CHAPTER II

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN THE PUNJAB

2.1. THE SIKH SYSTEM

2.1.1. Education through Sangat and Masand System

The Institution of Sangat:

The institution of Sangat proved a very powerful instrument in the spread of Sikh education during the period of the Sikh Gurus. The genesis of the foundation of the Khalsa Panth by the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh may be traced in the institution of Sangat founded by Guru Nanak Dev (1469-1539 A.D.). Guru Nanak had given his own definition of the Sangat as that society where the name of one God alone is mentioned.

With the further development of Sikhism and Sikh educational concepts, Sat Sangat came to be associated with company of the Gurmukhs. In plain terms it meant the Sikhs. In this way developed the idea of the Sikh congregation also known as the Sangat.

The Sangat was thus a small assembly of the Guru's devotees, centred on the personality of the Guru himself or his nominee, if it happened to be situated at a distant place from the centre. In the beginning, however, religion was the chief hallmark, for which reason, it was generally termed as Satsangat.

2. For Guru Nanak's views on Sadhsangat see, Sri Rag.
which meant the company of the honest, pious and holy men. Gradually however, the Sangat included, within its curriculum, secular functions also, though these were still disguised as religious.

As long as the Sikhism was in its primary stages and the Guru could manage to educate his followers personally, the single Sangat was sufficient. But with the growing popularity of Sikhism, the number of Sangats increased. Apart from Simran (or divine meditation), the Sangats also frequently discussed the social evils, particularly the caste system, untouchability and low status of women.

As for the membership of the Sangat, there were no hard and fast rules. In fact it was open to any one, man or woman, irrespective of his social status, provided he or she accepted the educational concepts of the Guru.


2. Incidentally, the idea of Sangat also necessitated the running of a common kitchen which further proved to be a highly valuable instrument of social reform and put the idea of a caste-less society (preached by the Sikh Gurus) in practice. Thus the institution of Sangat was linked with Pulak. (i.e. Langar).

3. Fauja Singh, op. cit., p. 75.
As the Guru's educational concepts gained popularity, the institution of Sangat also gained momentum and developed further. God himself existed in the Sangat was the idea present in the beginning but gradually, the Sangat assumed a divine status and under Guru's own protection. For example, Guru Arjun acclaimed its descent from 

Similarly Bhai Gurdas emphasized that an assembly of five or more sikhs represented God. 

Another important institutional aspect of the idea of the Sangat was growing identification of the 'Guru with the Sikhs and the Sikhs with the Guru's as emphasized by Bhai Gurdas. 

The equation between the Guru and his Sangat was further perfected by the Gurus when the first three of them selected their successors from among the members of the Sangat and disregarded the claims of their own family. Even the later Gurus gave due weight to those who had distinguished themselves as perfect and devoted teachers. 

1. See Gujari Mohalla V.
2. Bhai Gurdas, Var 7, Pauri 5.
3. Ibid., Var , Pauri 11.
4. Guru Nanak, Guru Angad and Guru Amar Das rejected the claims of their own family members to Gurugaddi and selected true disciples from among the Sangat to succeed them.
5. Each one of the Gurus, while making nomination, bowed low at the feet of his successor thus removing any distinction between the two.
The tradition has it that Guru Arjun even rated the Sangat above the Guru by saying that the Guru was equal to 20 measures, whereas the Sangat was equal to 21 measures.

The functions of the Sangat increased many-fold even during the period of the early Sikh Gurus. It included many other aspects such as worship, social and religious discussions, organisation of Langar and construction activities like those of temples and tanks and new towns. All the construction projects were invariably executed by the Gurus with the help of the Sangat. At a later stage even questions of self-defence, military education and relationship with the Mughal government were also included in the curriculum of the Sangat.

Gradually, the number of Sangats increased many-fold. Until the time of Guru Arjun, the net work of Sangats had spread far and wide, beyond the border of Punjab. Sangats had been established even in such far-off places as Kabul in the west and Dacca in the east. This is testified by the contemporary writer, Bhai Gurdas, who mentions Sangats at Dall, Sultanpur, Lahore, Kabul, Kashmir, Thanesar, Delhi, Fatehpur, Agra, Dacca etc.

1. Fauja Singh, op. cit., P. 77.
2. Bhai Gurdas, Var, XI, Pauri, 14-31. Further, in an old manuscript copy of Guru Granth Sahib (written in 1675), is found the story of the Sikh travels in the Deccan, called Hakikat Ram Mukam, from which we gather something about the Sikh Sangats scattered over southern India and Ceylon.
By the year 1666 A.D. prosperous Sangat flourished at places such as Sylhet, Chittagong, Sandip and SangaHola quarter of Deccā. References about the existence of the Sikh Sangats and temples are also available at places like, Ramshwar, Salur, Bhaker and Shivakji in Madras and Colombo in Ceylon. Old temples built by Sikh Sangats during the Guru period still exist at Burhanpur, Surat, Bombay, Amraoti, Nirmal (District Adilabad in Nizam's dominions), whereas old copies of Granth Sahib are to be found at Burhapur, Surat and at Lonavala, near Poona.

1. This information is based on a few letters discovered by Gurbax Sing at Deccā, which further reveal that by the time of Guru Gobind Singh, Deccā had earned the title of 'the Home of Sikhism' Vide I.B. Banerjee, op. cit., p. 255.

2. For details see article entitled 'Sikh Relics in Eastern Bengal' published in the Deccā Review, 1916, pp. 225 and H.A. Rose, Glossary of Punjab Tribes and Castes, Vol. I, pp. 687-88. It is further stated that the Sikh Sangats consisting mostly of the Aroras went north to Kabul and Kandhar, Balkh, Bokhara and even Russia, whereas, the Khatris monopolised the markets of eastern and southern India. The Khatri Sangats naturally grew up throughout these wide tracts and the Sangat habit became a vital part of Sikhism. I.B. Banerjee, op. cit., p. 259.
During the period under review, wherever the Sikhs following the Guru's teachings lived, they were brought under the institution of Sangats. It is also important to notice that these sangats were not so many loose, incoherent units. The reforms introduced by Guru Arjun had moulded them into closely knit system, thus representing a corporate body of the Panth. Further, the Sangats were placed under the authorised Masanda, Whose duty was to preach the Sikh Guru's teaching and be responsible to the Guru for the Sikh Sangat in his diocese.

4.2. The Sangats as centres of Sikh Education:

All the Sikh and non-Sikh accounts unanimously agree that the Sikh Sangats were primarily the centres of Sikh education, instruction and propoganda. The activities of the Sikh Sangats gathered further momentum with the introduction of the Masand and the Manji System.

The Institution of Sangat (along with Pangat) was established with a view to teach the Sikhs at one central place, irrespective of their castes and social status. The Sikhs sitting and dinging together at a common place, had a very 'wholesome and revolutionary effect' upon the lives of the people.

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1. The Masand System has been dealt with separately in the second part of this chapter.

2. For the Manji System see separately under the educational concepts of Guru Amar Das.
In the Sikh Sangats, the Hindus and Muslims and the highest caste Brahmins and the lowest of the low Shudras, were brought to a common social level. Thus in the Institution of Sangat where all sat together to hear the master's teachings, we get the idea of equality and fraternity put into real practice.

Recently, a number of Hukumnamas have been brought to notice and edited. Most of these Hukumnamas refer to the existence of the Sikh Sangats at various places during the period of the Sikh Gurus. These Sangats existed in the undermentioned localities: Alamganj (a part of the town of Patna); Bina (District in Madhya Pradesh) and Monghyr (District in Bihar).

The references to these towns are known from the Hukumnamas issued by the Sixth Guru, Hargobind and Ninth Guru Tegh Bahadur.

Dera at Dehradun, known from the Nishan of seventh Guru Har Rai.

3. For photo-copy of the Nishan see, Ganda Singh, op.cit., p.71.
Dharamsal at pattan Farid (Now Pak Pattan in Pakistan): known from the Hukumnamas of eighth Guru, Harkrishan, ninth Guru, Tegh Bahadur, and tenth Guru, Gobind Singh. Benaras (District in Uttar Pradesh): Known from the Hukumanamas of Guru Tegh Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh. Patna: (District and capital of Bihar State); References to the existence of the Sangat at Patna during the period of Guru Hargobind, Guru Tegh Bahadur is known from at least seven Hukumnamas. Dera at Shehzadpur (probably in district Purnia in Bihar) Known from a Hukumnama of Guru Tegh Bahadur. Sylhat (a district in Bangla Desh); Known from a Hukumnama of Guru Gobind Singh. Decca, Lashkar, Chittagong and Sndeept towns are also referred to the same Hukumnama.  

1. Ibid., pp. 72, 76, 112, 169, 162.  
2. Ibid., pp. 78, 82, 88, 92, 96, 98, and 190.  
3. Ibid., Hukumnamas, Nos. 2, 10, 13, 17, and 21-23.  
4. Ibid., No. 15.
Jamalpur Sangat: (A Qasba either in East Bengal or in Bihar) Known from the Hukumnama addressed to Bhai Mall and Bhai Bagha from Sri Matta (?). The same Hukumnama refers to Sangat at Bakala\(^1\) town also.

Dasu^a Sangat: (A tehsil in District Hoshiarpur Punjab), known from the Hukumnama of Guru Gobind Singh\(^2\).

Naushehra Pannu Sangat: (In district Amritsar) Known from the Hukumnama of Guru Gobind Singh\(^3\).

Paryag Sangat: (District Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh) Known from the Hukumnama of Guru Gobind Singh\(^4\).

Phaphra Bhai Ke Sangat: (A village in Tehsil Mansa, district Bhatinda) known from Hukumnama of Guru Gobind Singh\(^5\).

Bhai Rupa Sangat: (A village in Rampura Phul, Dist. Bhatinda, known from a Hukumnama of a Guru Gobind Singh\(^6\).)

from a Hukumanama of Guru Gobind Singh\(^7\), and Mirzapur Sangat (Dist. in U.P.) known from Hukumnama of Tegh Bahadur\(^8\).

\(^1\) Ganda Singh, op. cit., Hukumnama No. 30.

\(^2\) Ibid., No. 53

\(^3\) Ibid., No. 48, 52, 58 and 83.

\(^4\) Ibid., No. 56.

\(^5\) Ibid., No. 47.

\(^6\) Ibid., Nos. 33, 44, 58, 62 and 66.

\(^7\) Ibid., No. 46.

\(^8\) Ibid., No. 20.
A close look at these Hukumnamas will reveal the fact that non-formal centres of Sikh education, in the form of the Sangats, had been established both within and outside the Punjab. These centres extended towards east as far as Dacca in Bangla Desh, apart from several important towns in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

The Hukumnamas further refer to a variety of instructions to the Sangats such as:

1. Remitting donations for Langar and construction work being carried at the headquarters,
2. To establish and keep a bond of fraternity and brotherhood among the different members of the Sangat,
3. Encouraging the outside Sangats for the celebration of various Gurpurubs etc.
4. To pay personal homage to the Guru on certain special occasions, and
5. Instructions regarding discontinuation of the Masand system. (during the period of the later Gurus)

It will also be interesting to notice that these Hukumnamas also refer to a number of important members of the

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1. For further details see Ganda Singh (ed.) Hukumnamas, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1967.
Sikh Sangats established at various places, who were carrying on the religious, social and educational activities in these centres. In several of the above mentioned Hukumnamas, the educational efforts by the Sangats have been duly appreciated and the Sangats have been elevated to the position of Guru-rup i.e., Guru's own image. By the time of Guru Gobind Singh the Sangat was equated with the Khalsarup.

The Hukumnamas also refer to a number of Pujiaris, Granthis, Mahants and Ardasis at various Sangat establishments. These Sangats were noted for the spread of non-formal education within and outside the Punjab. They were not only centres of worship and education, but these also served as way side inns, where langar continued on regular basis and shelter was provided free to the poor and way-farers.

By the time of Guru Tegh Bahadur, the Sikh Sangats had been well-organised as non-formal centres of education.

1. See for example the Hukumnamas No. 46, 48, 50-61, where we find references such as and etc. The earliest reference to the term Khalsa in these Hukumnamas is found in an Hukumnama of Guru Hargobind (Ibid., No. 3).

For example the Dacca Sangat was termed as Hazuri Sangats or the Head Sangat, which controlled various other Sangats operating at Bengal, which in turn was controlled by the Guru Himself from headquarters at Anandpur Sahib and later on from Patna Sahib, which became the Takhats or the thrones of the Sikh authority.

During the travels of Guru Tegh Bahadur, lasting for two years, the Guru visited several places and contacted his Sangats on route. The Guru imparted education to his Sangats and received homage of the people along with many offerings. The total number of the Sangats in terms of its membership depended upon the number of ikhs living in a particular region.

2.1.1.3. The Masand System

As already stated, with the passage of time these Sangats were institutionalized and were placed under the charge of the authorised Masands. This was done with a view to impart formal education to the members of the Sangat and also to receive the collections for Bhent or Karseva to be remitted to the Guru at the headquarters.

The word Masand is from the Persian word Masaad which means an elevated seat or Gaddi. The Masands acted as the representatives of the Gurus and were thus offered higher seats or Gaddis in Sikhs Sangats and were called as Masands.
The Masand system had come to replace the Manji system of Guru Amar Das. The Masands were also called Ramdasī, after the name of the Guru who instituted this order and whom they represented.

The beginning of the institution of Masand can be traced in the Manji system introduced by Guru Amar Das, the third Guru, who established twenty-two Manjis (each under the charge of a Masand) to propagate the Guru's teaching and to accept the collections on behalf of the Guru. In order to further streamline the system, the fifth Guru, Arjun Dev, ordered that in future every Sikh was to set aside Daswandh or one tenth of his income for Guru's fund.

The Masands were specially trained Sikh preachers who were fully conversant with the doctrines of the Gurus. That they were not merely collectors of Bhejū or offerings, but were teachers and propogators of Sikh faith. This is evident from the contemporary non Sikh sources such as the Dabistan-i-Mazahib of Mohsin Fani, wherein it is stated as under:

1. For details of Manji system see chapter on Guru Amar Das.
3. Mohsin Fani, the author of Dabistan-i-Mazahib, was a contemporary of 5th, 6th and seventh Gurus and was a personal friend of the sixth Guru, Hargobind. This source is valuable as it helps us in distinguishing the earlier from the later Sikh traditions.
"Through that Masand, people became Sikhs of the Guru. The Chief Masand, through whom great multitudes became Sikhs of the Guru, appointed their own deputies, until in every place and district, the associates of a Masand through his deputy became Sikhs of Guru.

By the time of Guru Arjun Dev, the construction and other welfare activities required huge funds. The Masands were therefore specially instructed to come to Chak Ram Das (The Guru's headquarters) every first of Baisakh to render accounts and bring with them as many Sikhs as could conveniently accompany them. Many more Sangats were established and trained Masands were appointed there, during the period of Guru Hargobind.

The Masand system was thus a far-flung and, at the same time a closely centralised institution. There are many instances on record to show that during several decades the institution worked smoothly. It was the general rule for a Masand not to depend in any way on the offerings made by the Sikhs, for his own subsistence. The offerings were regarded as poison and dependence on them for subsistence was tantamount to polluting the body.  

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That the Masands were specially honoured by the Gurus is known from the fact that at the time of taking leave each and every one of the Masanda received a turban. The Gurus thus not only received a substantial income through the Masands but the latter proved as powerful instruments of propagating the Guru's doctrines. The Masands taught and organised the Sangats as aice of the Gurus. Thus the Sikhs were provided with convenient local educational cum religious centres.

Up to the period of the Sixth Guru, the well-knit organisation of the Sangats and Masands, kept the Sikhs together and in touch with their leader. During the period of Guru Hargobind, a new duty was assigned to the Masands which consisted of recruitment, and training of the Sikhs in art of warfare, for the purpose of supplying the warriors to the Guru. A Hukumnama was issued to the Masands to the effect that the Guru –

1. Ibid., p. 261.

2. According to the Sikh records the Gurus received substantial income from the Sangat at Kabul. The beautiful horses that afterwards became the cause of collision between Guru Hargobind and the imperialists are stated to be presents from a Masand at Kabul. We are also told how Sujan, a Masand from Kabul, massed for the Guru, great wealth from the offerings. M.A. Macauliffe, op.cit., Vol.IV, p.38

3. For further details see under Military education under the Sikhs.
would be pleased with those (Masands) who brought them the
offerings of arms and horses instead of money. (1) During
the same period, the institution of Sangats and Masands was
supplemented by several Dhuans (hearth) and Bakshishes
(bounties) apart from the Udasis. (2)

2.1.1.4. DETERIORATION OF THE MASAND SYSTEM

By the time of Guru Hargobind, the old Masands became
largely corrupt and unreliable. The next Guru therefore,
hit upon an other idea for carrying on the work of educat­
ing the Sikhs. A new set of the devotees was converted to
Sikhism and these were assigned the task earlier performed
by the Masands.

The Guru converted a Bairagi named Bhagat Gir to Sikh
faith, together with his followers. The new convert was
renamed Bhagat Bhagawan and was appointed to ' preach
Sikhism in the east, where he and his followers established
about 360 Gaddis, most of which are still extant. Another
disciple of Guru Har Rai was appointed to preach Sikhism
in the central districts of the Punjab. (3)

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(1) M.A. Macauliffe, op. cit., pp.2-5.
(2) For further details about the Udasis, see separate
chapter on the Udasi contribution to the Sikh
Education.
(3) Teja Singh, Sikhism - Its Ideals and Institutions,
( Bombay, 1937 ), p.73.
It was thus during the period of Guru Har Rai that the first two Bakshishes (bounties) or centres of missionary work were established. At a later stage these proved to be so successful that three others were added by Guru Tegh Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh.

The political moves of the Masands, however, came to the surface during the period of Guru Har Krishan who made an attempt to seize the Gurugaddi for Har Rai, and use the latter as a tool. The incident is a clear indication of the deterioration in the Masand system, which had begun even during the days of Guru Hargobind. They were no longer pious and honest men whom Guru Arjun had appointed. They had been selected initially as torch-bearers of Sikh educational concepts. The office of a Masand, however, soon became hereditary and gradually fell into unworthy hands.

By the time of Guru Tegh Bahadur, the whole institution of Masand earned a bad reputation. Some of the Masands began openly to declare that they could make or unmake the Gurus. Further their corrupt practices and dishonesty brought disrepute to the whole movement.

(2) The Sikh records refer to a few recalcitrant Masands who took over the side of Har Rai and declared him the Guru.
(3) The chief conspirator in this episode was a Masand named Gurdas. M.A.Macauliffe, *op.cit.*, IV p.316.
(4) G.C.Narang, *Transformation of Sikhism*, (1972), p.73 The situation deteriorated to such an extent that one of the Masands, named Sihan, even made an attempt on the life of Guru Tegh Bahadur (Macauliffe, IV,p.334).
Thus the Masands, who had been foremost in spreading
the Guru's message, became, in the course of time, the
greatest counterpoise to his authority. The Sikh sources
(1) contain a number of stories as to how Guru Gobind Singh
was finally convinced of the utter perversity of the
Masands and determined to free his Sikhs from their
influence. These stories may or may not be true, but the
substantial truth behind them is testified to by the Guru
(2) himself:

"If any one go to the Masands, they will tell him
to bring all his property at once and give it to
them.

If any one serve the Masands, they will say, 'Fetch
and give us all thy offerings'.

Go at once and make a present to us of whatever
property is in thy house.

Think of us night and day, and mention not others
even by mistake.

'They put oil into their eyes to make people believe
that they are shedding tears.

If they see any of their worshippers wealthy,
they serve up sacred food and feed him with it.

(1) It is said that one day a company of mimes came to
the Guru's court. The Guru asked them to imitate the
Masands. One of them accordingly dressed as a Masand
two as Masand's servants, and fourth as Masand's
courtesan, riding behind him on a horseback as he
went to collect offerings for the Gurus. The mimes
portrayed to life the villainies and oppression
practised by the Masands. (Macauliffe op.cit.,
Vol. V, p.89) See also I.B. Banerjee, op.cit., Vol.II,
p.110.

(2) M.A. Macauliffe, op.cit., pp.84-89; Sukha Singh,
Gurbilas Patshahi Dasvin, (Lahore n.d.), p.34.
If they see him without wealth, they give him nothing, though he beg for it, they will not even show him their faces.

Those beasts plunder men, and never sing the praise of the Supreme Being.

Guru Gobind Singh thus did not compromise on half measures like trying to reform the Masands or separating the less corrupt from the thoroughly corrupt, but with one stroke of the pen pronounced excommunication on the whole lot of them. It was thus a historical situation, which once again linked the Guru directly with his Sikhs.

A number of Hukumnamas issued by Guru Gobind Singh to the Sikh Sangats after 1699, refer to the Guru's instructions to the Sikhs to send their offerings direct through the authorised persons and not through the Masands, or to bring them personally to Anandpur. They are also asked not to associate themselves with the Masands and their followers.

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(2) Khalsa College, Amritsar; SHR 35, Nos. 4 and 8; SHR 42, Nos. 2, 3, 4; SHR 43, No. 5. Cited in Grewal and Bal, *op. cit.*, p. 227, fn. 28.
THE ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF GURMUKHI SCHOOL.

The origin of the Sikh or Gurmukhi school may be traced according to tradition to the second Guru Angad whom the portrait painters have portrayed in his characteristic pose of a teacher instructing a child. He was particularly fond of children, his own as well as others and took a keen interest in them. He used to watch their activities like eating and playing and would instruct them in an easy and natural manner. He educated his daughter Amro as well as his sons who constantly remained with him.

Secondly, Guru Angad cultivated the Gurmukhi script with the enthusiastic devotion of a priest. Guru Nanak had left a boy of sacred verse particularly "Japji", "Asa d£ War", etc, which all his followers had to learn and commit to memory for daily service. It was, the recitation of his hymns at Khadur, a village in Amritsar district, by one Jodha that touched the deepest chord in Lahina and drew him to the feet of Guru Nanak. It was, again, Bibi Amro who, in the same manner, unconsciously brought Amar Das to the fold of Guru Angad. In short, Guru Angad may be described as the father of the Gurmukhi school, a pedagogue himself who found both a script and a literature at his disposal to teach. The method of
learning was characterised by memory and music. The sacred
verse was enjoined to be repeated at least once a day.
Satta and Balwand bards of his court, carried on the tradition
of Mardana and filled the village of Khadur with Guru's
sacred music. As we have seen in the previous pages.
The ancestor or the fore-runner of the school was Sangat,
a society of adults founded by Guru Nanak at different
places all over the country and westward during his tours
spread over a period of twelve years.
Such societies were probably thirty in number and were called
Manjis in the characteristic Punjabi manner. Each Sangat or
society was presided over by a disciple, nominated by the Guru,
known as Bhai or Baba as he came to be called later on. The
Sangat recited at its meetings the hymns of the Guru in accom­
paniment with music and the Bhai gave particularly an exposi­
tion of these to the audience.

In course of time a temple came to be built by the
followers at each place visited by the Guru. There is no
evidence of any attempt made by a Sangat to teach the illiterate
or the children, the art of reading or writing. The largest
Sangat came into existence on the bank of the Ravi where Dewan
Karori Mal built the village of Kartarpur with a temple for
Guru Nanak. Most of his followers were grown-ups, there is no
record of any educational activity, in the strictly formal sense
introduced there.
The second stage in the evolution of the school commenced with the education of Har Gobind, who later on became the Sixth Guru, in the Harminder at the feet of Bhai Budha after the Granth had been installed in the temple. His education was initiated ceremonially with all the elements of religious formality: a temple for its house, a Granthi as a teacher and a holybook as the text "of spiritual and temporal instruction". A full account of the education has been given elsewhere. This incident broke first ground in the history of education in India, created a tradition which came to be universally observed. Dharamsal became an important institution under the charge of a Granthi whose business it was not only to lead prayers but also to instruct the children of his community. "Gobind Rai", received his instruction like Har Gobind at the feet of a Granthi, and it is extremely probable that all the other children of the Gurus and others received their first instruction from the Granthis of the temples.

Once a Sikh came to Guru Gobind Singh in search of peace. The Guru asked him if he could read. He replied in the negative. But when the Guru explained to him the advantages of literacy, he expressed his earnest desire to learn if he could find a tutor. The Guru appointed his own Granthi or reader to instruct him. More instances like these may be quoted in support of this tradition. Further instances from the lives of historical personages are also forthcoming. Maharaja Ranjit Singh for instance was first put to school at the feet of a Granthi in a Sikh temple at Gujranwala.
RAPID GROWTH OF GURMUKHI SCHOOLS: The number of Gurmukhi schools multiplied and soon a network of them spread over the Province. Three very important factors were responsible for their rapid and extensive growth. Each of the Gurus, with a solitary exception, either built a new colony or adopted a separate habitation or village as a centre of his religious activities. Guru Nanak's centre of religious propaganda Kartarpur, Angad's Khadur; Amar Das's Goindwal; Har Rai's Kiratpur; Tegh Bahadur's Makhowal; Gobind Singh's Paunta and Anandpur at Makhowal. There are many other places associated with them, a long list of which Griffin gives in his 'Punjab Chiefs'. This gave each of them perfect freedom to carry on the religious cum educational tradition according to his insight and resources. In this way nearly a dozen centres of Sikhism began to flourish.

Secondly, these Gurus adopted the practice of going out of their headquarters on preaching tours. This revived old contacts, brought a fresh converts and stimulated the building of temples or charamsals. This gave a fillip to the cause of Sikh education and culture. With each new temple raised, a new school was opened for the children of the community.

Thirdly, the relations of the Gurus, like Bedis and Sodhis founded colonies in districts like those of Lahore, Jhelum and Gujrat they received charitable grants of villages from the Sikh Chiefs, Governors and Maharaja Ranjit Singh. In these colonies Sikh religion and its institutions flourished to this day.
The curriculum of the Sikh religious education consisted mostly in the hymns composed by the Gurus except the sixth, the seventh and the eighth. Some of them are, no doubt, occasional pieces inspired by a variety of objects, views or events of social or moral nature. But the chief variety of hymns is devotional and grouped under several prayers prescribed for different times. 'Japji' for instance is a long piece of 38 stanzas (Pauris) composed by Guru Nanak intended to be obediently repeated early in the morning for the great divine service for every Sikh follower. Even those who are illiterate have a learn it as a matter of duty and repeat it as enjoined. "Asa di War" is another song of praise composed mainly by Guru Nanak and a bit by Guru Angad often recited in Dharmasalas after Japji as a morning divine service. The ReHaras is a collection of hymns by Guru Nanak Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Dass and Guru Arjan recited by the Sikhs as divine service as sun set. The Sohila is another collection of hymns to be repeated at bed time composed chiefly by Guru Nanak and partly by Guru Ram Das and Guru Arjun.

These three compositions made up in the beginning, the fundamental of curriculum of the Sikh education until the time of Guru Arjan. Also, according to Kanahya Lal, the fourth Guru compiled anthology of hymns called 'Shabad Shalok'. Anand and Sadd have formed part of rituals and particularly learnt by those aspiring to be Granthis or Readers.
Anand is now read at the beginning of any undertaking as well as in the morning congregation to begin the day auspiciously. The learned sons of Guru Amar Das had a literary bent of mind. Sant Ram compiled the hymns of the Guru Amar Das while Sundar Das compiled Anand or calling sung on all occasions of mourning.

Once on the birth of a grand son, Sidh Jogi, Guru Amar Das composed the Anand or the song of joy which has come to be sung or recited on occasions of marriages and rejoicings also before large feasts and at the preparation of sacred food. The study of these hymns was enjoined upon all Sikhs by the Gurus by precept and example.

During his stay at Kartarpur the Sodar and the Sohila were chanted in the evening and the 'Japji' repeated at the ambrosial hour of the morning.

It was Guru Nanak's practice to rise three hours before day, go to bathe in the Ravi, recite 'Japji' and meditate on God. Once when a black-smith approached Guru Angad for divine instructions, the Guru bade him recite 'Japji' with attention every morning and work gratuitously for the poor.

One day when requested by Bhai Budha and other Sikhs to recount to them the rules of his religion, Guru Amar Dass who lived repeating 'Japji' and exhorted others to do so and 'while yet a watch of night remaineth, let my Sikh arise, bathe and sit apart for meditation. Let them ponder on the Guru's hymns. Let Sikhs associate with the holy, love

the Guru's hymns and be pleased when they read or listen to them. Let them act according to the Guru's words; then shall they know that they are saved. While instructing new disciples, once Guru Ram Das counselled them to love Guru's hymns beyond their own affairs. 'When ever you read the Guru's hymns,' added he, 'keep your attention on their meaning and never allow your minds to wander.'

In his message to the people of Kashmir, Guru Arjan advised them to rise before day, perform their ablution repeat and sing the Guru's hymns.

While departing to his final home, Guru Har Gobind said in his farewell message:

Ever love the Guru's hymns and regale your hearts by reading and listening to them.

The Guru's instruction is a raft to cross over the fiery ocean of the world, said once Guru Har Rai. They (baptized Sikhs) must rise at dawn, bathe and read the prescribed hymns enjoined Guru Gobind Singh on the birth of the Khalsa.

Some of his principle injunctions were:

i) Repeat the Japji and Jap Sahib before breakfast.

ii) Repeat the Rahiras' in the evening and the Sohila at bed time.

iii) Receive the baptism and teaching of the Guru and act according to the Granth Sahib.

iv) Habitually attend a Sikh temple ...(V.117)

Describing the life of a Sikh Sirdar in olden days, Griffin says that at day break he would rise, perform his ablutions and start repeating the morning prayer or Sukhmuli. After the evening meal, musicians played and sang hymns called "Shabdh Rahras" and an hour after sunset all retired to rest having repeated 'Ardas' or evening prayer.
Next to Guru Nanak, Guru Arjan contributed largely to the evolution of the curriculum. He was a distinguished poet and a great scholar. Besides a large number of hymns, he composed *Sukhmani* or the 'Psalm of Peace' containing 1120 lines of verse, which are repeated in the morning after *Jap Ji* and *Asa Ki War* or beside the thick bed. His "Twelve Months" or *Bawan Akhari*, (an acrostic on Alphabet) are devotional pieces. His *Jaitsari Ki War* is devotional and partly ethical; *Shaskriti Slokas* ethical; while *Gatha* contains sforisms. *Punhas* is a poem of 23 devotional quatrains written by the Guru for his sister-in-law. Of these *Sukhmani* had been most popular since then.

These poems of his, the Guru included in the Granth that he compiled, a voluminous book which contained the compositions of the other Gurus together with selections from the songs of both Punjabi and non-Punjabi saints. Copies of this *Granth* must have been made in parts, for the benefit of the Sikhs in different villages and towns and placed in charge of the *Granthis*. While the *Granthi* was supposed to have specialised in the mastery of the Holy book, young students were to study as much as they could, of the poems mentioned above. Selections like ' *Pancham Granth* ' and later ' *Dasam Granth* ' were probably made then for their benefit. The importance of the Granth as the holy book of the Sikhs became very vital for the growth of the community, and for the propaganda of its religious culture.
The study of the book, became, therefore, indispensable for the pious as well as for the young students, professional Granthis or their sons. This 'Model Book of spiritual and temporal instructions as Mohan Singh calles it, became the curriculum itself. Guru after Guru exhorted his followers to read the Granth: You must need the Granth Sahib and not worship any inanimate object. 'Guru may die', said Gur Har Kishan before his death, but their hearts, that is, the 'Granth' Sahib, shall remain with you. It containsth instruction divine knowledge and the Guru's spell. Read it and set on its counsels.'

'Look on the hymns of the 'Granth' as embodiment of the true Guru,' advised Guru Gobind Singh while baptizing one Har Gopal of Ujjain.

Lastly, before his death Guru Gobind Singh declared in a ceremony that the 'Granth' would be his successor and the last Guru of the Sikhs:

"Agya Bhayi Akal Ki, Tab'i chalayo Panth
Sab Sikkhan ko hukum hai Guru manyo Granth".

The panth was created by a Decree of the Eternal Dispensation:
All the Sikhs are enjoined to pay homage to the Granth as their Guru.'

He further advised the Sikhs to regard Guru Granth as their eternal Guide and Friend.
This was a momentous decision that enhanced the status of the Granth above man, and lent it sanctity of the highest degree. It became now the sole object of inspiration and worship.

While at Damdama, the Guru dictated an authorised version of the Granth to his disciple Mani Singh and sent copies of this version to various Dharamsalas like Nankana Sahib, as his gifts to them, just as Maharaja Ranjit Singh did later in the early 19th century. Guru Granth thus became a precious possession of the Dharamsalas, as the object of greatest veneration and study.

The interpretation and explanation of the Book, a quarto volume with 1530 pages, or exegesis became the sole object of study by learned Sikhs or scholars who became the custodian of the Dharamsal as Granthis, or as Gyanis or expounders. Mani Singh, the disciple of the tenth Guru, especially trained by him in exegesis became the other priest of the Har Mandir, Amritsar. Damdama, the Kanshi of Guru became the centre of this educational activity resorted to by the scholars of the Granth.

The beginners, however, studied a selection from the Holy Book, known as Panj Granthi which included Jap Ji Sahib, and Rihams. This selection, it appears was made by Guru Gobind Singh himself, also for he is said to have given a gift of Panj Granthi to the Raja of Udaypur.
The curriculum of the Gurmukhi school has been no doubt mainly spiritual devotional eulogic, expostulatory, and ethical. In course of time biography came to be added to it. Janam Sakhi or a biography of Guru Nanak was attempted by more than one literary aspirant. As a matter of piety Angad sought to write a biographical account of Nanak's who had to abandon a career as an Udaspilgrim and missionary. The tradition says that Bala, and Paira secured a truthful account of Nanak's life from his relations at Talwandi and helped writing a detailed account of his early life. Next, Miharban nephew of Guru Arjan wrote a Janam Sakhi of Guru Nanak. Later, another priest of Jandiala in the Amritsar district Handal by name narrated a religion of his own and compiled a Granth and a Janam to match the rival. The biographical accounts that found favour with the later generations were Bhai Gurdas's 'Varan', Mani Singh's 'Gyan Ratnakar' and Sewa Das's Janam Sakhi.

Next to biography other arts found their way in the hitherto narrow domain of Sikh education. The education of Har Gobind at the feet of Bhai Budha seems to be of encyclopaedic character, and cannot as such be regarded as typical. But it reflects a tendency to go beyond the strictly religious scriptures into the domain of secular arts like Military Science. (1) With the advent of Guru Gobind

(1) For details see a separate chapter on Military Education.
Singh and his founding the university of literary and military research, the Sikh educational curriculum became, elastic catholic, varied and wide. It came to include balladry military romance, mythology, philosophy, history, autobiography, etc. Guru Gobind Singh was particularly interested in history for its educational and philosophical values. On two different occasions he stressed the importance of its study. He realised that history was, in fact the teaching of philosophy by example:

'Listen to the history of the lives of the Gurus,' said he, inter alia, when asked by his Sikhs to give them further instruction that would lead them in their temporal affairs.

Read the history of your Gurus from the time of Guru Nanak enjoined Guru Gobind Singh before his death.

The third great contribution to the curriculum was made by the last Guru Gobind Singh himself.

The story of his literary labours has been told elsewhere. All his writings were collected by his faithful follower and literary disciple, Bhai Mani Singh in a volume called The Dasam Granth. His translation of the Bhagwat Gita and Prem-Abodh, however, do not form a part of this collection. Such a large output of literature is amazing in its richness and variety of it, Jap Ji is held by the Sikhs in the same estimation as the Jap Ji of Guru Nanak.
His *Akal Ustat* or 'the Prize of the Imortal', is devotional. *Bachittar Natak* ', is his incomplete autobiography.

"Var Sri Bhagauti Ji Ki" is a ballad of the Goddess Bhagauti. *Gian Parbodh*', contains legends of Parichhat, Ajai Singh and Chalis Autar ' is the story of twenty four incarnations. *Tiriya Charittar* written by Guru Gobind Singh in the *Dasam Granth*, is a collection of 'Women's wiles'.

His 'shabads' and Swayyas' are devotional and spiritual. *Shastra Nam Mala' and 'Nam Mala' contain names of the military armoury and accounts thereof. Lastly, 'Prem Abodh' contains biographical sketches of 16 saints. His spiritual compositions like *Jap Ji*, *Akal Ustat' and Ardas were included in higher reading for which every pious Sikh finds time particularly in the morning.

Arithmetic also found a place in the curriculum of Sikh education. Sikh Gurus had, always, advocated both by precept and example the pursuit of some occupation, trade, banking, agriculture, etc., whereby one could earn one's livelihood honestly. The knowledge of Arithmetic was indispensable for the pursuit of some of these occupations. The teaching of arithmetic as we have noticed in the education of Guru Nanak, was very common in these days because the Khatri and Vaishyas followed mostly the trading occupation. In course of time, as evidence indicates, the teaching of arithmetic came to be included in the curriculum of the Gurmukhi school, which widened its scope of studies according to the growing needs of the community.
According to the returns of the Lahore Division submitted by Robert Montgomery, the curriculum of the Gur-mukhi school consisted of three parts: Alphabet, Arithmetic and Scriptures. The figures from other districts from Hoshiarpur to Jhelum make, however, no mention of arithmetic while 'Alphabet' and 'Scriptures' were no doubt taught there. The Gazetteer of the Ludhiana district confirms the evidence of the Lahore Division. Some of the older men, it says, who have business transactions keep account books in Gurmukhi. This indicates that the conception of literacy was developed in the Gurmukhi school, and in course of time the school became perfect of its type.

'A large proportion' of 'Sikh Schools', writes the Hunter Commission's Report (p.20) taught in the Gurmukhi character the language of the Sikh Scriptures or Granth. Indeed, the Granth was the Chief book of study, and other subjects held only a secondary place in the education of children. For the part-time students and adults, the holy book was the sole object of study. The sons of businessmen, shopkeepers, traders would of necessity learn arithmetic and naturally whatever help the Reader could give them in learning arithmetic was availed of by them. The average Gurmukhi School, bore, no doubt, the stamp of the Holy book.

1. R. Montgomery, Selections from the Public Correspondence of Administration for the Affairs of the Punjab, (Lahore, 1852), p.76.
2.2. THE HINDU SYSTEM

2.2.1. GLIMPSES OF BRAHMANIC EDUCATION.

It is, moreover, necessary, writes the author of "The Dabistan" while describing the curious rites of Brahmans, that a Brahman's son should be invested with the Munji (sacred thread) at the age of eight, the Kshatriya's at eleven, and the Vaisya's at twelve, after which ceremony the boy is to be sent to school. Nanak, who was the son of a Khatri, of the Lahore district, was, however, put to school at seven and given the sacred thread two years later. The story of his education however throws more light on the educational practice of outlook of the Hindus during the Mughal period, than a mere knowledge of prevailing observances, customs or ceremonies.

When Nanak was seven years of age, his father in the manner of the Hindus of those days asked the village astrologer to select an auspicious time for the commencement of the boy's education. The school master thought the time had arrived. The village school master was the village astrologer, as well, but other than the family priest, Hardial, who was later asked to invest him with the sacred thread, and who should have been the proper person to initiate Nanak into religious learning. The Pandha

1. Mohsan Fani is believed to have passed his infancy, youth and manhood mostly in Kashmir, the Punjab and Guzerat under the reigns of the three emperors Jehangir, Shah Jehan and Aurangzeb. It was the state of religion prevailing in those days in Hindustan that he describes. Dabistan 3,5.
or the professional village school master offered, in his humble school, to teach both religion and commerce, for he claimed to know the Vedas and Shastars and had learned to cast up accounts, post ledgers and day-books, and strike balances.

Guru Nanak attended the school for sometime and left it after having shown his scholastic efficiency to the satisfaction of his teacher. It must be said to the credit of the Pandha, Pandit Gopal that he equipped Nanak with sufficient skill in book-keeping which served him in good stead later on as a storekeeper factor, and to that of that Pt. Brijnath who awakened or stimulated directly or indirectly in him a love for spiritual learning.

It is not a mere presumption to affirm that in the same type of school were educated, the Guru Angad, Guru Amar Das and Guru Ram Dass who were not born Sikhs but educated Khatri converts to Sikhism. Bhai Gurdas, the St Paul of Sikhism, and Sultanpur Bard, Bhikha, whose verses have been included in the Granth, also received their education under Brahmans. Prahlad, the legendary Bhagat of Multan was educated like Guru Nanak with other pupils by a preceptor or tutor. A further study of Nanak's school is very illuminating. The admission to school was like initiation attended with ceremonial. Nanak's father took a coin, some betel nut and rice, and presented these to the schoolmaster together with the learner.

The Primers, like the other books, were a luxury then and were provided to the beginner after he had committed the distinction of the alphabet to memory and could also tell one letter from
another. The first stage of his learning was, therefore, and is still to this day, the phatti or tablet on which the teacher wrote for the novice, the letters with a kind of liquid chalk. These he repeated loudly and practised on the tablet daily with the benefit of individual correction. The memorization of the alphabet was, however, not mechanical. In the modern Primers each letter is illustrated by the picture of an object of the name of which begins with that letter. In those days each letter introduced a verse in praise of God, a God or a saint. The acrostic repeated by Nanak is a pretty long poem divided into 35 couplets dealing with the immortality of God and the morality of man in a picturesque language.

The manner of learning was in short, poetic, a drill and practice method so much emphasised by the present day educationists in modern educational practice.

The character of the education, as noticed above, was two-fold, cultural—as well as practical or commercial. Nanak received both the types of education. While the commercial education was open to all, being almost universal for its practical utility, the religious or cultural education was a close preserve of the upper classes. There is story related by the tenth Guru of a king Summat Sain who put his children under the tuition of a Brahman. The observation made by Alberuni in the 11th century held good in the time of the Sikh Gurus as well; for according to Vaidya, the Vaishyas were treated no better than the lower classes.¹ When Guru Gobind Singh asked Pt. Raghunath

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¹ C.V. Vaidya, *History of Medieval Hindu India*, (Poona, 1926), p 4K.
to teach Sanskrit to his Sikhs, the Pandit declined on the ground that the Jats could not be taught the language because they were too low in their social status. This led the Guru to send his Sikhs of outstanding ability to Benaras in the guise of Sansyasis to master the language. On their return after seven years these Nirmalas broke down the Brahmanic monopoly of the Sanskrit language.

Guru Amar Das who was a contemporary of Akbar, was told the same things by a Pandit who said that religious instruction ought not to be communicated to everyone, it being forbidden to instruct Shudras and women in the sacred lore. The Brahmans, said the eighth Guru, Har Krishan, of the present day are not deeply read. They are great talkers and arguers and are deteriorating everyday; and in future they will have even less religion than they have now. Even earlier, the Gurus frequently commented on the futility of Brahmanical learning for it had not influenced their spirit or culture. Intellectual arrogance, and not profoundness, was a characteristic of their attitude towards the common people. The Sikh Gurus were ever against the pride of learning or knowledge. As paper is spoiled by water, so the perverse are ruined by pride, said Guru Ram Dass.

Even though religious education was mostly denied to the Vaishyas, lower classes and women, yet it does not lend itself to the conclusion that these classes were irreligious, lacking in culture or in intellectual curiosity. Bhai Budha was a Hindu shepherd when he came under the influence of Guru Nanak and rose to be the first Granthi of the Harmandir. Almost (_almost_ ) (a missionary of Baba Gurditta), was originally a goat-herd when reclaimed by Guru Har Gobind. Bidhi Chand was a notorious professional
thief who made a third though incomplete copy of the Granth.
Nam Dev, whose memory is still cherished in Gurdaspur and whose disciples and followers flourished at Dhariwal and Sukhowal, was the son of a tailor. Common people with little or no education came from all parts of the province to learn something from the Sikh Gurus, asked them questions and had their doubts removed and their minds enlightened. The devotional thrill they felt made them new men. Saido and Gheho, who accompanied Guru Nanak to the south, and acted as his secretaries, and, according to Macauliffe, are said to have made a record of Majh ki var and Pran Sangli, were Jats.

2.2.2: DOMESTIC EDUCATION

Guru Har Kishan, once complained that it was only a rich man's son who had had a private tutor under whom he could read a book like the Bhagvat Gita. Guru Arjan also expressed the same sentiment while he remarked to a Brahman: But it is only in wealthy houses thou ever readeest the books.

The Brahman, it indicates, was a mercenary who educated boys or visited the houses of the rich for the sake of money. Private tutor is, however, a universal figure found in all countries. In India, too, private coaching has been for ages, a common practice. There are people found everywhere who can afford it. Guru Govind Singh, when young, had tutors engaged for him at Anandpur. At the time of Annexation it was found that in Jullundur and Ambala Districts, almost all the education of the country was conducted at home and that private tutors were employed at home by respectable zamindars of all classes for teaching Persian, Hindi or Gurmukhi to their children. During the time of Maharaja
Ranjit Singh, employed by the Maharaja himself as well as by nobles, tutors used to coach children at their own houses in Persian or English.

But there was a peculiar feature of private education that was very common then. There were no public schools for the daughter of the Hindus and Sikhs. They were mostly given education at the houses of their parents. Major Edward's (1851) report about Jullundhar district, Bayly's (1852) about Kangra and the Multan Commissioner's (1848) report regarding female education show that female education was almost entirely a domestic education. In Lahore division, wrote Montogomery (1852) the children of the more wealthy home have private instruction in their own houses. The settlement report of Ludhiana district (1840) points out that in some of the higher families such as Jagirdars or others possessed of property exceeding the usual amount of ancestral share in a village community, a reader of the Granth may be found who imparts instruction to the extent of reading and writing Gurmukhi. They young girls are likewise thus far instructed. Such a teacher, if not permanently attached to the family, usually resides in it for some 6 or 7 years.

Elementary education was also given to the children of the middle class at their own houses by their parents or by teachers especially managed for the purpose. Private education was as common among the Sikhs, as among other communities. An educated parent would love to teach his or her child the elements of reading, writing and reckoning and would further help him to memorize selected passages from the scriptures for daily
recitations. Maharaja Jassa Singh of Kapurthala state, spent his childhood with Mata Sundri and was educated and brought up by her.

But parents who were too busy with their multifarious duties and who could afford to engage a tutor for their children, made private arrangements for their education. Some wealthy Sikh Sardars writes the Phulkian Gazetteer, also appointed Bhaigs to read and teach the Sikh scriptures to their boys and girls. S. Gurdial Singh employed a learned Sikh and a learned Maulvi for the education of his son who later distinguished himself as Hari Singh Nalwa. Emily Eden noticed in 1938-39, a grey-bearded tutor who never left the side of the prince of 'Puttealah Raja'. Maharaja Ranjit Singh employed, as we have noticed above, several teachers for the education of his princes and the sons of courtiers. The family of Sandhanwalias always had their private tutors, and, besides the sons of Sardars, others were also allowed to derive benefit from their teachers.

2.2.3. Private enterprise (The Dharamsala)

With the advent of the Sikh Misls, there was a general revival of religion and religious learning.

A great feature in the Punjab villages, according to the Ludhiana Gazetteer, is the Dharamsala, an institution of partly religious, partly charitable nature incharge of an ascetic or Sadhu of the Udasi or of some other order known as Bhai elsewhere. "It is the general feature of this province that wherever there are 10 houses of Hindus or Sikhs, there is sure to be a Dharamsala."

1. In all the early records, the Sikh temple is described as Dharamsal and not as Gurdwara. See Calcutta Review: July, 1850-Bh. Dit Singh's account, Bhai Nand Lal's biography, the account of the 'Gurdwara' at Gujrat.
Sikh religious place) observed Bhai D'it Singh in 1850. There is a
Bhai and a copy of the Granth in every dharamsala, adds he from
his observations of the various parts of the Province. In the
list of Gurdwaras compiled on the eve of the Gurdwara Act, the
number of the institutions is nearly 550. The number of Gurdwaras
in the charge of Udasis is quite large.

An Udasi was always and a Nirmala was often, a celebrity.
He would attract a few resident disciples or pupils who lived with
him, served him and received education at his feet. In a large
institution of this sort, the Sadh and his Chelas make up a
college, the former being called the Guru or father of the Chelas
and the Mahant of the institution. The Chelas collect money and
sometimes set up in other villages similar institutions affiliated
to the original one. Regarding the function of the Dharamsala,
the Phulkian Gazetteer (1904) records that Gurumukhi schools are
located in Dharamsalas and the teachers are Bhais and Sadhs.

Kahan Singh (1931) in his "Gur Shaba Ratnakar Maha Kosh",
however, enlarged on the function of the Gurdwara saying that it
was a school for children, Guru for the seekers after truth, a
hospital for the sick and shelter for the women in need, a rest
house for travellers and a boarding house for the hungry. From
our point of view, then, it appears evident that the Dharamsala was
a school as well as a college. However, the education imparted
in the Dharamsala may be considered as of an elementary character.¹
It was in Dharamsala that men like Maharaja Ranjit Singh and Bhai
Kand Lal learned to read Gurumukhi.

'The instruction', writes Walker, in the Ludhiana Gazetteer (1888-89) 'is given by means of slates. The boy first learns to form letters and then to write from dictation. An advanced boy will, sometimes, begin to read the Granth or Sikh scriptures but the use of books has not yet been introduced'. The statement about the elementary character of education which consisted in the two arts of writing and reading is rather laconic. The first report of the Administration of the Punjab is silent on the point and so is the report of the first Director of Public Instructions. All that they say is that the 'Seikh' school was resorted to by Sikhs, which taught "the Granth in Gurkukhi' and that these schools were chiefly of religious character attended only by Sikhs.

More light is, however, thrown on the subject by Phulkian Gazetteer, (1904) by Leitner (1882) and by testimony of those old men who received indigenous education early at the feet of those who themselves had received the same in the age-old-traditional manner. Instruction in the first year consisted in learning the arts of writing and reading. The method of learning the Gurmukhi alphabet was not new or peculiar, but was common to Devnagri, or lande, as well. It grew out of the conditions of living in which, paper was scarce and dust was abundant, in which simplicity was a euphemism for poverty and ignorance and in which memory was more in demand than intelligence.
Reading and Writing

After having committed to memory the letters, the child proceeded to trace letters on the ground covered with sand or dust with his finger or later with a thin piece of wood, for a pencil. In the third stage the beginner was given a takhti or board made of wood plastered with black on which he wrote with a white ink made by dissolving a piece of earth with water and a pen made of reed. He would write down, and recite at the same time in a sing song manner each consonant in turn in combination with each vowel, as:

sa mukta, sa kanna
si siari, si bihari
su unkar, su dulankar
se lawan, sai dulawan
so hora, sao kanaura
sang tippi, san bindi.

The teacher first, and then the monitor, led the way in the demonstrative reciting and writing down simultaneously. The Child's education began with learning alphabet or 'painti' the 35 letters by rote. Each letter being accompanied by a motto or moral maxim, which according to Leitner had come down since the time of Guru Anged who is believed to have written the first primer of Gurmukhi.

Fourthly, the child would learn to write down familiar words like the names of God, Gurus, relations, friends and neighbours, etc and of the things of every day use, like the clothes, the eatables, the articles of household, dharamsala, etc.
Writing and reading went, thus, hand in hand and the child acquired efficiency in making a literary acquaintance with his surrounding world. Practice both in recitation and writing was the method of teaching. Drill or oral practice was called Moharni and played, as we have observed it already, a prominent part in the indigenous method of teaching or learning. The lessons in reading were concentrated on Balopdesh of which little is known except the name mentioned in Phulkian Gazettee and Leitner and confirmed by Bhai Narain Singh of Khushab. Bhai Dit Singh in 1850 and Bhai Bishan Singh in 1949 refer to Balbodh as the first "primer" cum "Reader" used by children.

2.2.5. TEACHING OF ARITHMETIC:

The Phulkian and the Ludhiana Gazetteers do not make mention of the teaching of arithmetic. Tradition, however, points out that elementary arithmetic had its place in the elementary instruction at the Dharamsalas. It goes without saying that children learnt the forms of numerals and simple numeration. But it was not enough and could not be enough. 'The Nanak Putras', writes Lawrence, 'were Siṅh traders who accompanied caravans as agents while passing through Sikh States'. The knowledge of commercial arithmetic was no doubt, essential for such a purpose. They would, no doubt, have attended the Lande school for that purpose. But the multiplication tables must have been committed to memory at this stage as tradition affirms it.

Leitner's observations that only sons of Lambardars or Patwaries learnt the Pahara or multiplication tables is too narrow to be accepted. The sons of the Sikh trading or business class formed major part of the student community in the Dharamsals. Memorising multiplication tables was as important for them as the Shabads. The method of learning these was by Mohari or oral drill in groups with every student, in turn, taking a load in repetition.

Secondary education in the Dharamsal was devoted to the study of the Panj Granthi or "Five Chapters" of the Granth. This selection from the Granth, seems to have been made early in the time of Guru Gobind Singh or probably earlier, for the Guru made a gift of it to Raja of Udey Pur. It had, therefore, the sanctity of the Holy book for those who could not have the time or capacity to study the bulky scriptures. These five chapters were read, explained and memorized in the course of a year. These five were most probably among the following list of the Das Granthi:

1. Japji Sahib. - Morning Prayer
2. Rahe Ras. - Evening Prayers
4. Sidh ghost. - Dialogue between Sidhs and Guru Nanak
5. Bawan Akhari - by Guru Arjan in Gauri Rag.
6. Asa di var - Prayers for the morning.

1. No manuscript copy of the Panj Granthi is still extant.


9. **Sukhmani Sahib** - Peace of mind by Guru Arjan Dev.

10. **Barah Mah** - by Guru Arjan Dev in Majh Rag.

A keen student would study all these which put together were called "**Das Granthi**" or "Ten Chapters" or Sections of the Holy Book. It is presumed, though there is no evidence bearing on the point, that prose was also included in the course of studies for the secondary education. It was in the first place more easy to learn than poetry. Next it offered a delightful variety in the biography of Guru Nanak. Bhai Mani Singh had written one and another was attributed to Bhai Bala. It is, therefore, suggested that besides "Panj Granthi" and "Das Granthi" the biography of Guru Nanak was also studied by Sikh students particularly when the life stories of the Baba had become so popular among the people themselves.

No special attention was paid to writing apart from practical exercises in the transcription or reproduction of the text. The study of Arithmetic or any other subject was conspicuous by its absence from the curriculum. If the Granthi himself had received a training in music or there as a Ragi in the Gurdwara, music also formed a subject of study. Pupils with a sweet voice sometimes, entered the service of the Dharamsala or went abroad for further training in the sacred music.

**CO-EDUCATION:**

Boys and girls were often educated together at the primary stage. The memorization of the multiplication tables
was, however, not popular with the girls, nor was it felt necessary for them. In secondary education, too, girls took equal interest and sometimes led the boys in the art of recitation. The mother of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Kishan Devi and Mathura Devi of the Dhamasal at Gujrat, Nanki, the wife of Bhai Nand Lal, and the wife of Veer Haqiqat Rai, are believed to have received their education in the Sikh Dharmasals. These are some of the historical instances of female education among the Sikhs.

The social and religious clash between the invading Turks and the Hindus in the Punjab and eastward, is without a parallel in volume, in intensity and in bitterness. This has been dealt upon too often to be repeated here.

There was, however, another aspect of this collision, i.e. the cultural impact between the two peoples, which however, took a long time to emerge; for, the conquerors and settlers, whether rich or poor, cultured or illiterate, intelligent or dull, regarded themselves as superior race and kept apart from social or civic contacts with the people. But the stern reality of administration, the hard necessity of making the Hindus work for ruling class, taught them—

1. For the terms used in the indigenous schools during the pre-British period in the Punjab see Appendix, VI.
both to relent a little and use care and caution in the
treatment of inhabitants. And the Hindus, too, sooner or
later realized their political inferiority and social weakness
and accepted with good or ill grace the yoke of the foreign
rulers. The Ghaznevides who lived for over a century in the
Punjab especially the princes and who expelled by the Seljuks
from Iran and Turan had settled down in the Punjab as the kings
of the country, says the author of "Lahore", "appear to have
been a tolerant race and to have adopted 'the conciliation
policy' towards their Hindu subjects. They employed troops of
Hindu cavalry under a general like Tilak in their unending
warefare. Some of them even adopted on their coinage the
titles and written characters of the conquered race. Their
popularity may further be inferred from the continual disturbances
which arose at Lahore after their expulsion" by the Ghoris.

Earlier, it is said on the authority of Chach-Namah Mohd-bin-Qasim appointed Brahmans to be the collectors of the
Jizyeh. This was obviously a matter of necessity. It is
believed that after the establishment of settled Muslim Rule
in Delhi, the emperors not only began to make use of Hindus
to an increasing extent in the Government of the country but

3. Elliot and Dowson, op.cit.,Vol.I, p.182.
Hindu Princes who had come into favour with the Muslim rulers became useful allies and employed their Hindu troops in the service of the Muslim authority. Troops of both the denominations fought together in the same field against the common enemy who was generally a Hindu but sometimes a Muslim.

The historical evidence brings out two important facts: One that the Hindus particularly Brahmans came to be employed by their rulers at a very early date, on certain minor posts and second, that Hindu soldiers mixed with the Turkish soldiers and fought their battles for them. This two-fold contact at two different social strata gave rise to two linguistic phenomena; the evolution of a new language in the army and the introduction of a new language among the Hindu educated community. The rank and file of the army as well as the officers had to depend on the Hindus for the everyday needs of their life. They had, therefore, to pick up their language, the basic language which consisted of words or phrases relating to eating, drinking, clothing which had to be bought or snatched off; to riding and transport which had to be hired or pressed in by force; to housing and shelter which had to be procured, built up, or seized; to furniture and other accessories that are so common and yet so indispensable in daily living. Commands and orders had to be given to them in their language, their answers or replies had to be understood. The rank and file

individually or collectively could only seldom employ interpreters. Thus there was a natural evolution of a new speech in the street as well as in the camp wherein the Hindu soldiers lived and drilled and fought side by side with the Turks. The Indians, no doubt, picked up a few words or phrases and the acquisition on their part had perforce to be greater, more systematic and more useful. This was Urdu, an army jargon, born in the Punjab, as an oral dialect with a hybrid or mixed vocabulary to suit the convenience, and serve the purpose, of the foreign rulers.

There were Hindu dragomans in the service of Mahmud both in the civil administration and in the army large portions of which were Hindus under Hindu officers .... A specimen of these interpreters is Tilak the son of Jai Sen (i.e., Tilaka the son of Jaya Sena). After having pursued his studies in Kashmir, he became interpreter first to Ka'bi Shirazi Bulhasan Ali a high civil official under Mahmud and Masud, then to Ahmad Ibn Hasan of Maimand, who was grand vizir, A.D. 1007-1025, under Mahmud and a second time, 1030-33 under Masud, and rose, afterwards, to be a commanding officer in the army. This class of men spoke and wrote Hindi (of course with Arabic characters) and Persian (perhaps also Turkish, as this language prevailed in the army) and it is probably in these circles that we must look for the origin of Urdu or Hindustani.

On the higher stratum, it is evident, the Brahmans or others, who collected poll tax or land revenue, or kept accounts for the new masters, or assisted the learned foreigners in doing so, must have picked up a large number of Persian words and even learnt the Persian script with a view to acquiring an adequate knowledge or skill in, the language of their chiefs. The first accounts were, however, kept in Hindi and later in Hindi written in Persian script with a sprinkling of Persian words which they learnt directly from their masters. What is learnt through the natural process of speech comes in handy, but, for a systematic study of the language, the Hindus must have attended the madrasah. The desire to win the good will or favour of the rulers and at the same time, to secure a job for themselves in the new regime, was a strong motive for learning Persian, the language of the Government and many people possessing a realistic frame of mind must have come forward, just as Brahmans, their spiritual leaders had come forward earlier, to learn the new language.

1. Hindu accountants kept the registers in which was recorded landholder's or cultivator's normal liability to Government. Hindu village officials or muqaddams ordinarily collected revenue. The Hindus were Rais, Chaudharies or landlords and officials of importance. In short, practically all minor posts connected with the assessment and collection of land revenue and with accounts of public and state finance generally were filled as they were many generation later, by Hindus, Cambridge History of India, Vol.III, p.45.
2.4. PROMOTION OF LEARNING AND EDUCATION BY MAHARAJA RANJIT SINGH.

2.4.1. Introduction

Ranjit Singh was, no doubt, 'a military genius' who ushered in an era of peace, a period of transition from the middle ages to the modern times. He was, also, an enlightened ruler and a great patron of learning and art.

Ranjit Singh was indeed a cultured ruler with a large humanity, who fixed up a box to receive complaints from the aggrieved and which he opened himself, who never administered capital punishment, and who abolished traffic in children and women, a scourge of the lawless times in which he was born.

This liberalism of the Maharaja, writes Griffin, had an excellent effect upon his administration example was catching.


2. He established a degree of law and order and of peace and security which, the people of the Punjab had not enjoyed since the invasion of Nadir Shah in 1837. The confusion and anarchy which had come in its wake was aggravated by the invasions of Ahmad Shah Abdali on the one hand and on the other hand by the predatory and lawless activities of the Sikh Mislas which even indulged in mutually destructive wars. B.R. Chopra, *Kingdom of the Punjab, 1839-45* (Chandigarh, 1960), p. 193.


Ranjit Singh bore, inspite of his mere literacy, every quality of an educated person. He was found of discussing the constitutions of other countries and hearing about the army campaigns of Europe with every foreign visitor to his court. His manners to strangers were particularly pleasing and courteous and exercised over the travellers fascination.

Jacquemont found him almost an intellectual in conversation. He observed in his letters: 'He is almost inquisitive India I have seen and his curiosity balances of the whole of his nation. He has asked me a hundred thousand questions about the British, Europe, Bonaparte, this world and the next, hell, paradise, the soul, God, the devil and others of the same kind. Again, adds he, Ranjit Singh was getting information about the population, the strength the taxes, the produce of the each branch of public revenue, axioms of our civil and criminal law, and lastly the great the application of our sciences to manufactures.'

(1846)

Lawrence found Ranjit Singh 'gifted with great natural intelligence, wonderfully quick apprehension and retentive memory.' For his age and country he may be truly called a benevolent despot and in some respects even a good king. His secretaries were in attendance upon him and read

out to him papers in Persian and Hindi, catching every word and noting it in the court language and *transmistsed* it to every corner of the empire. Although illiterate, he frequently criticised and corrected the diction of his secretaries.¹

Giving a glimpse of Ranjit Singh's Court, Lawrence writes that he was surrounded by about a ministers, reporters, vazirs, scribes, omedwars, plaintiffs large number of and by prisoners all of whom awaited his attention and final orders.²

2.4.2. Patronage of Learned and Talented Men.

Ranjit Singh's court was an image or reflection of his character. 'All that was educated and refined', writes Prinsep,³ 'disappeared from the Punjab before Ranjit Singh was born.⁴

Ranjit Singh's effort had been to create a Court where, in the course of time, science and refinement will be reproduced or collected from countries around, as the habits of peace and luxury come and the bustle and perpetual activity of war and military expeditions took much of his time. According to M. McGregor, he was too much occupied with the Court matters to allow his devoting any portion of it to literary activities. He nevertheless respected learning and learned men. He always referred them for such information as they were supposed to possess.

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A characteristic instance of the truth of the remark is known from what he did on the very first day he held his court. At his coronation, writes Kanhyā Lal, all the learned men, scholars and poets of the city of Lahore were present. Every one was rewarded according to his rank and talents. Then Ranjit Singh asked the poets to make a verse mentioning Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh therein, for a legend to be inscribed on his coin. After several attempts and much criticism, the old verse was approved as under:

'Deg-o Teg-o Fateh-o Nusrat bedrang
Yaft az Nanak Guru Gobind Singh.'

All the new rupees were given away to the poor. The hereditary Qazis and Muftis who had proved their efficiency were retained in their posts and offices.¹

Being great himself, Ranjit Singh had an eye for what was good and great. His sense of values was very keen and unerring. This is exactly what Chopra means when he says that Ranjit Singh had the knack of selecting 'the right man for the right place', regardless of any considerations of creed, caste or colour, origin or rank. Apart from Sikhs, Brahmans no less than Muslims, and Khattris as well as Dogras were his confidants and advisers. Among his officers were Afghans, Persians, Gurkhas and Europeans of different nationalities. Among his courtiers were Sikhs of all Mislas, Hindus of all castes and Muslims of all tribes.

². B.R. Chopra, op. cit., p. 218.
It is an interesting study to meet some of the gems of his 'cosmopolitan' court who were in most cases men of learning, and competent administrators and educationists as well. A brief account of them will throw light on the state of learning in the Punjab and also indicate that Ranjit Singh believed instinctively not in benevolent dictatorship, but in the idea of entrusting the government to the pick of talents that a country produces. Fakir Aziz-ud-Din and his brother pesa Singh Majitha and his son Lehna Singh Majitha, Hari Singh Nalwa, Diwan Mohkam Chand, the Attari Chiefs, Misr Diwan Chand, Diwan Sawan Mal, etc., etc., would have been the pride of any court or country.

Although himself illiterate Ranjit Singh had a deep respect for learned men and learning and when occasion presented itself during his first visit to Peshawar, of showing his esteem for literature, he did not neglect it and issued positive orders for the preservation of the extensive library of the Mussalman Saint at Cham Kan.

Fakir Aziz-ud-Din was a gem of Ranjit Singh's court. He was not only a diplomat, a mystic poet, an educationist, but also author of several works. He was well-versed in astronomy and had written a dissertation on theology and physics

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treating both together, after the manner of ancient Greeks. Mian Qadir Bakhsh was another distinguished courtier of Ranjit Singh. He was a profound scholar of Arabic and Persian, a physician, and a poet. At the instance of the Maharaja, he learned the art of gunnery under the French Military Officers and wrote on the subject a book in Persian called 'Miftah-u-qila!

The Sikh confedracy before Ranjit Singh possessed no written law. Ranjit Singh however, realised the need of a statute book or Penal Code, for his government, which was carried on in the customary judicial manner except for the special changes made by him regarding traffic in women and children, sati, capital punishment, etc. He, therefore, appointed Pt. Radha kishan a great writer to write a Dharama Shastra or law book for his Government and gave him extra salary for it. This was a great attempt to prepare a law code suitable to the needs of a secular state administered by Sikhs, Hindus and Mussalmans together. Captain Wade, according to Kohli, was asked by the Maharaja to write a note on British Penal Code and British constitution which Munshi Sohan Lai had to translate in Persian. The British Government Martial Law was also translated. In the catalogue of his library books, there are two titles, Qawaid (Laws) and Qawaid-i-Ain-Angrezi (English Penal Code) Both the books are in Gurumukhi.

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2. Revenue, 40-47, 1851.
Sardar Lehna Singh Majitha was a mathematician, an astronomer, an engineer and an inventor. Ranjit Singh's court was equally popular with historians. Of his numerous vakils, the most distinguished was Sohan Lal. He was the court historian or chronicler. This Akhbar Nawis has left a Rognamcha or a record of dates and a chronicle of events, known as Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, which gives a true and faithfull narrative of Ranjit Singh's eventful life. It is regarded as a historical document of first rate importance.1

Kashmiri Brahman scholars found the court of Ranjit Singh more hospitable than others and at the invitation of the Maharaja to dewan Ganga Ram many Pandits came with him and found employment and position in the Court. The Dewan's brother Pt.Bakht Mal who had previously held a subordinate civil post at Delhi, became, now, the historian of the Punjab. His Khalsa Nama, a chronicle of the Maharaja rule until 1809 is regarded as an authority, by historians like Malcolm,2 on Sikh History Dewan Amar Nath, the grandson of Pandit Bakht Mal, and son of Pandit Dina Nath, was, besides being a paymaster of the irregular forces of 'Khalsa Darbar', a poet and historian. He is regarded as the most classical poet of his time who wrote sonnets of great beauty. Like his grand-father, he was also a historian and, in 1858, published his Zatar-Nama-i-Ranjit Singh, which is considered to be a book of first rate importance for the political history of the Sikhs.3

Other poets believed to have been associated with his court were Hashim Shah, Misr Ram Das, 'Qabil', Ahmad Yar and Qadir Yar, Budh Singh Joya Singh, and Shiv Dyal. Hashim Shah came to the notice of the Maharaja first for his wars in which he had celebrated the military exploits of his fathers, Maha Singh. Hasham Shah wrote lyrical, romantic and philosophical verses as well.

At the instance of the Maharaja Hashim Shah versified the Panj Granthi, Raj Niti and Gian Mala. The Maharaja was so pleased with his works that he granted him a large jagir in perpetuity. Ahmad Yar wrote the history of the Khalsa and celebrated the triumphs of Ranjit Singh while Qadir Yar celebrated those of Hari Singh Nalwa. Ganesh Dass chose on the other hand, the medium of Hindi to describe the battles of Multan and the exploits of Sadhu Singh and Phula Singh. Misr Ram Dass drew inspiration from the classics and versified the Ramayana. These poets have also to their credit lyric verse as well as versified reminiscences. Bh. Budh Singh translated, writes Bawa Pareem Singh, Panj Tantra in 1812. Shiv Dyal and Joya Singh, adds he, were always busy doing some sort of service or other in the cause of education.

Physicians, too, like Hakam Rai 'Karm Farma' and Hakim Wali Shah, well known for his learning and ability, received royal patronage. One Nur produced a work on medicine 'Nayabat-ul-Tabib', which was considered to be the most useful book of reference. Mirza Faqir Ullah kept a medical school for which he got a jagir of Rs.2000/- . The help of Dr.Horning Berger translations were also made of several
treatises on medicine and surgery into Punjabi. The Maharaja, writes Sewa Parm Singh, was highly pleased with such attempts and rewarded the translators liberally.¹