliament and also the Chairman of the East India Company in 1805, could exercise a lot of influence in Parliament regarding the affairs of the Company. Therefore, when the Charter of the Company was

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19. Ibid., p.81-82.

renewed in 1813, an educational clause was added to it, which formed the 43rd section of the Charter. It stated that:

"It shall be lawful for the Governor-General-in-Council to direct that out of any surplus which may remain of the rent, revenues, and profits arising from the said territorial acquisitions, after defraying the expenses of the military, civil, and commercial establishments and paying the interest of the debt, in manner hereinafter provided, a sum of not less than one lac of rupees in each year shall be set apart and applied to the revival and improvement of literature and the encouragement of the learned natives of India, and for the introduction and promotion of a knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories in India."<sup>20</sup>

Thus, the educational clause of the Charter Act of 1813, marked an important development in the history of the East India Company. For the first time the Company was made to take the responsibility of education. In fact, it became lawful for the Governor-General-in-Council to promote education by setting apart, a fixed sum of money. It is also interesting to note that whereas the Company was made to take the responsibility of education in India, in England, education was still not regarded as the state subject. It was only in 1833 that Government took interest in education for the first time and made an annual grant of £ 20,000 to aid schools maintained by Charity organizations.<sup>21</sup>

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20. Ibid., p.22.

21. D.P. Sinha, op.cit., p.xviii.

Despite the Charter Act, we find very little changes in the educational policy of the Company. The Company continued the policy of encouraging Sanskrit and Arabic studies. It could do very little for education because it was heavily pre-occupied with the Pindaris and the Marathas. In fact, during this period it was missionaries who actively contributed in promoting education particularly vernacular education. In fact, the Charter Act had inaugurated a new era for the missionaries. They could carry on their activities in the Company's Dominions. Perhaps we can also say that after the Charter Act was passed it was the missionaries who actively promoted education.

However, the policy of the Company gradually changed. By the Resolution dated 17 July 1823, the Governor-General-in-Council appointed a General Committee of Public Instruction for the Bengal Presidency. The grant of one lakh of rupees provided by the Charter was also placed at its disposal. The Committee consisted of ten members. They were W.H. Harington, who was the President of the Committee; H.H. Wilson was the Secretary; J.P. Larkins; W.B. Martin; W.B. Bayley; H.T. Prinsep; J.C. Sutherland; A. Stirling; H. Shakespeare; H. Mackenzie.<sup>22</sup> Most of the members of the Committee were Orientalist, some of them were also students of Fort William College e.g. H.T. Prinsep; A. Stirling; J.C. Sutherland and H. Mackenzie, who had already

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22. Ibid., p.54. See also S. Nurullah and J.P. Naik, op.cit., p.53, also H. Sharp, op.cit., p.57.



imbibed the Oriental tradition of the College.

Thus, most of the members being Orientalist, it was natural, on their part to promote classical education. In fact, the educational policy of the Committee was a continuation of the earlier policy of the Company, i.e. promoting traditional learning. Between 1823 and 1833, the Committee reorganized the Calcutta Madrasah and the Banaras Sanskrit College. A College was also established in Calcutta in 1824, known as Sanskrit College. The main aim of the College was to promote Sanskrit learning. Though English classes were attached to the college, it was not given much importance. Two more Oriental Colleges were established at Agra and Delhi.

Apart from establishing traditional colleges, the Committee encouraged the printing and publication of Sanskrit and Arabic books on a large scale. It employed Oriental scholars to translate English books containing useful knowledge into the oriental classical languages.

However, the educational policy of the Committee aroused considerable opposition, especially among the enlightened Indians like Raja Rammohun Roy. The Raja opposed the establishment of Sanskrit College at Calcutta. In a letter to Lord Amherst, the Governor-General of India, dated 11 December 1823, Rammohan Roy brought to the Government's notice the outdated policy of the Committee. He stated in his letter that the Committee by encouraging:

"The Sangsrit language, so difficult that almost a life time is necessary for its

perfect acquisition, is well known to have been for ages a lamentable check on the diffusion of knowledge; and the learning concealed under this almost impervious veil is far from sufficient to reward the labour of acquiring it. But if it were thought necessary to perpetuate this language for the sake of the portion of the valuable information it contains, this might be much more easily accomplished by other means than the establishment of a new Sangscrit College... If the plan now adopted be followed, it will completely defeat the object proposed; since no improvement can be expected from inducing youngmen to consume a dozen of years of the most valuable period of their lives in acquiring the niceties of the Byakurun or Sangscrit Grammar."<sup>23</sup>

Therefore, he suggested that since the objective of the Government was to improve education, it should promote a more liberal and enlightened system of instruction. The curriculum should consist of mathematics, philosophy, chemistry and other useful sciences. He also stated in his letter that English should be the medium of education. Thus, Rammohan felt that Western education should be encouraged because it was the key to the scientific and democratic thoughts of modern West.

Though Rammohan Roy's suggestion were not accepted, we do find that during this period the rising Bengali intelligentsia constantly challenged the educational policy of the Committee. In fact, like the Christian missionaries, the Bengali intelligentsia, gradually became an important force in

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23. H. Sharp, op.cit., p.100.

influencing the educational policy of the Company.

Most of the Bengali intelligentsia in their individual capacities had already laid the foundation of educational institutions, which promoted English education. In fact, Rammohan Roy had already taken the lead in this field. As early as 1816-17, he had already established Anglo-Hindu school at Suripara. The main objective of the school was to impart English education. The entire cost of the school was borne by him. Gradually the school had become very popular. It was estimated that 200 children attended the school. This initial success further gave incentive to Rammohan who established the Anglo-Hindu School in 1822. He was also the first to take up the initial proposal for establishing the Hindu College or the Mahavidyalaya. This College was founded in 1817.<sup>24</sup> The aim of this College was also to promote the knowledge of Western sciences in English.

The establishment of <sup>the</sup> Hindu College was very important because it clearly indicated that English was gaining popularity among the Bengali intelligentsia. Most of the Hindus of Calcutta liberally subscribed to it, e.g. they gave a sum of Rs.1,51,179<sup>25</sup> for laying its foundation. It is interesting to note that while the Company was reluctant to encourage English education, the

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24. For Rammohan Roy, see J. Nag, Raja Rammohan Roy. See also U.N. Ball, Rammohan Roy - A Study of his life, work and thoughts, p.156-58.

25. D.P. Sinha, op.cit., p.87.

Bengali intelligentsia actively promoted it and also laid the foundation of primary as well as higher educational institutions which laid emphasis on English education.

These developments not only influenced the educational policy of the Company but had an important bearing on indigenous education. Most of the Bengali intelligentsia, who were the beneficiaries of indigenous education, particularly classical education increasingly acquired English education. This shift in emphasis from traditional to English education clearly indicated that classical education, had lost its earlier value. It could no longer meet the requirements of the time. In fact, it also could no longer meet the challenges of the new education i.e. English; which not only conferred practical advantages but also diffused scientific and liberal ideas, and which found ready acceptance among the people. Traditional education, on the other hand, continued to lay emphasis on religious aspects. In other words it had become outdated. Even some of the conservatives like Radhakanta Dev, who wanted to conserve and promote their tradition, supported the cause of English education. Perhaps like the others, they had also realized that traditional education had become obsolete and failed to cater to their needs.

Moreover, some of the Bengali intelligentsia, during this period owed their status to wealth rather than caste. By increasingly associating themselves with East India Company's

administration, in different capacities<sup>26</sup> and also by investing in commerce, a lot of wealth was acquired by them. This determined their social position in society. Therefore, traditional or classical education was of no value to them because it continued to emphasise on the caste system. It was natural for the rising Bengali intelligentsia, to acquire English education, for it held lot of promise to them. The acquisition of English education became the royal road to a secure jobs in the Company as well as it enabled the people to gain the respectable status of babus. Thus, the Bengali intelligentsia, increasingly demanded English education because of its social and economic significance.

Though the Bengali intelligentsia could not actively formulate the educational policy of the Company, it did act as a very significant force during our period. In fact, they constantly opposed the Orientalist policy pursued by the Company. Perhaps later without their support the Company could not have introduced English education successfully in India. Thus, the intelligentsia played a crucial role in shaping the educational policy of the Company.

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26. Nabakrishna was appointed munshi to the East India Company. In this capacity he soon built a large fortune. He held responsible positions under Clive and Warren Hasting and was honoured with the title of Maharaja. For details see, A.F. Salahuddin Ahmed, Social Ideas and Social Change in Bengal, 1818-1835, p.15-28.

Apart from the Bengali intelligentsia, the Utilitarians under James Mill and later his son John Stuart Mill, also influenced the educational policy of the Company. They constantly challenged the Orientalist policy pursued by the Company and later by the General Committee of Public Instruction. Mill strongly believed that "the greatest good of the greatest number" can be achieved by promoting the teaching of sciences, history and philosophy, and not literature and poetry. He found nothing to praise in the Indian institutions, nothing to admire in the values of the Indian society and religion. In fact, according to him nothing was worth preserving. He considered Indian society to be static and stagnant. These views on Indian society and institutions are clearly reflected in his book History of British India which he undertook in 1806 and finished in 1817.<sup>27</sup>

He exercised a vital influence on the policy of the Company especially after his appointment as an Assistant Examiner in 1819 and gradually by 1830, he held the post of an Examiner in the Executive Government of the Company. Later his son was also appointed in the Examiner's Office of the Company. By these appointments it became natural that the utilitarians would influence the policy of the Company

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27. S.C. Ghosh, Dalhousie in India, 1848-56, p.1. See also Eric Stokes, The English Utilitarians and India, p.47-51.

particularly educational policy. Under their influence the Directors of the Company attacked the educational policy pursued by the Committee. In a despatch, dated 18 February 1824, they wrote:

"We apprehend that the plan of the institutions to the improvement of which our attention is now directed was originally and fundamentally erroneous. The great end should not have been to teach Hindoo learning, but useful learning. No doubt in teaching useful learning to the Hindoos or Mahomedans, Hindoo media or Mahomedan media, so far as they were found the most effectual, would have been proper to be employed and Hindoo and Mahomedan prejudices would have needed to be consulted while everything which was useful in Hindoo or Mahomedan literature it would have been proper to retain; nor would there have been any insuperable difficulty in introducing under these reservations a system of instruction from which great advantage might have been derived. In professing on the other hand to establish seminaries for the purpose of teaching mere Hindoo, or mere Mahomedan literature, you bound yourselves to teach a great deal of what was frivolous, not a little of what was purely mischievous and a small remainder indeed in which utility was in anyway concerned."<sup>28</sup>

Thus, the Court of Directors emphasised that great importance should be attached to useful learning, that is European Sciences. In fact, the Despatch clearly desired that the Government's chief aim in education should be the advancement of scientific knowledge among the people of India, which would enable them to come upto the levels of the European Societies.

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28. H. Sharp, op.cit., p.91-92.

Therefore, the educational policy of the Committee were challenged by two vital forces operating during the first half of nineteenth century. These forces, as stated above, were the Bengali intelligentsia and the utilitarians. Most of the scholars even state that they can be considered as one force because some of the Bengali intelligentsia were influenced by utilitarian philosophy.<sup>29</sup> It was the influence of utilitarianism that made them supporters of English education.

Thus, these forces compelled the Committee to change its educational policy. And we find that by 1833, English classes were attached to the Calcutta Madarsah, and the College at Agra. Gradually the English classes in these colleges became popular. Statistical accounts clearly indicate that in the Calcutta Madarsah the number of Arabic students fell from 75 in 1829 to 17 in 1830.<sup>30</sup> The number again rose to 62 in 1831, but this was 23 short of the usual number and the progress of the student was far from satisfactory. Most of the traditional subjects were neglected. Similarly in the Sanskrit College at Calcutta the popularity of European sciences was shown by the

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29. Rammohan Roy was influenced by James Young, who was a disciple of Bentham. He had also introduced Rammohan Roy to Bentham, through letters. In a letter Bentham addressed Rammohan as "Intensely admired and dearly beloved collaborator in the service of mankind". Perhaps this influence made Rammohan Roy an ardent supporter of Western education. For details see, J. Bowring (ed.), The Works of Jeremy Bentham (Edinburgh 1843), X, 589. Quoted in A.F. Salahuddin Ahmed, op.cit., p.34-35.

30. Quoted in D.P. Sinha, op.cit., p.130.



decrease in the number of students in the Hindu Mathematic class which dwindled from 32 in 1832 to 8 in 1833.<sup>31</sup>

These figures clearly indicate that English had become very popular among the people. It also reflected that traditional education, particularly classical education was gradually losing its earlier value and importance and therefore it was no longer demanded by the people. The Committee further established at Delhi and Banaras, district English schools. However, these measures could not satisfy the growing desire of the people for English education, as well as Company officials who wanted to promote English language.

Therefore, these developments gradually led to a split in the Committee. Out of the 10 members of the Committee, only five supported the policy of encouraging Oriental education and literature, The others were in favour of encouraging English education. The supporters of classical education were the Orientalist party led by H.T. Prinsep who was then the Secretary to the Government of Bengal in Educational Department. The English party had no definite leader. This division of the Committee greatly affected education. In fact, no policy could be formulated because the policy formulated by one party, was rejected by the other. The division of the Committee led to many controversies and therefore, not much attention could be paid to education. This controversy which plagued the Committee

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31. Quoted in Ibid., p.134.

for many years is also known as the Anglicist-Oriental controversy. In fact, it represented a conflict between the changing philosophies and thoughts of the age. It was between those who wanted to conserve the tradition of the past and preserve its institutions and those who wanted to bring radical changes in the existing institutions, by introducing and adopting Western models.

The Anglicist Oriental controversy continued to exist when Lord William Bentinck became the Governor-General of India. The policy he formulated were influenced by the spirit of the age. In fact, before leaving for India William Bentinck was already influenced by utilitarian philosophy. In December 1827 Bentinck was given a farewell dinner at Grote's house, where he feasted on "the pure milk of the Benthamite word". His professions in reply gave every satisfaction. 'I am going to British India, but I shall not be Governor-General. It is you that will be the Governor-General'.<sup>32</sup> Thus, Bentinck's policy in India was a reflection of utilitarian philosophy.

The various social reforms which William Bentinck undertook e.g. the abolition of sati in 1829, abolition of female infanticide, suppression of human sacrifice and so on indicate that he influenced by utilitarianism. Also these reforms were supported by Rammohan Roy, who was influenced by the spirit of the age. Regarding education, it was natural that Bentinck's

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32. Eric Stokes, op.cit., p.51.

policy would be influenced by utilitarianism.

Under him, Macaulay became the President of the General Committee of Public Institution. He was also the Law Member of the Executive Council of the Governor-General. In fact, he had imbued the liberal tradition of the period. Like many of his contemporaries, Macaulay advocated that India was to be made a subordinate colony. It had to be developed in such a way that it would become an important market for the British commodities. Similarly, he also stated that Western sciences and literature should be increasingly diffused among the people so that they would appreciate and support the British rule in India. These views of Macaulay found reflection in his Minute dated 2 February 1835, when the papers dealing with the disputes between the Anglicist and Orientalist were placed before the Council.

In his Minute, Macaulay had clearly stated his contempt for Oriental learning as well as Oriental literature. He depicted that "a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia."<sup>33</sup> He therefore advocated that Oriental institutions should be closed because they did not serve any useful purpose. He said:

"The admirers of the oriental system of education have used another argument, which, if we admit it to be valid, is decisive against all change. They conceive that the public faith is pledged to the

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33. H. Sharp, op.cit., p.109.

present system, and that to alter the appropriation of any of the funds which have hitherto been spent in encouraging the study of Arabic and Sanscrit would be downright spoliation. It is not easy to understand by what process of reasoning they can have arrived at this conclusion. The grants which are made from the public purse for the encouragement of literature differ in no respect from the grants which are made from the same purse for other objects of real or supposed utility. We found a sanitarium on a spot which we suppose to be healthy. Do we thereby pledge ourselves to keep a sanitarium there if the result should not answer our expectations? We commence the erection of a pier. Is it a violation of the public faith to stop the works, if we afterwards see reason to believe that the building will be useless?"<sup>34</sup>

Macaulay also argued that the word "literature" occurring in Section 43 of the Charter Act could be interpreted as English literature. Similarly, "learned native of India" could be applied to persons versed in philosophy of Locke or poetry of Milton. He further stated that the knowledge of sciences should be imparted in English.

Macaulay also brushed aside the claims of vernacular language. He stated that:

"All parties seem to agreed on the point, that the dialects commonly spoken among the natives of this part of India contain neither literary nor scientific information, and are moreover so poor and rude that, until they are enriched from some other quarter, it will not be easy to translate any valuable work into them. It seems to be admitted on all sides, that the intellectual improvement of those classes of the people who have the means of pursuing higher studies can at present be affected only by means of some language not vernacular amongst them."<sup>35</sup>

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34. Ibid., p.108.

35. Ibid., p.109.

It is very ironical to note that it was the missionaries who realized the significance of vernacular language. They did not brush it as rude and poor. In fact, by successfully translating books into vernaculars, from Western science and literature and also traditional literature, they showed that it was not difficult to translate literature into vernaculars. Despite being guided by motive of proselytization, the credit should go to the missionaries for promoting vernacular language and literature. Thus, unlike Macaulay and others, they did not brush aside the mother-tongue of the people.

Therefore, since vernacular and traditional education had inherent defects, Macaulay emphasised that education should be imparted in English. He stated that:

"The claims of our own language it is hardly necessary to recapitulate. It stands pre-eminent even among the languages of the West... whoever knows that language has ready access to all the vast intellectual wealth which all the wisest nations of the earth have created and hoarded in the course of ninety generations. It may safely be said that the literature now extant in that language is of greater value than all the literature which three hundred years ago was extant in all the languages of the world together... In India, English is the language spoken by the ruling class. It is spoken by the higher class of natives at the seats of Government. It is likely to become the language of commerce throughout the seas of the East."<sup>36</sup>

He also argued that Indians had given sufficient evidence of their love for English. He pointed out that while the Committee of Public Instruction was finding it hard to

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36. Ibid., p.110.

dispose of its oriental publication, the English books of Calcutta<sup>37</sup> school book society were selling in thousands and making huge profits. He also drew attention to the fact that while the students of the Madarsah and Sanskrit College had to be paid stipends, the pupils in English schools were prepared to pay for instruction received therein. He further advocated that Hindu and Muslim laws should be codified into English and expenditure incurred on the maintenance of Oriental institutions should be reduced.

On these grounds Macaulay advocated that Western learning should be promoted through the medium of English language. He also stated that the new education i.e. English should remain confined to few people because the Government had limited means. Therefore, he advocated the downward filtration theory for India. He stated that:

"I feel with them that it is impossible for us, with our limited means to attempt to educate the body of the people. We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern - a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich

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37. The Calcutta School Book Society was founded in 1817. The main aim of the Society was to supply at lower cost, useful elementary books for schools. Between 1817 to 1821 emphasis was laid on the publication of vernacular and classical books. However, after 1821 emphasis began to be shifted to the publication of English books. This indicated that demand for English books gradually increased. For details see N.L. Basak, op.cit., p.161-172.

those dialects with term of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population."<sup>38</sup>

Thus, the Company would concentrate on educating the upper classes and leave it to them to spread education among the masses. Therefore, knowledge was to filter gradually to the masses from upper classes. Even the Orientalist like Macaulay believed in the filtration theory e.g. the Calcutta Madrasah and Banaras Sanskrit College were established to provide education to the influential sections of society who in turn would gradually educate the people.

Therefore, in his Minute, Macaulay stated that the sum of one lakh of rupees should be used to promote English education and to a limited section of society. However, the suggestions made by Macaulay was not an innovation. In fact, the ideas he conveyed in his Minute had its echo in Grant's treatise. As stated earlier, Grant had already advocated that English should be adopted as the medium of instruction. It is interesting to note that what Grant had suggested earlier was accepted by the Government after forty years.

The various arguments which Macaulay stated in his Minute was accepted by William Bentinck. This was mainly because he was influenced by Benthamite and Utilitarian ideas, as stated earlier. Like the utilitarians he believed that "the

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38. H. Sharp, op.cit., p.116.

greatest good of the greatest number" could be achieved not by pursuing traditional education but by encouraging English education. He was also influenced by the views of officials like Trevelyan and Metcalfe, as well as by Scottish missionary, Alexander Duff, who shared Macaulay's contempt for traditional education.

Similarly, Bentinck was also guided by practical administrative considerations. After the Charter Act of 1833 was passed, the Company was facing grave financial crisis. One principal task of the Company was to economize the administration. It was discovered that the main item of expenditure was the high pay of English officers. Therefore, Bentinck decided to increase the number of Indians in subordinate low paid judicial and revenue branches of administration.

Thus, the spirit of the age as well as the practical requirements of the time made Bentinck accept the various suggestions put forth by Macaulay in his Minute. By a Resolution of 7 March 1835, Bentinck declared that English would be encouraged:

"His lordship in Council is of the opinion that the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India; and that all the funds appropriated for the purpose of education would be best employed on English education alone."<sup>39</sup>

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39. H. Sharp, op.cit., p.130.



The Resolution also stated that:

"...it is not the intention of His Lordship in Council to abolish any College or School of native learning, while the native population shall appear to be inclined to avail themselves of the advantages which it affords, and His Lordship in Council directs that all existing professors and students at all the institutions under the superintendence of the Committee shall continue to receive their stipends... no stipend shall be given to any student that may hereafter enter at any of these institutions; and that when any professor of Oriental learning shall vacate his situation, the Committee shall report to the Government the number and state of the class in order that the Government may be able to decide upon the expediency of appointing a successor."<sup>40</sup>

Regarding the publication of Oriental works, Bentinck advocated that no funds should be employed for its printing. This is because the Government had already spent a considerable amount of money on its publication.

The Resolution of 7 March 1835, marked an important development in the history of education. For the first time, the Government decided to promote English education, by allotting the already assigned money for its advancement. Similarly, the Resolution sealed the fate of indigenous education particularly classical education. It was clearly evident that the Government would no longer promote classical education, though the existing institutions were allowed to continue. In fact, after 1835, the decline of classical education became inevitable because the Government declined to patronize it. The little

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40. Ibid., p.130-31.

life which the Orientalist put into the already declining classical education was completely extinguished by the Resolution of 7 March 1835.

Though the Resolution declared that English was to be encouraged, the controversy continued to exist when Lord Auckland succeeded William Bentinck as the Governor-General of India. In formulating his policy, particularly educational policy, Auckland more or less followed Bentinck's policy. He therefore laid emphasis on promoting English education. He assigned a sum of more than a lakh of rupees for its promotion. He also believed that if European sciences were taught through the medium of Sanskrit or Persian, only imperfect results would be achieved. Therefore, he advocated that European science could be best taught in English and so it should be encouraged.

Regarding classical education the policy followed by Auckland differed from Bentinck. In his Minute dated 24 November 1839, Auckland advocated that Government would guarantee the continuation of existing institutions of Oriental learning as well as give adequate grants to eminent professors and scholarship to students.

"...It would do nothing towards the abolition of the ancient seminaries of Oriental learning, so long as the community might desire to take advantage of them, their preservation as Oriental seminaries being alone at that time within the contemplation of either party."<sup>41</sup>

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41. H. Sharp, op.cit., p.150.

He also stated that encouragement would be given to the publication of useful books in Oriental language. However, the expenditure in publishing books should be kept within the limit of funds sanctioned for Oriental education.

"I would encourage the preparation within the limits of the funds of the most useful book of instruction, such as of the Siddhants and Sanscrit version of Euclid which Mr. Wilkinson has urged upon us..."<sup>42</sup>

He further stated that the first duty of the Oriental College was to impart instruction in Oriental learning and that they may conduct English classes if necessary, after the duty was fully discharged. Auckland also estimated that the proposal for encouraging Oriental learning would cost about Rs.31,000 per year.

Like Macaulay, Auckland believed in the Downward Filtration theory. He stated in his Minute that the Company should promote education among a limited section of society. By emphasising on <sup>the</sup> Filtration theory it was evident that Auckland did not want to promote vernacular education. In fact, even the earlier Governor-Generals did not encourage vernacular education because the Company had limited funds and a small staff to undertake the colossal task of educating millions in their mother tongue with which the officials were not familiar. Therefore, when William Adam submitted his Reports on the state

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42. Ibid., p.152.

of education in Bengal in 1838, and recommended the Government to extend and promote vernacular education, they were not accepted by Auckland on the grounds that "money, masters and books were not available."<sup>43</sup> Perhaps his decision was influenced by the Reports of the Committee of Public Instruction for the year 1835 (submitted by Sir C.E. Trevelyan in his evidence before the Parliamentary Committee of the House of Lords in 1853). In this Report, the Committee condemned Adam's proposals. It stated that:

"After a careful consideration of these propositions for the improvement of rural schools, we fear that the execution of the plan would be almost impracticable; in consequence of the complicated nature of details, which would also involve much more expense and difficulty than Mr. Adam has supposed."<sup>44</sup>

Therefore, in his Minute, Auckland stated that:

"I would observe upon it that it is impossible to read his valuable and intelligent report, without being painfully impressed with the low state of instruction as it exists amongst the immense masses of Indian population. Attempts to correct so lamentable an evil may well be eagerly embraced by benevolent minds. Yet I cannot but feel with the President in Council that the period has not yet arrived when the Government can join in these attempts with reasonable hope of practical good."<sup>45</sup>

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43. Quoted in S.C. Ghosh, Dalhousie in India, 1848-56, p.3.

44. J.A. Richey, op.cit., p.65.

45. H. Sharp, op.cit., p.152.

While Auckland was not in favour of promoting vernacular education, Lord Hardinge reversed the policy. In 1844, he declared that he would sanction the formation of village schools in some districts of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa in which sound and useful elementary instruction might be imparted in vernacular language. Village schools were established in Patna, Bhagalpur, Murshidabad, Dacca, Jessore, Cuttuck and Chittagong, to each of which a master was appointed capable of giving instruction in vernacular reading and writing, arithmetic, geography and histories of India and Bengal. They were placed under the supervision of the revenue authorities in the district.<sup>46</sup> However, this scheme chalked by Hardinge ended in a failure. The main cause was the reluctance of the parents to send their children to schools which imparted only vernacular education. They were also reluctant to pay fees for a purely vernacular education. In fact, the Reports of the Collector of Nattore and the Commissioner of Dacca in 1846 bears testimony to this fact:

"The native gentlemen who constructed the school-house, informed me that the institution was useless. They expressed deep regret that Government should support Vernacular schools which they do not want, and without English schools of which they stand so much in need."<sup>47</sup>

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46. S.C. Ghosh, op.cit., p.4.

47. J.A. Richey, op.cit., p.68.

This extract clearly reflects that it was not vernacular but English education that was increasingly demanded by the people. Therefore, it was natural that <sup>the</sup> Hardinge scheme would be unsuccessful. However, the scheme of vernacular education proved to be successful in the North Western Provinces, under Lieutenant Governor, James Thomason.

Thomason derived his interest in vernacular education from his father. Rev. Thomas Thomason, who was a Chaplain at Calcutta. In 1814 Rev. Thomas Thomason had devised for the first time a detailed scheme for vernacular education in Bengal in 1814. Though Lord Moira was interested in the scheme, the Government could not adopt it because of the fear of arousing the religious suspicions of the people. Thus, it was left to James, to revive the scheme of vernacular education in the North Western Provinces. As a District Officer at Azamgarh during 1823-37, he became acquainted with the life and condition of the people,<sup>48</sup> which later helped him to introduce vernacular education in the North Western Provinces. In 1845, he addressed circular letters to all revenue collectors, calling their attention to the low standard of vernacular education and to the various factors at work for its improvement. They were to be found in the new revenue settlement under which the right of the cultivator, landlord or tenant was recorded, and for protection of their rights a system of registration of titles to land had been introduced. The register

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48. S. Nurullah and J.P. Naik, A History of Education in India, p.126.

was open to all those who chose to inspect them. But only those who could read and write could avail the advantage they offered to any extent. While to the full enjoyment of them some knowledge of arithmetic and principle of land measurement was required. Thomason's Secretary pointed out:

"There is thus a direct and powerful inducement to the mind of almost every individual to acquire so much of reading, writing, arithmetic and mensuration, as may suffice for the protection of his rights, until this knowledge be universal, it is vain to hope that any great degree of accuracy can be obtained in the preparation of the papers."<sup>49</sup>

Therefore, a direct appeal for education, particularly vernacular education, was made to the self-interest of the people. Perhaps an incentive like this was wanting in the Lower Provinces of Bengal where the rights of the cultivator had been swept away by the Permanent Settlement.<sup>50</sup> Since self-interest of the people of North-West was chief motivating factor for the acquisition of knowledge, it was felt that they would be induced by higher motives to advance further in quest of knowledge. It was with this end in view that detailed statistics about the state of education in the Province was prepared. It was found that:

"On an average less than 5 per cent of the youth who are of an age to attend schools obtain any instruction and that instruction which they do receive is of an imperfect kind."<sup>51</sup>

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49. J.A. Richey, op.cit., p.237.

50. S.C. Ghosh, op.cit., p.5.

51. Ibid., p.5.

Therefore, to rectify the lacuna in the existing system of education, Thomason proposed the endowment of a school in every considerable village, but this proposal, was not supported by the Court of Directors. However, in 1848, Thomason again submitted another scheme i.e. to set up a model school in every tehsildaree or revenue district in addition to the ordinary village school<sup>52</sup> at the general expense "to provide a powerful agency for visiting all the indigenous schools, for furnishing the people and the teachers with advice assistance and encouragement, and for rewarding those school-masters who may be found the most deserving."<sup>53</sup> There would be a Zillah Visitor in each district and three Pargana Visitors and a Visitor-General should be appointed from among the civil servants of the Company to supervise the working of the scheme. It was also calculated that this scheme when put into operation would cost £ 20,000 per annum. For the time being a partial experiment - confining the scheme to eight districts only - was to be made.<sup>54</sup>

This scheme of Thomason was received by Lord Dalhousie, who became the Governor-General of India in 1848. In fact, Dalhousie had to recommend the scheme of Thomason to the Court of Directors for their approval. Even though Dalhousie did not

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52. J.A. Richey, op.cit., p.244.

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid.



have any definite policy towards education, he had assured the people at the very beginning of his administration that he would "afford every encouragement for the development of native talents".<sup>55</sup> He also stated that "whether the Education of India should be based exclusively on English, rejecting the vernacular or not" was a question which might admit of controversy<sup>56</sup> as well as of experiment. Since Thomason's scheme provided such an opportunity, Dalhousie recommended it to the Court of Directors. Thus, on 3 October 1849 the Court of Directors gave sanction to Thomason's scheme. It is interesting to note that were as the earlier schemes on vernacular education by Adam, Munro and Elphinstone were not accepted by the Governor-Generals, Thomason's scheme was not only accepted by the Governor-General and the Court of Directors, but he was also allowed a free hand to develop education in the North-Western Provinces along his own lines.

Therefore, in 1850 Thomason's scheme of vernacular education proved extremely successful. A considerable number of youths had been brought under instruction, also the character of the instruction had been raised and a vernacular school literature had been created. The number of schools had been raised from 2014 in 1850 to 3469 in 1852, the number of scholars had increased from 17169 in 1850 to 36884 in 1852-53.<sup>57</sup>

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55. Quoted in S.C. Ghosh, op.cit., p.6.

56. S.C. Ghosh, op.cit., p.6.

57. Ibid., p.7.

These figures clearly reflect that Thomason's scheme had become very popular, it acquired a wide base among the people of the North-Western Provinces. In fact, the success of vernacular education in the North-Western Province was in sharp contrast to those existing in Bengal Presidency where a scheme for vernacular education though tried in 1844 had ended in a failure.

Thus, it was only in the North-Western Province that the attempt to promote vernacular education by Company officials became successful during our period. Therefore, by 1849 important trends in education had developed in Bengal Presidency. On the one hand, classical education, particularly Sanskrit and Persian, witnessed a gradual decline especially after the Resolution of 7 March 1835, English education on the other hand had become very popular. It was mainly promoted after 1835 by Governor-General succeeding William Bentinck and supported by the Bengali intelligentsia. In fact, after 1844 the Government had clearly stated that preference would be given to those who knew English in all government appointments. This clearly indicated that the Government gave importance to English and not classical education. Regarding vernacular education the efforts made by Company officials could not succeed as stated earlier. Thus, by 1849 it was English education that had become popular in Bengal Presidency.

In fact, when Lord Dalhousie became the Governor-General of India, he was aware of the important developments regarding

Indigenous education as well, as English education. While formulating his educational policy Dalhousie was influenced by the spirit of the age or by the utilitarian philosophy. Though he never gave explicit expression to his belief in utilitarian principles, on certain occasions Dalhousie did come very near to express his faith in utilitarianism. His frequent reference to his concern about the interest of the community in India, like "the good of the community", "the interests of the public", "the largest aggregate amount of benefit for the people",<sup>58</sup> clearly reflect his belief in "the greatest good of the greatest number". Dalhousie's "utilitarianism", as Professor Eric Stokes points out, "was characteristic of his age. It was no longer a fixed programme derived from the texts of Bentham, nor was it a set of intellectual dogmas. It was rather a practical cast of mind."<sup>59</sup>

His belief in the utilitarian philosophy found expression in the various social policy he formulated e.g. the abolition of Thugi, Sati, and the Meriah of human sacrifice. In fact, these measures of Dalhousie was a continuation of his predecessors policy. Apart from this policy the introduction of electric telegraph, uniform postage, railways and so on, reflects his faith in utilitarianism.

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58. S.C. Ghosh, op.cit., p.139.

59. Eric Stokes, op.cit., p.249.

Regarding education Dalhousie realized the significance of English as well as vernacular education. He was fully convinced of the success of Thomason's scheme of vernacular education and therefore recommended it to the Court of Directors. He also realized that this scheme could be extended to rest of the country particularly to the Bengal Presidency. While recommending the extension of vernacular education, Dalhousie was influenced by the Reports of Dr. Mouat, who was the Secretary to the Council of Education. In this Report Dr. Mouat stated "the utter failure" of the scheme of vernacular education adopted in Bengal, "among a more intelligent, docile and less prejudiced people than those of the N.W.P." as well as to his assurance that the scheme which had been best adopted to dispel the ignorance of the agricultural people of the N.W.P. was also "the plan best suited for the Vernacular Education of the mass of people of Bengal and Bihar."<sup>60</sup>

Dalhousie also calculated that if the cost of the entire scheme of vernacular education in North-Western Provinces was something more than 2 lakhs of rupees, it would not cost more than double that sum in Bengal as well as in Punjab. He also indicated that the Government would have no problem to meet the expense since "a clear addition of revenue of seven lakhs of rupees had been given to the annual revenues

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60. Quoted in S.C. Ghosh, op.cit., p.9.

of the Government by recent death of Benaik Rao."<sup>61</sup>

Apart from the extension of vernacular education, Dalhousie also carried elaborate educational reforms at Calcutta. He believed that it was the duty of the Government to provide an effective means of acquiring sound instruction, both in elementary knowledge and in higher branches of learning which was cultivated by "the great sects of the Hindus and Muslims", and to multiply facilities for acquiring a solid vernacular and English education by all sections of society. In fact, Dalhousie wanted to lay the foundation of an efficient system of instruction not only through the medium of English and vernaculars but also through Sanskrit and Persian medium.

Dalhousie received some proposals for reforming education from Dr. Mouat. In a letter to Dalhousie, he stated that the English department at the Madarsah had failed. He pointed to the exclusive character of Sanskrit and Hindu Colleges and also delay in the progress of Hindu College due to double management. He further stated that the Government of India had not done for encouragement of sound education in Calcutta all that was desirable or even all that would have been its positive duty if the public finances had not been for many years past, and until very lately in a condition which clogged the action of state. Thus, while Agra, Delhi, Benares and many other places of lesser importance possessed a college, Calcutta, the

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61. Quoted in Ibid., p.9.

nuclear of the British empire in India, did not possess a general college. He stated that even the Madarsah should be reformed, mainly by introducing changes in the junior department. Improvements should be introduced in the Arabic department and a branch school of the Madarsah should be established similar to the Hindu College. He pointed out that Hindu College should be open to all irrespective of their caste and creed. In fact, the Hindu College would constitute "the Government College" once it was open to all sections of society.

Though Dalhousie received these suggestions from Dr. Mouat, he decided to follow only those policy which would promote the well being and interest of the people as well as not act contrary to the Company's educational policy. Therefore, the proposal of abolition of the exclusive character of Hindu College was not accepted by Dalhousie. He believed it was "impolitic" to afford unnecessary pretext for the circulation of any colourable complaints that the Government was breaking faith with the Hindus - that it was promiscuously admitting all classes to the seminary which was established for Hindus alone and that although a Government College had been erected it was upon the ruins of Hindu College that its foundation were raised.<sup>62</sup>

The scheme that Dalhousie suggested was that, the principal professors etc. of the senior Hindu College would

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62. S.C. Ghosh, op.cit., p.11.

constitute the establishment of a new college at Calcutta founded by the Government and a fitting edifice should be built for it. Only those students who had passed the junior scholarship could be admitted to it. The institution would be termed as "Presidency College" in order to distinguish it from local and private institutions. Admissions would be open to all sections of society. The Hindu College, left with junior department, and Sanskrit College were open to Hindus, or students belonging to higher class on a higher fee. Similarly the branch school of Hindu College, with its name changed to Colootollah Branch school as suggested by the Secretary's plan, was to be open to all sections of society.<sup>63</sup>

Dalhousie suggested that the Calcutta Madarsah should be maintained for the Muslims exclusively and should consist of two main divisions - the Arabic College as proposed by Dr. Mouat's plan and junior department for boy of higher class. It should be placed on equal footing as far as possible and a fee was now required at the Madarsah as it was now required at Hindu College. In the junior department non-Muslims could be admitted if the Muslims did not object. A branch school similar to the branch school of the Hindu College, was established at Collinga, open to all classes and creeds.<sup>64</sup>

Therefore, Dalhousie should be given the credit for laying the foundation of an efficient system of instruction

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63. Ibid., p.11. See also J.A. Richey, op.cit., p.123.

64. Ibid., p.124.

for all sections of society. Hindu students could acquire the knowledge of English as well as vernaculars in the junior department of Hindu College and its branch school at Colootollah. Similarly, the Muslim students could acquire similar kind of knowledge at junior department and its branch at Collinga. Hindu students could pursue higher studies in Sanskrit College and Muslim students on the other hand could pursue higher education in Arabic College. Also the students belonging to both these communities and others could acquire knowledge in Presidency College which was open to all irrespective of one's caste and creed.

Apart from reforming the Madarsah, reorganizing the Hindu College and laying the foundation of Presidency College, Dalhousie also planned to organize a civil engineering college in each of the Presidencies in India to meet the increasing demand of civil engineers in the Department of Public Work. In fact, Thomason had already established a civil engineering college at Roorkee in November 1847. The success of this college convinced Dalhousie that it could be established in other Presidencies as well.

Dalhousie also promoted female education in India. He actively supported Bethune's school<sup>65</sup> for girls at Calcutta.

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65. J.E.D. Bethune (1801-51) was the law member of the Executive Council of Governor-General and the President of the Council of Education from 1848 to 1851. He was keenly interested in the education of women. He, therefore, decided to establish a secular school for Indian girls in his own individual capacity and to bear all the expenses thereof. Thus, on 7 May 1849, Bethune established a school with twenty-one girls. Within a short time, it attracted a fairly large number of girls, who were eager to acquire education in the school he established. After his death the school was permanently associated with his name and it soon developed into the Bethune College. This College was the only important institution of higher education for women. For details see, Kalidas Nag (ed.), Bethune School and College, Centenary Volume, 1849-1949, p.19-23.



In fact, when Lord Bethune died, Lord Dalhousie personally undertook the charge of the school. This was clearly stated in news item published in "The Hindu Intelligencer" of February 6, 1854:

"His Lordship has signified his desire that the school may be kept open at his sole charge so long as he remains in India, his anxiety being that he might be assured that it may not fall to the ground whenever he retires from his present office."<sup>66</sup>

The support which Dalhousie gave to Bethune was the first move by the Government in promoting the cause of female education. Therefore, many scholars portray in their accounts that Dalhousie was the father of Female education in India.

Thus, the educational policy formulated by Dalhousie reflected his utilitarian bias. Moreover, some of the policy he formulated found reflection in the Educational Despatch of 1854. The occasion for the Despatch was provided by the renewal of the Company Charter in 1853. At this time as at the earlier renewals of the charter in 1813 and 1833, a Select Committee of the House of Commons held an enquiry into the educational developments in India. On basis of this inquiry, the Court of Directors formulated the Educational Despatch of 1854.

A detailed examination of the Despatch clearly reflects that the policy and schemes formulated by the framers was not

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66. Ibid., p.21.

an innovation. In fact, most of the policy that were suggested were already in operation. For example, regarding the classical education, the Despatch stated that:

"We do not wish to diminish the opportunities which are now afforded in special institutions for the study of Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian literature, or for the cultivation of those languages which may be called the classical language of India. An acquaintance with the works contained in them is valuable for historical and antiquarian purposes, and a knowledge of the languages themselves is required in the study of Hindoo and Mahomedan law, and is also of great importance for the critical cultivation and improvement of vernacular languages of India."<sup>67</sup>

Thus, the continuation of traditional institutions as stated in the Despatch, and the importance of acquiring it were already stated as early as 1792 in a letter addressed to Lord Cornwallis by J. Duncan, a Resident, at Banaras. In this letter, as stated earlier, Duncan had already stated the importance of acquiring classical education and demanded for its continuation. Similarly Lord Auckland and Dalhousie had also guaranteed the continuation of classical education. This clearly indicated that regarding traditional education the Despatch had nothing new to say.

Similarly regarding the various lacunas in traditional education the Despatch agreed with Macaulay and pointed out:

"The system of science and philosophy which form the learning of the East abound with grave errors, and eastern literature is at best very deficient as regards all modern discovery and improvements...."<sup>68</sup>

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67. J.A. Richey, op.cit., p.366.

68. Ibid.,

Therefore, it concluded the discussion by stating that the main object of the educational policy of the Government was to promote European art, sciences, philosophy and literature in English. This policy was also a continuation of the earlier policy adopted by the Governor-Generals especially after 1835.

Regarding the medium of instruction the Despatch laid emphasis on English as well as vernacular languages. It stated that:

"In any general system of education, English language should be taught where there is a demand for it; but such instruction should always be combined with a careful attention to the study of the vernacular language of the district, and with such general instruction as can be conveyed through that language; and while the English language continues to be made use of as by far the most perfect medium for the education of those persons who have acquired a sufficient knowledge of it to receive general instruction through it, the vernacular languages must be employed to teach the far larger classes who are ignorant of, or imperfectly acquainted with English... At that sametime, and as the importance of the vernacular languages become more appreciated, the vernacular literature of India, will be gradually enriched by translations of European books or by the original compositions of men whose minds have been imbued with the spirit of European advancement, so that European knowledge may gradually be placed in this manner within the reach of all classes of the people. We look therefore, to the English language and to vernaculars languages of India together as the media for the diffusion of European knowledge, and it is our desire to see them cultivated together in all schools in India of a sufficiently high class to maintain a school-master possessing the requisite qualifications."69

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69. Ibid., p.367-68.

The emphasis on English as well as vernacular languages was also not an original idea of the Despatch. In fact, Lord Dalhousie had already realized the importance of vernacular language and therefore, he recommended Thomason's scheme of vernacular education to the Court of Directors. As stated earlier, the Court of Directors, gave their sanction to the scheme on 3 October 1849. The success of Thomason's scheme in the North-Western Province convinced Dalhousie that it could be extended to the Bengal Presidency. Infact, the Educational Despatch also stated that the plan for encouraging indigenous vernacular schools should be based on Thomason's scheme. It recommended its adoption as largely as possible. Thus, the Despatch recommended that:

"....Indigenous schools should, by wise encouragement, such as has been given under the system organized by Mr. Thomason in the North-Western Provinces, and which has been carried out in eight districts under the able direction of Mr. H.S. Reid in an eminently practical manner, and with great promise of satisfactory results, be made capable of imparting correct elementary knowledge to the great mass of the people."<sup>70</sup>

Apart from adopting Thomason's plan for vernacular education, the Despatch developed Dalhousie idea on female education. It stated that:

"The importance of female education in India cannot be over-rated; and we have observed with pleasure the evidence which is now afforded of an increased desire on the part of many of the natives of India to give a good education to their daughters. By this means a far greater proportional impulse is imparted

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70. Ibid., p.377.

to the educational and moral tone of the people than by the education of men. We have already observed that schools for females are included among those to which grant-in-aid may be given and we cannot refrain from expressing our cordial sympathy with the efforts which are being made in this direction. Our Governor-General-in-Council has declared in a communication to the Government of Bengal that the Government ought to give to native female education in India its frank and cordial support."<sup>71</sup>

Similarly, the Despatch also expanded Dalhousie's ideas on technical education. This is clearly evident from the 31 Paragraph of the Despatch. It stated that:

"Civil engineering is another subject of importance, the advantage of which, as a profession, are gradually becoming known to the natives of India; and while we are inclined to believe that instruction of a practical nature, such as is given at the Thomason College of Civil Engineering at Roorkee, is far more useful than any lectures could possibly be, professorships of civil engineering might, perhaps, be attached to the universities and degree in civil engineering be included in their general scheme."<sup>72</sup>

Thus, the Educational Despatch of 19 July 1854 was an expansion of the educational policy pursued by Dalhousie and his predecessors in India. In fact, the educational policy formulated in the Despatch was a compilation of the earlier experiments pursued by the Company officials. Though the

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71. Ibid., p.368.

72. Ibid., p.373.

Despatch had nothing original to say, we do find that it played a crucial role because for the first time a comprehensive scheme of education was formulated for the whole of India. It also shaped the destiny of Indigenous as well as English education.

Regarding indigenous education, particularly classical education, though the Despatch stated the importance of acquiring it but then nothing was stated regarding its promotion. Thus, the Despatch did not formulate any policy which would check the gradual decline of traditional education. Therefore, it was natural that the decline of traditional became inevitable after 1854. On the other hand, it laid emphasis on the promotion of English education because it was considered as the only medium through which Western sciences and literature could be imparted. The Despatch further stated the universities that were to be established at Bombay, Calcutta and Madras were to be established not on the models of the tols or Chatuspathis and Madarsah but on that of the London University. In fact, the emphasis on English education made the Despatch a Magna Charta of English education.

Though the Despatch did not emphasise the promotion of the first aspect of indigenous education, it did emphasise on the second aspect of indigenous education or vernacular education. The despatch clearly stated vernacular as well as English education would be encouraged at the secondary stage.

In fact, by emphasising on its promotion, the Despatch rejected the Downward Filtration theory suggested by Macaulay and followed by almost all the Governor-Generals during our period. Some scholars even portray that the Despatch by emphasising on vernacular education laid the foundation of National system of education which was earlier suggested by William Adam. Despite its promotion we find very little was done in practice. In fact, the plans for vernacular education as stated by the Despatch were not realized. There was no High School that was established for promoting vernacular education for more than seven decades. Thus, the Educational Despatch of 1854 mainly emphasised on the promotion of English education.

Thus, during our period the policy of the Company towards education, particularly indigenous education was influenced by three important forces. As stated earlier these forces were the spirit of the age, the Christian missionaries and the Bengali intelligentsia. Initially the Company promoted indigenous education, particularly classical education because it was in harmony with the spirit of age as well as it catered to the practical requirements of the Company. However, the initial educational policy that was pursued by the Company was challenged by the Christian missionaries, the Bengali intelligentsia and the utilitarians. These challenges compelled the Company to change its educational policy. Therefore, we find that English education was introduced and promoted after the

Resolution of 7 March 1835. In fact, English education reached its peak of expansion especially with the passing of the Educational Despatch of 1854. Regarding indigenous education particularly classical education, its decline had become inevitable and by 1854, classical education witnessed a decline. It lost its earlier value and importance and therefore it could face the challenges of the period. Similarly, though vernacular education was promoted by Governor-Generals like Dalhousie and also by the Despatch of 1854, very little was done in practice for its promotion. Thus, by 1854, the success of English education and the decline of classical education became clearly evident.



## CONCLUSION

The indigenous system of education in the Presidency of Bengal was influenced by political developments during the period (1765-1854), the activities of the Christian missionaries, the Bengali intelligentsia and the policy formulated by the East India Company. These factors influenced each aspect of indigenous education i.e. classical or Brahmanical and Islamic education, Vernacular and vocational education in different capacities in the mid-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and thus, shaped the destiny of indigenous education.

During our period, the Brahmanical and Islamic education was the most prominent form of indigenous education. The chief vehicle through which knowledge was imparted in Brahmanical centres of learning or the pathsalas (primary educational institutions) and the tols (higher centres of learning) was Sanskrit. Similarly, in Islamic centres of learning Persian and Arabic were the chief medium through which knowledge was imparted in Maktabs (primary educational institution) and Madarsahs (higher centres of learning). The curriculum in these institutions of learning mainly emphasised on religious education. It reflected the values and beliefs of the ruling classes and therefore it was increasingly promoted by them. In fact, many of the important seats of

classical education e.g. Nadia, Patna, Tirhoot and so on owed their very existence to the patronage of the Nawabs and the ruling classes. Therefore, it was natural that with the transition in political authority from the Nawabs to the East India Company, the institutions particularly classical academic institutions, maintained and promoted by the Nawabs witnessed a gradual decline. However, traditional education continued to exist and formed an important part of indigenous education.

Initially, the East India Company guided by the spirit of the age i.e. Oriental philosophy and practical requirements of the time promoted classical education. Their educational policy found expression in the establishment of the Calcutta Madarsah in 1781, the Banaras Sanskrit College in 1792, the Fort William College in 1800, and the Calcutta Sanskrit College in 1824. However, the policy pursued by the Company did not check the gradual decline of traditional education. In fact, their activity was like a drop in the ocean. The encouragement given to traditional education was challenged by Charles Grant, the Chairman of the East India Company in 1805. He was influenced by the Christian missionaries, who were very critical regarding the educational policy pursued by the Company. Grant and the Christian missionaries under William Wilberforce acted as a powerful force in influencing the public opinion in England as well as the British Parliament.

Grant had published a treatise in 1797 in which he depicted the various evils which beset Indian society. He stated that the only way of removing them was by imparting the knowledge of Western sciences through the medium of English. The treatise of Grant was largely used by the missionaries in demanding Parliament to change the educational policy of the Company.

Thus, the observations of Grant and the activities of the missionaries influenced British Parliament and therefore, when the Charter of the Company was renewed in 1813, a missionary clause as well as an educational clause was added to the Charter. The missionaries succeeded in their objectives. They were allowed to come to India and work in the Company's territories. The Educational clause on the other hand compelled the Company to take the responsibility of educating the people by spending a lakh of rupees annually on its promotion. Though, the Charter compelled the Company to take the responsibility of education, it did not specify the medium through which knowledge was to be imparted to the pupils. Therefore, the Company officials continued to promote traditional education.

However, the policy pursued by the Company was attacked by the Bengali intelligentsia who had the benefits of English education. Most of them like Rammohan Roy who belonged to the higher caste felt that English education

was the key to the treasure of scientific and democratic thoughts of modern West and therefore demanded that it should be promoted instead of traditional education. This shift in emphasis, particularly by the upper caste, from acquiring traditional education to English education indicates that the former had lost its earlier value and significance. It failed to meet the requirements of the time. Similarly, it could no longer face the challenges of the new system of education i.e. English education which not only conferred practical advantages but also diffused scientific and liberal ideas, and which found ready acceptance among the people. Since traditional education mainly emphasised on religious aspects, it became obsolete or outdated. Also some of the Bengali intelligentsia who owed their status to wealth rather than caste did not find classical education useful. It failed to meet their requirements and therefore they did not promote it. In fact, some of the Bengali intelligentsia like Rammohan Roy and Radha-Kanta Deb in their own individual capacities laid the foundation of primary as well as higher centres of learning which promoted English education. Thus, the increasing emphasis on English education by the Bengali intelligentsia not only challenged the Company's policy but also acted as an important factor in bringing about the decline in classical education.

Apart from the Bengali intelligentsia, the utilitarians under James Mill and later his son John Stuart Mill also challenged the policy of the Company. By their appointment to

the Examiner's Office in the Court of Directors, they significantly influenced the Company officials who also became critical about the policy formulated by the Company. They strongly stated that instead of literature, emphasis should be laid on the propagation of scientific knowledge through the medium of English. It was under the utilitarian influence that William Bentinck accepted Macaulay's suggestions of promoting Western education through the medium of English. Thus, Bentinck passed a Resolution on 7 March 1835, which stated that the Government would promote English education. This Resolution adversely affected traditional education. It had become clear that it was not traditional but English education that would be patronized by the Government. The little encouragement that was given to it earlier was completely extinguished by this Resolution. Therefore, the real decline of traditional education began after 1835.

The Governor-Generals who succeeded Bentinck did not bring many changes in the educational policy. Though they patronized the existing traditional institutions of learning, they did not promote their development and expansion. Therefore, after the establishment of the Calcutta Sanskrit College in 1824, the Company did not establish any other traditional institutions. In fact, greater emphasis began to be laid on English education. In promoting English education the Company was not only influenced by utilitarian philosophy and Bengali

intelligentsia but also by the practical requirements of the time. By this time the Company had expanded its territorial domain in India. It therefore needed the services of Indians in low paid jobs. Also the Company officials wanted to create a class "Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste", who would increasingly demand the products of Lancashire. Therefore, the promotion of English became essential.

Thus, the policy of encouraging English education reached its climax by the passing of the Educational Despatch of 1854. The various policy suggested by the Despatch had its roots in the earlier policy. It had nothing original to state. Though the Despatch recognized the importance of traditional education, there was no provision for its promotion. In fact, the Despatch of 1854 was a Magna Charta of English education.

Therefore, the traditional education which was deeply embedded in the soil of Bengal gradually declined during our period. The activities of the Christian missionaries, the Bengali intelligentsia and the policy of the Company after 1835 made its decline inevitable. This reached its climax by the passing of the Educational Despatch of 1854. Perhaps more important than these factors was the inherent defect in the classical education itself. The very fact that it continued to emphasise on religious aspects, brought about its downfall. It could not face the challenges of the time and therefore it faded into insignificance. It was no longer demanded by the

Bengali intelligentsia who were the beneficiaries of this education. Thus, by mid-nineteenth century traditional education declined.

Vernacular education was another facet of indigenous education, which was affected during this period though not adversely. Unlike the classical education it did not have a long tradition. It owed its origins in the teaching and writing of Bhakti Saints like Chaitanya. It was however promoted by the Nawabs of Bengal and under their patronage Bengali became the chief medium through which literature and poetry was composed. Gradually it became an important medium through which education was imparted.

The curriculum existing in the Vernacular institutions mainly emphasised on reading, writing and arithmetic. Knowledge was imparted to the pupils mainly in Bengali and Hindi. The beneficiaries of this education were the merchants, the numerous agrarian caste and lower castes e.g. Chandals, Doms and Keots and so on. Adam's Reports clearly depict that vernacular education was mainly popular among the lower castes, though there are some evidences from his Reports that state that even higher caste also acquired vernacular education.

Though vernacular literature was promoted by the Nawabs they did not promote vernacular education and therefore, when political authority of the Nawabs declined this did not adversely effect the vernacular education, as it had on classical education. It is interesting to note that forces

which led to the decline of classical education promoted vernacular education e.g. the activities of the Christian missionaries contributed to the development of vernacular education. Though the missionaries were guided by the proselytization zeal their efforts not only encouraged vernacular education but made it efficient. By introducing printed books in place of manuscripts, holding periodical examinations, regular inspections, and so on, they laid the foundation of modern vernacular education in Bengal Presidency. In fact, the schools established by the missionaries became very popular among the people.

Like the Christian missionaries, the Bengali intelligentsia also promoted vernacular education. In the nineteenth century Bengali became the important medium through which literature, newspapers, journals and so on were written and circulated among the people. Thus, Bengali became an important medium through which education as well as literary activities were carried on during this period.

The significance of vernacular education was also realized by the East India Company and therefore in 1844, Lord Hardinge established vernacular schools in a few districts of Bengal. However, his scheme of promoting vernacular education failed in Bengal, mainly because parents wanted their children to acquire English education rather than vernacular. It is ironical to note that though the Company



wanted to promote vernacular education, the people did not desire to acquire it. While Hardinge's scheme failed in Bengal, Thomason scheme of promoting vernacular education succeeded in the North-Western Provinces. The successful application of his scheme made Dalhousie recommend it to the Court of Directors on 3 October 1849. In 1854, the Educational Despatch also recommended the adoption of Thomason's scheme of vernacular education. It also stated that along with English, vernacular education was to be encouraged at secondary levels.

Thus, during our period, vernacular education did not decline. It was encouraged by the missionaries, the Bengali intelligentsia and the East India Company. Despite the encouragement given to vernacular education its expansion and development was limited in the Bengal Presidency. There were few primary schools which imparted vernacular education. Similarly, the establishment of secondary schools imparting vernacular education was not realized for more than seven decades.

Like the vernacular education, female education, also received great impetus from the missionaries and by the Bengali intelligentsia. Even the Government realized its importance and under Lord Dalhousie female education was patronized. Also the Educational Despatch clearly reflected that female education should be promoted. Despite being promoted, female education was only popular in Calcutta and surrounding areas. In

village the prejudices against female education continued to exist. Thus, female education could not become very popular in the Presidency of Bengal during our period.

Vocational education which was the third aspect of indigenous education which we have taken up for consideration, was not patronized by the Nawabs as well as the East India Company. It was promoted by the missionaries to an extent. Despite not receiving patronage vocational education played a crucial role during eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This was concerned with the promotion of technical and scientific skill exercised by the artisans in production of commodities. The commodities produced by the artisans who had the benefit of this education were noted for their workmanship. They were demanded throughout Europe as well as Asia. We note that with the coming of industrialization the market for Bengal commodities gradually declined. However, this development did not affect the skill of the artisans. In fact, they continued to produce for the local market. Though the techniques and skill of the artisans remained static they did not decline during our period.

Thus, to sum up, during the mid eighteenth and nineteenth centuries it was the classical education which witnessed a gradual decline. Vernacular and Vocational education on the other hand did not decline. The political developments during our period, as well as the activities of Christian missionaries and the policy of the Company encouraged and promoted vernacular

education while allowing the vocational education to continue its existence in the Presidency of Bengal.

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