Chapter VI

Pandit Malaviya and the Conceptualization of Benaras Hindu University

Introduction

In conceiving BHU, Malaviya was supported by Annie Besant and others of a similar bent of mind. The Congress leadership and the British administration were not very eager to support the founding of an institution for higher education on traditional lines. Malaviya’s vision of education was directed towards education for the socio-economic development of the country, the transmission of cultural values, and character development of the individual. For him the role of the university was to catalyze the transmission and cultivation of cultural values. He also wished that such an institution would inculcate a sense of patriotism and nationalism.

The purpose of the chapter is to put his vision in context. He had to pass through many hurdles before the foundation of the Hindu University and how he gave concrete form to his vision; how the funds and politics were managed to support to establish the University of his Dreams. The task involved sensitizing people of the singular importance of scientific and technical education.

By the beginning of the twentieth century a small group of enlightened Indians aware of the role science and technology had played in transforming different societies. They began pressurizing the government to invest in primary, secondary and higher education. Education was the key to improving the

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1 A. Basu 1974: op. cit; p.2.
political, social and economic condition of the country. Educationists like Sir Syed, Malaviya, Tagore, Gokhale and others believed that modern India would develop if the nation’s scientific and technological capabilities were developed. This meant that from technological capabilities from heavy machineries to railways should be cultivated within the country. This would obviate the need for importing goods and expertise from the West. They also believed that Indians should be trained as scientists and technocrats within the country.

The objective of creating institutions like the Muslim Anglo-Oriental College and the Central Hindu College in the last quarter of the nineteenth century was to promote modern education as well as moral values based on religious education. The founding of the Benaras Hindu University and the Aligarh Muslim University in the second decade of the twentieth century was a larger project informed by the program initiated in the late nineteenth century.

The new dimension incorporated into the late nineteenth century project in the twentieth century was to "wed the best secular education of Western style and the best religious teachings of the eastern type." ¹ The avowed rationale for a religious education was that it would inculcate humanitarian feelings and produce good citizens of a free country. This pedagogy that emphasized character building and value education would help students appreciate the glory of Indian civilization and culture. The knowledge of India's past glory would arouse the dream of impulse of freedom from colonial rule. Only then was the

¹ Yudhistera Kumar no date. Annie Besant as an Indian Educator; Swarup Publication: Gwalior, p. 78. See the details in Anjali Dar 1991. Communalism and Education in the United Provinces 1915-1947; Dissertation, CHS, JNU.
development of the nation possible along national lines.\textsuperscript{1} Thus according to Lala Lajpat Rai, education which was to be useful must be ‘based on custom, tradition, history, physical needs and climate..... [and], the social and spiritual ways of each community.’\textsuperscript{2} Similarly, Sir Syed’s son prepared a scheme for establishing a Urdu university in 1872.\textsuperscript{3} David Lelyveld book ‘Aligarh’s First Generation’ indicates that Syed Mahmud (Sir Syed’s son) sent an essay to his father in 1872 from Cambridge, in which he proposed the establishment of a residential college where “Muslims alone would be able to obtain education according to their wishes”.\textsuperscript{4} The Aligarh College was opened for Muslims from all over India. The curriculum developed by the founders of the Aligarh movement was more suitable for students from North India. The founders “established contact with a very small group of North Indian Muslims who were literate in Urdu”.\textsuperscript{5} However, the founders of the university may have also contacted Hindus for donations and received support from the Hindu community of the region.

Pandit Malaviya possibly felt that ancient culture was egalitarian and society was affluent because of the importance given to education which was both intellectual and spiritual. The ashrams of the rishis were places where the students learned acquired a variety of skills informed by religious education. This method of education appealed to Pandit Malaviya who saw the Indians leading miserable lives. At the same time he saw the Western civilizations flourishing in

the light of modern scientific education. These two ideas combined over a period of time in his scheme of education.¹

The Mandate of Benaras Hindu University

The object of the Benaras University was to combine the best oriental ideals of life and thought with the best ideals of the West. This university was not opposed to existing Universities, but was a departure from the idea of the secular university.² The proponents of the idea of the Hindu University emphasized the importance of education which had deep roots in national sentiments and national traditions.³ The mandate the Hindu University was to mould national character based on Hindu traditions and Hindu ideals, and to educate loyal citizens who could lead the country to greater achievements in the sciences, arts and social well-being.⁴ Though the founders of the university were aware of the controversy which could arise due to the constitution of the theological faculty, they felt that Hinduism was a broad-based religion which included the Sikhs, Jain, Arya Samajists, etc. The university introduced theological studies because

³ Dr. Rashbehari Ghosh, 1911. The Hindu University, p. 2.
⁴ The aim of the Benaras Hindu University according to the BHU Act 1916 are:
   - To promote the study of the Hindu Shashtras and Sanskrit literature generally as means of preserving and popularizing for the benefit of the Hindus in particular and the world at large in general, the best thought and culture of the Hindus, and all that was good and great in the ancient civilization of India.
   - To promote learning and research generally in arts and science –all branches.
   - To advance and diffuse such scientific, technical and professional knowledge, combined with necessary practical training. As is best calculated to help in promoting indigenous industries in development of material resources of the country.
   - To promote the building up of character in youth by making religion and ethics an integral part of education.
this faculty was not available part of any other university in India at the time. The university was to have a pan-Indian character, and admitted students from Bengal, Bombay or Madras. Though the university curriculum was secular basis, the department of theology was totally staffed by Hindus and its curriculum focused upon Hinduism. The proposal of 1911 clearly mentioned that the university was not to recall the vanished institutions of the past since the past never returns, but was oriented towards promoting scientific, technical, and artistic education in combination with religious instruction and classical culture.

The proposal set out a bold agenda for the introduction of the Vedas and Hindu scriptures to all students. Dr. Rash Bihari Ghosh said in his Presidential address at Calcutta: “the Hindu University will, however, be open to the students of every creed and of every class and attendance at religious lectures will not be compulsory in the case of students who are not of our faith, or even in the case of Hindus whose guardians have conscientious objections to such attendance.” He also explicitly clarified that intention of establishing a denominational university was not to widen the gap between the Hindus and the Muslims as feared by a few. The founding fathers of the Hindu University including Pandit Malaviya were of the opinion that people who entertained such thoughts were those with

1 See ‘The Hindu University Bill’ in The Indiaman, April 23, 1915, Butler paper, MSS 116/70.
2 The Government did not have the power to appoint. The real power was entrusted to the senatus academicus, but Benaras was autonomous. ‘The Hindu University Bill’, Op. cit; See also speech of Pandit Malaviya on March 22, 1915 at a meeting of Imperial Legislative Council, printed in V.A. Sundaram, 1936. Op. cit, pp. 218-220. Malaviya explained to the members Mr. Ghaznavi and Mr. Setalvad who had objection to the establishment of the sectarian University that the proposed university was to have a University Court whose members were to be Hindus as the Hindu community provided endowments for the university.
3 Dr. Rashbehari Ghosh, 1911. The Hindu University, p. 3
4 Most of the newspapers published articles critical of the Hindu university in a time when the nation had already taken to a stage after witnessed the partition of Bengal and the sectarian developments that followed. Thus sections saw the Hindu University Bill as another attempt to widen the gap between Hindus and Muslims
narrow minds and constricted hearts. The denominational university had its drawbacks but the founders felt it was needed to establish true culture.\textsuperscript{1}

**The Importance of Benaras Hindu University**

Religious revivalism and communitarian identity politics raises its head in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The movement for the communitarian university was restricted at that time to the North West Province: colleges and schools had already been established in the province to impart religious ideas to students.\textsuperscript{2} The Hindu University was established for students of all castes and creeds and socializes them in the religious life and values. But the guardians of the students could choose whether their wards would opt for the religious courses. The role of the university was amongst other things to consolidate a sense of Hindu identity, which it was suggested, had been fragmented and distorted under colonial rule. This consolidation did not draw its source of inspiration from modern Hindu reform movements but from the ancient *Sanatan Dharma*, that was seen as common to the fragmented versions of Hinduism.\textsuperscript{3} Finally, the hope was that the students graduating from the university would be God-fearing, truthful, loyal to their sovereign, devoted to their country, and fit in every way to take their place in the future before them.\textsuperscript{4} Pandit Malaviya had a unique role to play in the conceptualization and foundation of the

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\textsuperscript{1} Muslims such as Syed Hasan Imam had liberally contributed to the funds of the proposed Hindu University. Mr. Ali Imam had mentioned, ‘are we not Indians first and Hindus and Mohammedans afterwards?’ Dr. Rashbehari Ghosh, 1911. *The Hindu University*, p. 4. \\
\textsuperscript{2} The MAO College at founded in Aligarh in 1875; Central Hindu College and Ranvir School in Benaras in 1898 are examples. The Central Hindu College and Ranvir school physically trained boys to make them strong to fight for the nation. \\
\textsuperscript{3} See the speech of H.H. the Maharaja Bahadur of Darbhanga at Meerut on October 17, 1911. MSS F 116 /76 \\
\textsuperscript{4} Maharaja Bahadur of Darbhanga at Meerut, *op. cit*
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denominational university in a period when many did not approve of the idea of such a university.¹ The establishment of a denominational university ran contrary to the educational policy of the government.

Importance of Benaras as a seat of learning

Legend has it that the city of Benaras was founded in the eighth century B.C. on the banks of the Ganges.² Naturally, the city has an ancient historical memory and ha retained its significance in the multiplicity of the Hindu imagination over the centuries. The city is then rich in mythical memories that give religious life meaning. In addition, Benaras has always been an important centre for scholarship and learning. Abul Fazl once described Benaras as the chief seat of learning in Hindustan since time immemorial. Seekers after knowledge from the sub-continent flocked to Benaras to receive knowledge and instruction.³ There is ample historical evidence to suggest that it has been an important centre for Vedic and Puranic learning and the birth place of poets, saints and philosophers. The French traveler Bernier compared Benaras with Athens in Greece: 'The town (Benaras) contains no college or regular classes as in our universities but

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¹ In a speech delivered on March 22, 1915 Pandit Malaviya pointed out that the Hindu university was a denominational university and not a sectarian university. Its role was not to promote narrow sectarianism but a broad liberation of mind and religious spirit which would promote brotherly feeling between humans. He said that it was unfortunate that even the secular state universities where there was no compulsory religious education had not prevented the growth of sectarianism in the country. He was of the opinion that the religious instruction for the Hindus at BHU or for Muslims at AMU helped in the propagation of truth of religion and not hatred. This would create men who are true to their God, King and their country. For details see V. A. Sundaram, 1936. Op. cit, pp. 216-217.
³ Abul Fazl, Ain -e Akbari: Vol. II, (In the portion on Allahabad Suba, as Benaras was the commercial and ancient Hindu educational center).
resembles rather the schools of ancient days'. Tavernier who traveled in India in 1665 described the college established by Raja Jai Singh for the education of the nobility.

Consequently, Benaras was the ideal location for Malaviya’s dream institution. The institution was advertised as a religious institution and thus stood in for the modern incarnation of an ancient seat of learning. The rich Hindus of the city, and there were many in Benaras, donated generously towards the founding of the institute. The Rajas of Benaras, Darbhanga, Bikaner, Cossimbazar agreed that it was the most suitable place for an institution higher learning. Allahabad already had a university. Further, with Benaras as the site for the university, it was possible to appeal to Hindus from all over India to contribute towards its development. The Central Hindu College was the nucleus of the Hindu University, and Benaras became the obvious choice for Pandit Malaviya and others in the Hindu University Society. Furthermore, Benaras was also in the heart of the North Western Province of the “Hindi speaking”.

Once the decision was taken Pandit Malaviya began traveling to different places to solicit donations for this temple of learning. He spoke of the importance of the city of Benaras and exhorted Hindus to donate money for the establishment of a Hindu university. In the campaign he evoked the religious sentiments associated with the city: that it was the city of Mahadev Vishwanath on the banks of the sacred river Ganges, an important centre of pilgrimage since antiquity, the city that was donated by Raja Harishchandra, the city where innumerable sages and saints were born, and where innumerable Hindus came to spend their last days.

1 Bernier Travels; pp. 334-341.
2 Tavernier. 1665. Tavernier Travels; vol. II, pp. 234-35.
A donation to the establishment of the university was a way of obtaining of Bhola

This temple of learning was to offer a subtle mixture of eternal and worldly education and the curriculum contained all the components useful for one’s life: Dharma (religious duty); Artha (Finances); Kaam (Lust); Moksha (Salvation). Emphasis was placed on the ancient knowledge systems and institutions and he referred to “… the children of such parents who gave birth to Nalanda, Taxila and other similar universities”. These ancient centers of learning evoked were reminders of India’s ancient wisdom and learning, and it was in their memory that Malaviya sought donations; for he promised that the new university would keep this heritage of ancient India alive so that the coming generations would get a chance to appreciate its ancient glory. The avowed inspiration for the university was Nalanda and Taxila. The second convocation address delivered by him promises to make Kashi the center of learning for the Hindus.

The new university would blend ancient philosophical knowledge with modern technical and industrial education. The words of the university song, the Kulgeet of Benar
ts Hindu University suggest that this is the university that offers knowledge and education of all kinds that is sweet and good, and that the city of Kashi, the centre of learning, is best in the three worlds. The song goes on that

4 Kulgeet is the university song of the Benaras Hindu University, which was written by Dr. Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar in 1924 and was inspired by the efforts of Mahamana. This Kulgeet expresses
this center of knowledge is situated on the bank of the river Ganges and the bricks are not new but even then this is a marvelous work of Vishwakarma. The great temples of learning impart the pure knowledge that truth should be placed even before one's life. Many learned Brahmans had written books in the city of Benaras that helped many a person to walk on the right path. Saints like Buddha, sages and saints like Kabir and Tulsi lived here. Even the Kulgeet was blessed because in this temple of learning all types of education was imparted which included many arts, science, mathematics, chemistry, agriculture, physics and other subjects. This world famous temple of learning is a beautiful combination of occidental and oriental learning. It is creation of Pandit Malaviya and is a symbol of national consciousness and cultural renaissance. The old Indian university has again taken a new form and has come here as the beautiful temple of all types of learning. The emblem of BHU has the goddess Saraswati playing the Vina seated on a Hamsa and Kamal-encircled by the 'Omkara conferring Amrit through Vidya—he most central symbols of Hindu learning had been installed in the emblem of the university.

Proposal for the Hindu University

The scheme of the Hindu university was presented by Malaviya at the Benaras session of the Congress in 1905 and was passed unopposed. Annie Besant had

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some of ideas Mahamana presented in the 'Final proposal of the Hindu University of Benaras in 1911'. It was first sung at the Indian Science Congress held at BHU in 1925. The official history of the university 'The History of Benaras Hindu University' compiled by Shri Somaskandam and Shri S. L. Dhar records that the song was first sung in 1923 at the central Hindu College Celebration Day. For details see Souvenir (Third International BHU Alumni Meet and International Seminar on the Education in the 21st century and Mahamana's Vision), organized on January 6-7, 2007 by Benaras Hindu University and Mahamana Malaviya Mission.

1 The scheme of the Hindu university was blessed unanimously by the Congress. Most of the leaders present there did not give their comments but silently accepted the university based on
already started the Central Hindu College in 1898 to impart religious instructions according to the sanatan dharma. She had drafted a Royal Charter for the establishment of the ‘University of India’ in 1907. This proposed university was to affiliate the colleges of all denominations throughout the country.¹ The enthusiasm for a Hindu University at Benaras brought Malaviya, Shiva Prasad Gupta, and several rajas, maharajas, landlords, to form the Hindu University Society and Malaviya was made its secretary. He drafted the Hindu University Bill and responded to all possible queries before he proceeded to take donations for his denominational university.²

Malaviya led delegations of prominent public figures on campaigns to collect funds for the university between July 1911 and October 1911. This entailed traveling through Bihar and the United Provinces on a collection drive. The delegation was welcomed with enthusiasm and Malaviya was respected for the sincerity with which he had committed his life for the cause of the University.³

the ancient ideas of gurukul. Agha Khan conveyed his full sympathy for the university movement and gave a token donation of Rs. 5,000. See Parmanand, 1985. Mahama\nан Madan Mohan Malaviya (An Historical Biography), Malaviya Adhyayan Sansthan, BHU: Varanasi, Vol. I, pp. 139-140. See Appendix XIV for the First Prospectus Presented by Pandit Malaviya at the Congress in 1905.

¹ Mrs. Besant had Hindus and Muslims as signatories to this proposal to the Secretary of State. But the promoters of the Muslim University at Aligarh did not back it once they had collected the stipulated sum required by the government to apply for a university. She later agreed to merge her idea of University of India with the Hindu University at Benaras. See Butler Papers MSS F116.71, p.31 letter dated August 8, 1912, from H. H, the Nawab of Rampur to Nawab Mohammad Ishaq Khan Saheb, also see Parmanand, 1985. Op. cit, Vol. I, pp. 195-199.


³ He had committed before the Congress in 1905 that he would devote his life for the cause of the university and for which he had become the biggest beggar in the world. When his delegation reached Lucknow Brij Narain Chakbast wrote a beautiful poem in Urdu and recited it in praise of Pandit Malaviya and exhorted people to come forward and give generous gifts to the nation’s
Within a small time span of three months he was able to collect more than was the needed for the initiation of the project. Later in October that year Pandit Malaviya met Mrs. Annie Besant and the trustees of the Central Hindu College who then decided on establishing the Hindu University. The governing body of the university, it was decided, would only have representatives of the Hindu community. It was also decided in this meeting that the Faculty for Theology was entirely to be managed by Hindus. The Hindu university society was formally penned on New Year’s Day and its office was opened at Allahabad, with one branch in Benaras. Sir Sundar Lal was made the secretary and Dr. Bhagwan Das, Iqbal Narain Gurtu, Gokaran Mishra were the acting Joint-Secretaries.

According to Malaviya the role of the university was to catalyze the transmission and cultivation of cultural values and knowledge. Further, such an institution should inculcate a sense of patriotism and nationalism. To give concrete form to this vision he very tactfully mobilized the required financial and political support. All the same there was a great deal of resistance to the proposal from mendicants. To see a few lines from his poem on Malaviya see Parmanand, 1985. *Op. cit*, Vol. I, See its appendix on pp. 212-213.

1 Pandit Malaviya visited Simla to meet Harcourt Butler, Member for Education in government of India and managed to get positive response from the government for the Hindu university with certain restriction which were similar to that put before the Muslim university program led by Agha Khan, who had succeeded Sir Syed to help for the cause of education for the Muslim community in India. For details see Parmanand, 1985. *op. cit*, Vol. I, p. 203.

2 See Parmanand, 1985. *Op. cit*, Vol. I, p. 192. Malaviya used to talk to his very close friends about his ambitious project. A close friend in Nainital, Pandit Krishnanand Joshi once protested: ‘Pandit ji you are talking very good things about the university but you don’t even have the money to make a small primary school let alone an all India university. We are sick and tired of listening about the university; at least open a school to begin with and then slowly and gradually thinks of a university.’ Other friends who were present smiled sarcastically. Malaviya was hurt. Later when Pandit Joshi visited BHU he met Pandit Malaviya congratulated him from the bottom of his heart. See Shukdev Pandey, 1961. ‘Mahamana Malaviyaji Ke Charitra Sambandhi Kutch
the government. The idea also ran into trouble in the North Western Provinces as its conceptualization was concurrent with the rise of the *Swadeshi* movement. The proposal for a Hindu university also came at a time when there was a demand for reform of the Universities Bill of 1904. There was a demand for structural reform of the existing universities; for establishing institutes of scientific and technological research, the proposal for a national education under the banner of the Congress and the *Swadeshi* movement.¹

In the first decade of the twentieth century the two proposals for denominational universities were put up to the government, both in the North-Western Provinces which were entirely supported by the community. The government had its own apprehensions about such universities and tried to impose its own rules and regulations for the functioning of such institutions. The associations that had forwarded these proposals were eager to proceed and hence consented to some of the imposed conditions. This naturally led to revisions in the conceptualization of the university, its establishment and management. The founders of the university initially were inspired by one of many Western models of the university, adapted to Indian circumstances. Such a university was a residential one, where the teacher and the taught were to reside together, and the teacher like a guru imparting spiritual instruction enabled the process of character building in the pupil. There were different models of universities in the industrial world—the German model, the London model, the Oxbridge model and several others.²

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¹ For 'Report of the Indian Universities Commission' see Curzon Papers: MSS F 111/251
At the turn of the century, a Hindu university was proposed to the government as a community’s effort for the promotion of higher education. At that moment there were only five universities in India. The Hindu University Deputation linked the poor economic condition of India with poor educational facilities provided in the country for education. The conditions of primary and secondary education were poor and the nationalist leadership had begun promoting the idea of national education, pressing upon the government to accept its responsibility to compulsory education of all children between six to fourteen years. Even Gokhale presented a petition on primary education in 1912 where he compared facilities for primary education in India with that available for the children of developed countries.

On the other hand, it was argued that the growth of higher education in the country was only possible if the institutions of knowledge were designed in such a way that it combined ancient methods of learning with the culture of the West. The university was then to be the temple of Sanskrit learning, incarnating the spirit of progress with a deep veneration for the past, combining the old and the new and the new and the old. In the process from its sacred precincts would

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1 In a presidential speech it was pointed out that for 300 million population there were only 5 universities in India whereas for a population of 41 millions in United Kingdom there were 18 universities. France with a population of 39 millions had 15 universities and Italy had 21 universities. Thus the members made their point clear that not only was one university like the Hindu university needed but many more were yet to follow in order to educate the Indians so that they could help in the development of their nation. Thus colonial neglect of education became an important item on the agenda of the nationalists. See The Hindu University, pp. 4-5.

2 See speech of Pandit Malaviya in The Hon’ble Pt Madan Mohan Malaviya, His Life and Speeches; p.542.

3 Gokhale’s petition was supported by Pandit Malaviya and he said that India would progress only if the primary education was made compulsory for all. See for details Dr. Umesh Datt Tiwari (ed.), 2004. Mahamana Ke Bhashan; pp. 460-469
emerge a national life which combined lofty spirituality with the determination and the masculine assertiveness of the West?¹ There was a section of Hindus in the Congress who were more inclined towards the Hindu- Cultural nationalism and employed Hindu religious symbols for political mobilization. This gave cause for suspicion among the Muslims, who had been informed since the time of Sir Syed that the Congress was a Hindu organization and whatever it did was for the welfare of the Hindu Community.² Following the partition of Bengal Swadeshi movement demanded planned national education and boycotted government. These developments had a long lasting impact on the mass mobilization that followed. For the first time the nationalist struggle began to take on the form of mass protest. Allahabad and Benaras were cities where the Hindu community had become very active. Thus at BHU it was proposed that there would be a College of Sanskrit Learning, a College of Ayurveda, that would give the science of life and healing preference. The study of the Sanskrit language and the teaching of the Vedas, Vedangas, Shrutis, Smritis, were to be the part of the curriculum. The idea was first proposed by Malaviya at a meeting in early 1904 at ‘Mint House’ in Benaras. The meeting was presided over by His Highness the Maharaja of Benaras. Pandit Malaviya drafted the first prospectus of the Hindu University and circulated it to select members of the Hindu community in October 1904.³ The university was committed to avoiding one-sided development of the student by providing for the cultivation of the intellect as well as that of souls.⁴

¹ See The Hindu University, pp. 9-10.
² Dr. Rajendra Prasad, India Divided, p. 93.
⁴ Speech by Maharaj Bahadur of Darbhanga on October 17, 1911 in a public meeting in connection to Hindu university held. See Butler Papers, MSS 116/76.
Students were to be admitted after the *upanayan* and commence the life of a *Brahmacharya* while in the institution.¹ This proposal was approved by the Indian National Congress in December 1905.² The concrete scheme of the Hindu University was presented on December 31, 1905, at the Town Hall, Benaras, where selected delegates from the Congress and many eminent scholars were invited.³ This scheme was again presented by Malaviya before the *Sanatan Dharma Sammelan* at Allahabad, which was attended by many orthodox sages who were followers of the *Dharma* and desired that teachers of religion be trained at the Hindu University for the preservation and promotion of *Sanatan Dharma*. The association of orthodox group during this phase began to reinforce the idea that it was a sectarian university. But the founding fathers of this university did not see it as a threat to the nation in any way for they believed that in the time of political crisis only religion could bring the community in together.

For other sections of the nationalists a denominational university signaled sectarianism that was an impediment in the path of national unity. The critics wanted to have institutions of knowledge that would be open to all. Newspapers of the period carried innumerable articles where Malaviya’s scheme was

¹ *Brahmacharya* was to confer on the student’s physical and mental peace which could help them bear the stress and strain of the intellectual, professional or civic work. Their culture would help in commanding respect of others and their character would inspire confidence. Their direction and control will ensure success to religious, educational, mercantile, industrial and philanthropic undertakings. These students were expected to establish colleges in different parts of the country which would spread the idea inculcated in them by the University and they would be affiliated to it. For details see Appendix XIV- The First Prospectus of 1904.

² Agha Khan was the 48th Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims. He was also one of the founding members and first president of the All-India Muslim league founded in 1906 and was the leader for the Muslim education after Sir Syed. He was educated in religious education as well as had sound European education which provided the perfect blend a leader for the Aligarh movement needed at that time for the establishment of the denominational University.

³ Bal Gangadhar Tilak was very enthusiastic about the scheme of the university and he asked if Malaviya was ready to devote the rest of his life for the cause. Later Jadunath Sarkar, and others devoted three years of their life to the service of the University. See Parmanand, *op. cit*, p. 193.
criticized. The Hindu University Deputation responded to its critics at Calcutta where Dr. Rash Bihari Ghosh, Babu Surendranath Banerjee, Sir Gooroodas Banerjee and the Maharaja of Cossimbazar supported the idea of a denominational university. In addition to being academics they were also supporters of the Congress and helped in finding resources for the university. Malaviya rewrote the draft of the university to help people understand the motive behind the founding of a denominational university. The title of this draft which was distributed as a pamphlet at the meeting was: *Benaras Hindu University: Why it is wanted and what it aims at.* The speakers responded to questions posed by politicians and colonial British officials. The obvious questions were:

- Whether the denominational university was desirable?
- Whether multiplication of universities is desirable?
- Whether a Hindu University is desirable?
- What is the idea of a true University?

Sir Gooroodas Banerjee expanded upon the relation between the denominational university and a child that receives a few things naturally from the family in which he is born, and then carries it outside as the set of values of a student in school. These ideas and sentiments along with his language are the gift of his family; his sect and his nation; and he would wish that the teacher should also utilize and improve that stock in him instead of ignoring it as in the case of government schools and universities. The Hindu University would spread ancient wisdom with modern scientific knowledge and help in the all round

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1 To have a look at the content of the pamphlet see Appendix XVII with the above title.
2 V. A. Sundaram, 1936. *op. cit.* pp. 158-159
development of a human being, who would believe in humanity first and then in nationhood and then the sect - Hindu or a Muslim or any other caste within the sect.

Furthermore, there arose the need, so it was argued, for a university which would impart religious education and benefit the vast majority of the Hindu population. Since the Muslims had their own proposal for a Muslim university the possibility of a common Indian university was removed. Sir Gooroodas further opined that non-denominational schools and universities kept the students free from religious bias but they did not inculcate the spiritual feeling which constitutes human beings. The supporters of the idea of the denominational university had to justify the point that these institutions would not accentuate and perpetuate religious differences, with the secular universities being neutral onlookers. They would build character and religious toleration among the students, and this would help in the spirit of conciliation between the Hindus and the Muslims. This process of reconciliation would in turn help in the removal of ignorance and intolerance present in Indian society. The idea of the Hindu university was based on the sanctity of the scriptures and the true ideals of Hindu life which had resisted the mighty religious, social and political revolutions that had swept the country. These ideals formed the permanent and unchanging features of Hinduism, but it was not opposed to progress. These noble ideals to be disseminated by the Hindu university could not give cause for

1 The ground work for the two universities were already prepared by Mrs. Annie Besant for the Hindu University and Sir Syed Ahmad Khan for the Aligarh Muslim University. See Aparna Basu, 1974. Education and Politics; see also Sir Gooroodas Banerjee, The Hindu University, p. 12.
2 The Hindu University, p. 14.
3 See MSS F 116 series.
4 The Hindu University, pp. 17.
any apprehension in the mind of even the most radical reformer that such a university would be antagonistic to progress.¹

Similarly, Surendranath Bannerjee clarified that the idea of a Hindu University was conceived for educational development and it was truly and faithfully to fulfill the educational needs of the nation beyond the narrow limitation of sect and creed.² He stressed that this was not a sectarian or a reactionary movement; rather it was to broaden the vision of the Hindus to look for the larger concerns of the nation and race. He affirmatively claimed that:

"All education is liberating. There is no such thing as sectarian education. The cultured mind never fails to rise above its artificial environments and to assert its native dignity in the generous sympathy which it feels for all that is valuable in other systems of culture. But there is yet another line of argument..... what necessity is there for a separate Hindu University when we have Calcutta University and other universities which are open to Hindus and Mohammedans alike?.... you could not resist this movement. It was bound to come. It is natural and normal expansion of the movement which has given birth in Bengal to the National College and its affiliated institutes. It is the part of the great awakening to which Lord Minto bore such eloquent testimony. The movement recognizes that in education lies our salvation, and further that education to be effective must appeal to our inherited instincts and must be conducted upon national lines. The educationist... has to deal with deep-seated, it may be,

¹ The Hindu University, p. 17.
² Babu Surendranath Banerjee, speech at the Hindu University Deputation, The Hindu University, pp. 6-11 also 12.
underdeveloped tendencies inherited from the past result? .... we hear a lot about the moral education in these days. The government universities have failed to grapple with the question. The Hindu University will solve it."1

A community university was not a government university, even though there was a movement for a national system of education.2 Bannerjee explained that since the time of Lord Ripon i.e., 1875, private enterprises were encouraged in the matter of education. Though reform and reorganization were frequently implemented there was lot of scope for improvement. A people’s institution of learning such as the Hindu University was bound to put enormous moral pressure for good on the government universities.3 Colonial officials who established the modern Indian universities were of the opinion that since Indians did not have any university on the modern pattern it was not easy for them to establish a modern university. The University of Benaras was inspired in part by Oxford and Cambridge.4 The medieval universities like Oxford and Cambridge5 were themselves undergoing change at the time. In the second half of the nineteenth century Cambridge acquired departments of science and technology. There were also instances when there was a move to remove religious instructions at these universities and throw open them to all corners.6

1 Babu Surendranath Banerjee’s speech at the Hindu University Deputation; The Hindu University, p. 8.
2 These universities were not totally autonomous of the government since the representatives of the government such as the Lieutenant-Governor was the visitor of the university and had the emergency power of interference when need arose. See The Hindu University Bill; MSS 116/70.
3 Babu Surendranath Banerjee, speech at the Hindu University Deputation, The Hindu University, pp. 9.
4 See The Hindu University Bill; MSS 116/70.
5 See Essentials of University for details on university system of education in England.
6 Essentials of University; See also Butler paper, MSS 116/70, an article on the introduction of a Bill for the creation of a Hindu University. The Statesman dated March 26, 1915 from Calcutta.
Identitarian politics became more visible in the Northern Provinces in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Religion and language were the axes of this politics. The colonial government had initially played one side against the other, but gradually looked upon it with alarm as it began to gather momentum. Lord Curzon who took over as viceroy in 1898 planned to arrest the growing political restiveness. The education organized by him was not attended by any Indians.¹

The University Reforms Commission was set up in 1902 to review the condition of higher education in the country. The committee submitted its report and in 1904 the Universities Commission Act was enacted.²

The founders of AMU and BHU conceived education as an instrument of social change. The education they spoke off was a morally guided education that

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² See Indian Universities Act 1904, based on the Universities Commission Report of 1902. The commission conferred power upon five existing universities to expand their scope by monitoring education in colleges and to undertake research. The commission also opposed the formation of Hindu and the Muslim universities. Government was also against the opening of any university in India other than the existing five universities. It was only in the 1913, through the Government of India Resolution, that there was a provision to open a teaching and residential university in all the provinces. Such drastic changes in government policy reveal the building pressure. A close examination of the communications with the Member of Education, Sir Harcourt Butler and the members of the two camps (see Butler Collections at the India Office Library, MSS. EUR. F116 series) it is understood that the British government felt the need to allow the religious institutions to be established as it would be fruitful for the government. The Education policy of the government passed in 1913 shows that the government passed the provision of building research universities in each province. See B. R. Garg, 2001. Policy Documents on Indian Education, pp. 277-314.
combined religious instruction with modern values. S. K. Bhatnagar points out that at the time it had become difficult to conceive of social reform without religious instruction and reform. The rules for admission at MAO College and the appointment of teachers which were not sectarian. The university register reveals that there were Brahmins among the first batch of students graduating from MAO College.

Sir Syed was educated in western ways and concluded that if Muslims wished to survive with dignity with the Hindus they had to acquire modern education imparted by the 'Enlightened outsiders'. The task was not easy since any new endeavour at the time was perceived as an attack on the religious and traditional identity of the community.

Sir Syed and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya were conservative modernizers of the time. Sir Syed took the bold step of establishing a system of modern education for the Muslims. He motivated the Muslims saying that with the

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1 Even the University Reforms Act of 1904 criticized the existing system of higher education. After prolonged deliberations the government decided to permit the establishment of denominational Residential Teaching and Research University in all provinces. For details see the Benaras Hindu University Bill, MSS. F116/80; B. R. Garg, 2001. Policy Documents on Indian Education, pp. 277-314.

2 S. K. Bhatnagar, 1969. History of the Anglo-Oriental College: Aligarh, Bombay: Asia Publishing House. He has explained why in that period religious study was an important part of the education movement. Any reform movement had to include reform of religion. A change in attitude was not possible unless "a new and dynamic spirit of enquiry was infused into religious studies." (p. viii) that the MAO college "was no doubt founded for the Muslims but its admission rules were not sectarian." (p. xi).

3 The Ulema had issued a fatwa against him and he was condemned of having abandoned Muslim norms and having adopted Christianity. But he fearlessly worked for the betterment of the Muslim community and used to praise the Bengalis in his speech. For detail see his speeches in Shan Muhammad (ed.), 2003. The All India Muslim Educational Conference, (though not all the speeches are available)
English education eventually they would be in the rightful possession of power,\(^1\) within the British Empire.\(^2\) In a pamphlet entitled, 'O Mohammadans of Aligarh, wake up and know your duty', he emphasized the role of theology in building up a 'true Muhammadan.'\(^3\) The pamphlet argued that 'The study of Theology would be as compulsory as the study of the books of modern Science.......'\(^4\) This was quite analogous to what some of the Hindu modernizers were proposing The Hindu movement being discussed here were pushing for a similar modernization and religious education.

The Maharaja of Bikaner was concerned about the growing discontent between the two communities. In a letter written to Butler he pointed out that it - "...would have been better if all Indians had been unified in their demand for a great 'undenominational' University." But he felt that the Muslims "... have gone too far with their scheme of a Muslim University......"\(^5\) This development had strained the relation between Hindus and Muslims: ".... I am afraid it is unavoidable and brought about more by the Muhammadans themselves than the Hindus."\(^6\) Basically, these votaries of Hindu education appeared to be arguing that secular education had not produced satisfactory results. Nevertheless, there was a space for combining secular with religious education.\(^7\) Political parties and leaders at the time felt that politics and religion would combine to bind the community together, and in their view 'religion' did not feed the forces of

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\(^4\) Ibid, p.142.
\(^5\) Maharaja of Bikaner to Harcourt Butler May 9, 1911. See MSS F116/71; See also S.C. Ghosh (ed.) 1977. *op .cit*. p. 32.
\(^7\) Curzon Papers MSS F111/251

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communalism. By the first decade of the twentieth century it was clear that communalism was nourished on religious exceptionalism and that religion was being extensively politicized. Religious associations, leagues, and sabhas mushroomed in this decade and politicized the linguistic and religious spheres.¹

However, some colonial officials saw the idea of denominational Universities as worthwhile experiments.² It is easy to suggest a conspiracy theory at work: these universities would create political leaders steeped in their religious identities and would work against the consolidation of the nationalist movement. One of the outcomes of the politicization of religion was to exacerbate the differences between religious groups and communities.

Thus in 1905 the Bharat Dharma Mahamandal declared that the Hindu university would impart instruction in Sanskrit and the Vedas, the Puranas, Hindu Shashtras would be taught alongside courses in modern science. The prospectus of the university insisted that the medium of instruction would be Hindi in this university and the suitable place for founding this university was Benaras since it was the ancient seat of learning.³ However, the university would be granted permission only if the society had been running a college for at least ten years. The ‘Central Hindu College’ started by Mrs. Annie Besant in 1898 served as the nucleus for the Hindu university.⁴ In 1907, the first Hindu Sabha

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¹ See chapter II and also IV for details.
³ A copy of the first prospectus has been reproduced in the appendix.
was organized which was the platform for the All India Hindu Mahasabha established in 1915, whose first meeting was organized in Haridwar.¹

Thus we see that during this period the politicization of the religious sphere was accomplished by a fragmentation of traditional boundaries, and the instrumentalisation of education. Educational institutions became the epicenter for the cultivation of separatist ideas. Did the colonial administration anticipate this development, or was it the outcome of their pandering to a variety of political interests in the nineteenth century in the name of language.

The Hindu University Society

The Hindu University Society mostly comprised of local Rajas, Maharajas, landlords, businessmen, lawyers, and teachers.² The membership of the society was thus socially influential and sections even belonged to the elite. Several of them had connections in government. One of the criticisms of denominational universities at the time was that they were elite institutions established to cater to the needs of the elite. While this may be true during the early years, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century education in India had remained confined to the upper castes and classes. This feature was true across the religious divide.

¹ See Leah Renold, 2005. A Hindu Education: Early Years of the Benaras Hindu University, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, p. 44.
² For the list of names of those who were members of the newly formed Hindu Society, or had donated large sums of money for the foundation of the denominational university, See V. A. Sundaram, 1936. op. cit pp. 88-95
The Colonial Government's Response to the Establishment of Denominational Universities

Lord Hardinge, the Lieutenant-Governor of the province and the Member of Education, Sir Harcourt Butler were not convinced about establishing denominational universities for Hindus at Benaras and Muslims in Aligarh. They feared that religious centers of learning would become the centers of political agitation in the region, where Hindu-Muslim conflict would become more explicit. In addition they feared the politicization of the students in the universities. But then the secular universities had become centers of political unrest as well.1 Developments specific to the region led to formulation of the Indian Education Policy in 1913 that attached importance to moral and character building of students. Thus provision was made for imparting religious education with secular education in the new universities to be established. This made the founding of BHU and AMU a reality and paved the way for the establishment of other residential research and teaching universities at Hyderabad, Dacca, Lucknow and Agra.

The Benaras Hindu University Act was introduced by Sir H. Butler at a meeting in the Imperial Legislative Council held on March 22, 1915.2 Speaking about the bill Sir Butler said that the idea of a research and teaching university was very new to India and took shape between 1910 and 1915. He said that the University Commission's Act of 1904, which was an influential body, had pronounced against the establishment of such a university and there was great deal of

1 Letter of Lord Harding to Sir H. Butler dated March, 24, 1915, MSS, EUR. F 116.71 pp. 3-4, 15
2 Act XVI of 1915, passed by Governor-General of India in the October 1915.
opposition to this Act. The Act was the result of long and persistent discussions between committees representing the two communities (Hindus and Muslims) with the government seeking permission to establish denominational institutions in the country. The Indian Education Policy of 1913 reviewed the University Commission’s report and recommended the establishment of residential universities where religious and moral education could be imparted.

The Foundation of BHU

The foundation stone ceremony of the Benaras Hindu University was performed on Vasant Panchami, February 4, 1916 by Viceroy and Governor-General of India, Lord Hardinge. The ceremony was preceded by the performance of Hindu rites and ceremonies according to Sanatan Dharma under the direction of Pandit Adityaram Bhattacharya and others. A large crowd assembled at noon on the day of the ceremony when the guards of honor were there to welcome the Viceroy. The ceremony was attended by the Maharajas of the different states of India, the Lieutenant-Governors of Punjab, the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, Bihar and Orissa, distinguished guests, titular Rajas and Maharajas, Mahamahopadhyayas, Shams-ul Ulama, Principals of Colleges, a large number of Trustees and Donors of Benaras Hindu University from different parts of the country, and most of the distinguished guests of Benaras.

Mahamahopadhyaya Shiv Kumar Shashtri chanted some slokas in Sanskrit and then performed some rites before an idol of Ganapati and made offerings to

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1 Indian Education Policy Resolution, 1904
2 Indian Education Policy Resolution, 1913
4 See V. A. Sudaram, 1936. op. cit, p. 252-56.
Goddess Saraswati. The Maharaja of Darbhanga, the President of the Hindu University Society gave the welcome address and also a brief history of the movement of BHU since 1904, recounting the support provided to the movement and thanked the patrons and supportive colonial officials. He specially thanked Sir H. Butler for initiating the process, Mrs. Annie Besant and the college trustees for transferring the Central Hindu College to the Society, all the rajas, landowners and others who had provided donations and promised other financial aid to the society for the University and welcomed further cooperation. He also thanked the British government for supporting the cause of higher education, the help provided to residential and teaching Universities and the liberalization of educational policy by sanctioning the establishment of Benaras Hindu University. Even the Viceroy and Governor-General of India, Lord Hardinge in his speech at the ceremony praised the efforts of the Hindu community to have worked persistently for the establishment of the denominational university.

Administrative Structure of BHU

As a residential, teaching and research university BHU was influenced by Oxbridge -and it was understood by a few scholars that BHU was a similar institution established in India in early twentieth century. The organizational structure of BHU was designed by Sir Harcourt Butler. The Chancellor, Pro-Chancellor and Vice Chancellor were nominated by the Governor General of India. The University itself was a corporate body formed by the Chancellor, Pro-Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor as nominated by the Governor-General of India and the members who constituted the Court and the Senate and other members who would later be appointed to the office or provided membership. The
University would have the provision of imparting education, literary, artistic and scientific, agricultural, technical, commercial and professional, furthering the execution of original research, offering instructions in Hindu theology and religion, and of promoting the study of literature, art, philosophy, history, medicine and science and of imparting physical and moral training. The Senate was the academic body of the University, ordinarily consisting of not less than fifty members, comprising the ex-officio Chancellor, pro-Chancellor, vice-Chancellor and the pro-vice-Chancellor; University professors; Principals or heads of constituent colleges of the university, eleven elected members, five of them by ; five by the registered graduates of the university from the date fixed by the court; five representatives of the Hindu religion and Sanskrit learning elected by the Senate. On the Vice-Chancellor's declaration of deficiency in any faculty or faculties five or less person would be elected by the Senate, eminent in the subject or subjects of that faculty or those faculties; three nominated members and five members to be nominated by the visitor. The University Council was the executive body with ex-officio members comprising not more than thirty elected members, where five members other than the ex-officio members would be from the Senate. The Council would exercise such powers and perform those duties which were vested in the Statutes. The syndicate of the University comprised the vice-Chancellor, pro-vice-Chancellor and fifteen members of whom not less than ten would be University Professors or Principals of the constituent colleges. This was done to ensure that purely academic matters should be decided by a body of experts, while the governing and supervision of the University was the task of the Court and Council. The vice-Chancellor was to be the ex-officio chairman of the Council, Senate and the Syndicate.

1 See Benaras Hindu University Bill, Butler Papers, MSS, EUR, F116 /70; See also V. A. Sundaram, 1936. op. cit, p. 236-250.
The Curriculum at BHU

According to Pandit Malaviya teachers played a very important role in the university, and the teachers appointed at the university were to pledge their faith in ancient religious thoughts, to follow the Hindu scriptures, to spread education, to facilitate societal development, and to serve the nation.\(^1\) The Benaras Hindu University, according to some was the organizational realization of Malaviya's views on education.\(^2\) In this scheme he combined the study of ancient Ayurveda with modern Allopathic education, ancient Indian culture, theology, and an in depth understanding of history and literature; modern psychology, metaphysics, economics, logic, philosophy, political science along with the study of the Vedas and Vedangas and Sanskrit literature, the study of scientific knowledge, chemistry, geology, electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, agricultural science. Scientific agriculture and industry were important components of his developmental vision.\(^3\)

Physical education was considered to be of equal importance. Akharas were opened within the university and students were encouraged to participate in wrestling competitions. This was to be a way of dispelling the idea of the weak Indian propagated by colonial rule. This later became an integral part of the regimen of the Hindu militant.\(^4\)

\(^1\) Mahamana Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, (published earlier) p.10
\(^2\) Dr. Rash Bihari Ghosh, 1911. The Hindu University, p. 3.
\(^3\) Mahamana Madan Mohan Malaviya: Life and Speeches, p. 623.
Women's education was considered important, but a separate curriculum was designed for them. This curriculum also included the study of Sanskrit and Hindu religious texts. This was to ensure the propagation of the Hindu cultural legacy to the next generation. In 1928 a separate college within BHU called the 'Mahila Mahavidyalaya' was established. The college was staffed entirely by women. Despite this deep conservativism a hostel was opened for women, and he was strongly criticized by his co-religionists.¹

Members of the Bharat Dharma Mahamandal pressed for the compulsory inclusion of the study of the Vedas and other Hindu religious texts. The rationale offered was that the religious spirit generated of Sanatan Dharma would promote brotherhood and would help the anti-colonial struggle.² While agreeing with these suggestions Malaviya had to respond to the officials who were opposed to the blatant inclusion of religious propaganda in the curriculum. Malaviya told the Legislative Council on March 22, 1915, that the University was founded as a denominational university and not a sectarian one. Thus the removal of the provision for compulsory religious education, meant only for the Hindu students would be like “cutting the head ... of the scheme..... We wish to make up for an acknowledged deficiency in the existing system.....”³

The model of denominational universities proposed in the first decade of the century was criticized for being mere copies of foreign universities. The idea of BHU had its supporters, but it had as many critics among sections of educated Hindus and even amongst some scientists. The complaint was that the university

¹ Dar and Somaskandam, 1966. *The History of Benaras Hindu University.*
² See Chapter II of this thesis for details on *Sanatan Dharma.*
was not Hindu enough, it was not founded on indigenous principles or the ancient centers of learning, that it was a mere copy of Oxbridge and Cambridge. There was resistance in Calcutta to the conception of the British university in any case, and the eyes of the educated turned to Germany. Further, the movement for National education was spreading. Consequently, this group wished to see a radical alternative develop in BHU and AMU. The Universities at Benaras and Aligarh were community universities where knowledge was imparted in five areas—the arts, sciences, law, oriental learning and theology. Colonial officials were appointed as Rector and Visitor of the university. Thus the colonial state had encroached upon the management of the university, and this was cause for dissatisfaction. At the Convocation address of Jamia Millia Islamia, the chemist P. C. Ray said:

"Oxford and Cambridge, with those costly appurtenances will not do for us; in the rage for forms, furniture and machinery, we must not use the substance..... let us not give merely a purely theoretic and literary education that has made us for the affairs of the world, and made us service hunters, thus inviting to our schools the appellation of golam-khanas. Let us, along with the humanistic studies, which are by no means too neglected, arrange for scientific and technical studies, which will enable our boys to earn an independent livelihood." ¹

In addition to the scientists from Bengal, even leading political figures such as Mahatma Gandhi found these universities similar to government universities.

During the non-cooperation movement there were moves to discontinue support to the university and to restructure it as national institutions. This was not acceptable to trustees of BHU and AMU. The universities were not closed and very few students were the part of the movement initiated by Mahatma Gandhi. This boycott of the non-cooperation movement by the two denominational universities led Gandhi in 1921 to establish the Kashi Vidyapeeth, as a national educational institution. Similarly, the Jamia Millia Islamia was established during the same period when AMU also refused to make necessary changes to become a national institution.¹

¹ For details on Mahatma’s call for the nation and the response of Mahamana it is necessary to see the two personality’s works and their collections by other contemporary to them. These two were strong contemporary congress leaders, who had some ideological differences but were very respectful to each other. They were nationalists who wished to see the nation independent and people happy. Though their method of work was different and there were ideological clashes between the two great leaders of the time. The denial of the support from BHU to Gandhiji’s non-cooperation movement by Malaviya brought was unexpected and this was not taken in good spirits by Gandhiji and his supporters. Opening of Kashi Vidhyapeeth with the help of founders of BHU is evidence to it. Apart from these few clashes due to the non involvement of BHU and the later change in concept of Hindu nationalism between the two leaders, the two old nationalists were working for the same goal with different paths. Its interesting to read them in Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vols. XXX, LXII, LXIV, LXVII (1975-6, New Delhi).
Conclusion

The Hindu University founded in Benaras aspired to transform the foundations of Hindu culture by becoming the important Hindu cultural institution of higher education. It acquired its particular form during the period of colonial rule and arose in response to colonial institutions of higher learning. In the middle of the nineteenth century provision was made for opening three universities at Bombay, Madras and Calcutta based on the grants-in aid system. The model of the university was that of the University of London and the university played the role of an examining body. Though these Universities were founded to produce a class of individuals to enable the administration of the empire, they also produced a class of educated Indians who went on to constitute a new intelligentsia that would soon turn on the empire itself. This class also turned to analyzing the causes of India’s backwardness and arrived at the conclusion that the state of education in the country was poor and Indian would not become a developed nation until this was remedied.

The Hindi-Hindu movement in the formation of BHU

The politicization of religion manifested itself in the emergence of religious curricula in schools, colleges and universities that were established on a denominational basis. Theosophists such as Annie Besant were convinced of the importance of religious education for character and wrote textbooks in simple language on Hindu religion and ethics.¹ There was an attempt to define a

¹ Annie Besant Sanatan Dharma: An Elementary Textbook of Hindu Religion and Ethics, Sanatan Dharma Catechism, and An Advanced Textbook of Hindu Religion and Ethics. These textbooks were used for religious education at schools and colleges of the Hindu College and University.
standardized and unitary Hinduism, a project prompted in the encounter with the West. This standardized version was inspired by the idea of Sanatan Dharma, a reimagining of Hinduism that was a response to the rise of Hindu reform movements.

The last quarter of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century saw the rise of the politics of religion and language. Hindu revivalism in the form of the Hindi-Hindu 'renaissance' raised its head in the North Western Provinces of Oudh and Agra. This revivalism generated a demand for linguistic, religious and educational reform in the socio-political system. The fragmentation of the social consensus on religious lines was reflected in similar demands raised by Hindus and Muslims, namely that of denominationally oriented education for the development of respective communities. The demands extended to the state's provision of mass education, a modern scientific education, and a change of the medium of instruction from English to the vernacular. There were attempts in the second half of the nineteenth century to translate the works of Western science and mathematics for the Indian masses. Vernacular Translation Societies were formed to promote such work in India.

Pandit Malaviya, under Annie Besant's influence, was committed to providing education of the Vedas to the Harijans. The Central Hindu College and later BHU at Benaras were established to provide an access to the living past. BHU was designed as an institution of higher education in colonial India that would nourish and nurture the builders of India. BHU would provide the template of a denominational University that would be replicated in different parts of India where religious education was to be combined with a modern scientific education. Malaviya would often rationalize, unconvincingly though, that
denominational universities were not meant to be sectarian, but to spread peace and harmony rather than serve as a breeding ground for separatist tendencies between different communities. The initial scheme of the Hindu University was drafted in 1905 by those who wished to revive Hinduism and its values amidst the Hindu population. BHU was to be the centre for this revival and its department of theology was comprised only of Hindus, where ancient Hindu religious texts and a Sanskrit education were to be given preference. In any case, over three decades the conflation of religious and linguistic identities had driven a wedge between Hindus and Muslims in the North Western Provinces of Oudh and Agra. By the early decades of the twentieth century these communal sentiments began to propagate into other parts of India.

The antagonism between the two communities intensified as the nationalist struggle began to gain momentum that worked against the unity that the nationalists were attempting to forge. Thus Hindu nationalism and Muslim separatism appeared alongside. These developments were a logical consequence of the policies of divide and rule that marked the period after the revolt of 1857. At the level of institutions of higher education this fragmentation was reflected in the formation of the Central Hindu College and the Benaras Hindu University for the Hindu community at Benaras and the Mohammedan Anglo Oriental College and Aligarh Muslim University at Aligarh for the. These denominational institutions provided an organized academic structure to these politico-religious movements. The denominational universities of this period were not established by the government but through voluntary efforts of religious communities ostensibly to initiate the educational development of the community and the larger cause of the nation. In the case of BHU support came from Indian princes, landowners, and wealthy Brahmins, trustees of the Central Hindu College.
trustees, and the colonial administration. The support for the establishment of AMU came from a similar social constituency among the Muslims.

From the first proposal of the university to the publication of the finalized draft in 1911 a number of changes, suggestions and regulations were incorporated and the plan of the university became a public document. A number of changes were introduced into the university after its inauguration and these changes were also responses to the changing political climate of the country. The University was a live institution and the members of the Court, Council, Senate and Syndicate included politicians, rajas, maharajas, landlords, colonial officials, and sections of the professional educated intelligentsia. The changing socio-political landscape definitely impacted upon the educational and other activities of the University.

Krishna Kumar, Aparna Basu and other historians of education have an understanding of BHU as a community institution designed to educate members of the Hindu community. The objective of BHU was to spread the light of education among backward Hindus. In the maelstrom of identitarian politics the founders of denominational universities were unable to see through the severe limitations of such educational institutions and the contradictions it posed for composite nationalism Gandhi and secular Congress leadership realized this and orchestrated a politics calling for a separation of religion from nationalism. Malaviya differed on this point for he believed that religion was a binding force and a person who did not understand and respect his own religion could not have any respect for others. He either believed, or held this position for strategic reasons, that a true follower of one religion would not do any harm to humanity. But religion in the 1930’s was highly politicized and sectarian organizations were becoming more militant in that decade. Malaviya is frequently painted by
contemporary scholars as one of the inaugurators of Hindu nationalism who created a legitimate space for its expression and development. On this count, I have tried to point out that the politics of the late nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth century differed from that of the latter phase. As stated above Malaviya was unable to anticipate the direction militant and separatist outcomes and consequences of identitarian politics. The city of Benaras was the center of such politics; Benaras had always been an important religious centre, a commercial centre, and an educational centre.

More recently Gyan Pandey, Marzia Casolari and others indicate that BHU was the breeding ground of communal feelings. The University campus did provide an atmosphere that would nourish the divisive politics of separatism. It was also the training ground for future hardliner communal politicians. But there was nothing explicitly communal in the charter of the university: it would be difficult to find its roots in the curriculum or in the influence of teachers who subscribed to some kind of Hindu nationalism. The fact that it was a denominational university signaled a particular worldview to the students who entered and those who were receptive to that worldview could not have found a more salubrious hunting ground. However, the campus was not totally dominated by Hindu hardliners; and as students were drawn into the nationalist struggle several ideological formations mushroomed in its shadow from Hindu nationalism at one end to egalitarian socialism at the other. In a sense then Pandit Malaviya would not sit easy with today's Hindu nationalists. This is one reason why historians such as Bipin Chandra, Mushirul Hasan, Bimal Prasad, S. Z Farooqi consider Malaviya to be a liberal communalist. Pandit Malaviya, according to them was not one of those politicians who motivated Hindus to antagonize or harm members of another community, but at the same time he
wished to see his own community progress. The restoration of the glory of the Hindu past was an important cultural task in this scheme.

**The Divisive Politics of Colonial Rule**

The colonial administration very clearly understood the advantages of the divide between the two communities: a divide their policies were instrumental in creating. Malaviya quite realized that Hindus and Muslims had lived for centuries in Hindustan and would continue to do so, that India was a multi-religious society and there was a need for all the religions to live together in harmony. Though Malaviya and Sir Syed were practicing Hindus and Muslims respectively, they did entertain feelings of animosity against the other community. The social advancement of the interests of their own communities were at the core of their respective projects and politics. It would be difficult to find an anti-Muslim utterance in the writings of Pandit Malaviya. His own improvised interpretation of Sanatan Dharma defined his code of conduct. The humiliation produced by colonization prompted a preoccupation with the body and physical education for the youth of India figured prominently as a weapon of anti-colonial struggle. Thus religious training and physical discipline were important considerations in the conceptualization of BHU. This is not to say that there were no differences with his co-religionists at BHU. The denominational character of the university was consequently re-interpreted by communal interests in order to consolidate a sense of unitary Hinduism and set it apart from Islam and its practitioners. The political climate by the 1920s had already become receptive to separatist ideas at least in NWP of Oudh and Agra.
On certain matters Malaviya was quite pragmatic about his idea of the University, and was open to negotiating the conditions under which the two denominational Universities would be approved by the colonial administration. He was criticized by his co-founders like Shiv Prasad, when he accepted English as the medium of instruction for the new Universities. He seemed to have realized the urgency of establishing an institution of higher education that would impart a scientific and technological education. He also foresaw the advantages of rushing forward with English as the medium of instruction in these disciplines. The ideas of Swadeshi and economic self-reliance were in the air, and the urgency to have trained engineers, doctors, researchers, scientists, educationists, industrialists was emphasized by all political parties.

These pragmatic tendencies were off-set by concessions he frequently made to critics of his pragmatism. Some of the important posts in the university were filled by the colonial administration by way of a process of nomination, the rest were appointed by Pandit Malaviya himself. He declined the post of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor offered by the government and appointed his 'guru' Pandit Adityaram Bhattacharya instead. However, the rajas and colonial officials who had supported the establishment of the denominational University were alarmed by some of his appointments. The Executive Council and Board of Appointment selected teachers for the University and Malaviya appointed himself to these bodies. The colonial administration and patrons saw it as an encroachment of their powers. As a founder of a new university, Pandit Malaviya was constantly in search of good academics and was possibly poaching upon the faculty of other science colleges. This pro-active commitment of Pandit Malaviya and his colleagues to the University was not appreciated by the administration and the visitor to the University attempted to divide the group that supported its
establishment. The visitor at the University, Meston was upset about Pandit Malaviya’s dominating the affairs of the University. He raised the matter in a letter to Lord Chelmsford and stated that the Maharaja of Darbhanga, and the poor patrons who had contributed to the establishment of the University shared this view.

The University had provisions for yoga, meditation and religious instruction on Sundays for all those who wished to have a healthy mind and body. The attendance at such courses was not satisfactory and did not produce the kind of results expected by the founders of the University. The physical training schedule became a wrestlers association and was appropriated by and large as a training ground for Hindu militancy. The Akharas within the premises of BHU became a symbol of Hindu militancy and was appropriated by organizations such as the Hindu Mahasabha and later RSS. But BHU did play in role in the development of higher education in India, as it did produce scores of scientists and engineers who in turn trained other scientists and engineers. The curriculum of the University had a practical and vocational side to it as well, training its students in the production of goods and commodities. These students went on to become entrepreneurs, industrialists, agriculturists, doctors, pharmacists, Ayurvedic doctors, scientists etc. This was complemented by Sanskrit and Vedic. The other denominational university-AMU had evolved on similar lines as BHU. Many new residential universities opened in different provinces between 1900 and 1930: Dacca, Hyderabad, Mysore, Lucknow, Patna.

The response of educated Indians to BHU as an institution for higher education was mixed. Members of the Congress in 1905 responded positively since they saw in it a new beginning for the nation in the field of higher. Tilak was
overwhelmed since he felt that it was an unachievable task and would lose its
direction if not constantly checked by Malaviya. Previous experience indicated
that the colonial government responded to demands after prolonged persuasion.
The 1904 report on University reforms had mentioned that the government was
not satisfied with the existing Universities. The fear was then that government
would summarily reject a huge project such as the establishment of a research
and teaching university. Further, financial support from the government for a
denominational university would not be forthcoming. It took ten years from the
first proposal presented in 1905 to the actual establishment of the institution. By
1913, the government came around to according permission for the
establishment of denominational universities following the persistent pressure
exerted and the exigencies of the colonial administration.

Mahatma Gandhi was disheartened at the low-key participation of the BHU
community in the non-cooperation and the civil disobedience movement. He
appealed to the BHU students and teachers again in 1942 to support the 'Quit
India movement'. This time he received full cooperation from BHU and many
students were jailed. The university was closed by the administration for the first
time since its inception. This new phase of the nationalist struggle was marked
by mass mobilization, movements and protests. Pandit Malaviya did not stop
any staff or student from joining these movements, but was opposed to the
involvement of students in the non-cooperation movement as it would hamper
their studies. However, a few students joined J. B. Kriplani and boycotted classes
at BHU to join the movement. There was a similar cold response from the
university to Gandhiji's call for civil disobedience in 1930. AMU responded
similarly to both civil disobedience movements of 1920 and 1930. The two new
denominational universities were then supported by the colonial government
and did not wish to antagonize the administration so early in the life of the university. In the 1930s the nationalist struggle grew more intense. Now even universities such as BHU and AMU could not keep away from the ‘Quit India Movement’. Even Pandit Malaviya could not have prevented students from joining the disobedience movement, He was no longer the Vice-Chancellor of the University, and the University had stabilized to a large extent.

The assimilation of Hindu nationalism within Indian nationalism has been discussed in the book of John Zavos. Nationalist figures like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bipin Chandra Pal, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Sri Aurobindo Gosh and others made Hindu tradition as the base of Indian nationalism. Cultural nationalism was propagated during the first decade of the twentieth century and it was strengthened throughout the phase of national education. Cultural and Hindu nationalism were strains in Indian nationalism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. On the other hand, Bhartendu Harishchandra, Annie Besant, Pandit Malaviya and others were staunch believers and supporters of Hinduism. They recognized the cultural and religious importance of Benaras and believed that it was the ideal place to stage the renewal of Hinduism. It had been the ancient seat of learning and many saints and learned men came to this city to acquire the advanced knowledge of the Hindu scriptures. Since these leaders understood the importance of education in the transformation of society. In a way the traditionalists were also reformists since they wished to affect social change but through religious education combined with a scientific education. These moves and programmes were prompted in response to the erosion of the sense of the indigenous that had been evoked by modern education.
How did Pandit Malaviya's traditionalist reform or traditional modernism play itself out in the life of the University? The works of Dar and Somaskandam, Bhai Parmanand, Leah Renold and others have discussed the life of the hostels and the campus environment of the BHU. My visits to BHU and interviews with a few old teachers and students of 1940's have been informative. As a denominational university that was opened in the first quarter of the twentieth century BHU had a totally new outlook. It has been compared with AMU and called an elite institution but the condition within the university was different from that of its sister university at Aligarh. BHU is a place where religious worship is very evident. Despite the compulsory Geeta path, yoga and meditation classes, attendance at the religious classes was very poor. Students were treated equally and allotted the hostels according to their date of admission and the fee structure was the same for all. Though there were very few Muslims among the students and staff at BHU, they were not housed separately and mingled with the others. Between 1919 and 1946 the number of Muslim students enrolling annually was one or none at all. In 1946 seven students passed from BHU. There was no explicit policy disqualifying from applying, but Aligarh and Allahabad universities may have appealed more than BHU given its strongly Hindu orientation. BHU has often been seen in some circles as a regional institution and not an Indian university, even though the attendance register reveals that students from all parts of the country were enrolled. All the same students from Northern and Eastern India were in the majority.

Malaviya played a very central role in the life of BHU, from the stage of conceptualization, to its founding and his retirement in 1939 – a good 35 years of his life was devoted to the realization of this project. There were periods when he was not totally devoted to this task, since he was active in other political spheres
as well. The turmoil that India was witness in the early decades of the twentieth century, the emergence of social and political organizations, the struggles and changes in policy left an indelible mark on his thinking and shaped his ideas and plans for the university. Constant negotiation and resistance from the colonial government meant that plan could only be finalized in 1911. The most important struggle during this phase was obtaining the approval of the colonial government to establish a denominational university. In addition to mobilizing political support in the region, he then set about mobilizing financial resources to establish the university. Associations and groups were formed to collect donations for the University; the lead team to collect the initial grant required to establish the University was led by Pandit Malaviya himself. From drawing up the development plans to the organization of the administration, Malaviya was present everywhere. The members of all the important bodies—the Court, the Council, the Senate, the Syndicate and the Board of Appointments were chosen and nominated by his assent. His respect and growing institutional power within the University alarmed the colonial administration and the rajas who had donated generously for the welfare of the community. He was appointed Vice-Chancellor from 1919 to 1939 and ran the university despite all the financial.

The Benaras Hindu University emerged as the first denominational residential teaching and research University in twentieth century India. This university was conceived at a religious platform to usher in modern education set the religious guidelines for the social development of the Hindu community. The idea of the university was constantly revised and there was a gap between idea and practice. Most of the donors and promoters of the University were Hindus and desired that the university propagate the renewal of ancient Hindu culture and tradition. Such as university, it was thought, would ensure that those acquiring a
scientific education would not lose their own religious principles and practices. The university was conceived as a Hindu university where the medium of instruction was to be Hindi. The colonial administration finally approved the plan of the denominational university on the condition that English would remain the medium of instruction. The Universities curriculum as drawn up by the founders had underlined the importance of religious education. However, very few students showed any interest in them. The university thus failed to instill a passion for Hindi as a language or the religion. But it did succeed in creating good departments of science and technology and build an awareness of the importance of research. In a way then its origins and the first decades of its life continue to haunt the university as a historical memory that was played out in the partition of the nation. Its current status reveals that it continues to have good departments of science and engineering. The science and engineering programmes were dedicated to creating a class of qualified professionals devoted to the task of national development. Within a few years of the establishment of BHU, its alumni held important positions in industries, colleges and other fields.

The number of Hindu students in studying in AMU at the time was also small but was an order of magnitude higher than the number of Muslims studying at BHU. Neither of the universities showed averse to admit students from the other university. Competition, if any, between the universities was intellectual competition. There is a tendency to draw comparisons between the two universities, since they were both denominational universities, and they were both founded round about the same time. In founding the Mahila Mahavidyalaya was certainly a pioneer in women’s education in the region, but certainly not in the country. But even though he was criticized by the
conservatives, this criticism was pointless, since Malaviya's conception of women's education envisioned very traditional role for women.

The founders of the Benaras Hindu University had conceived of an institution of higher education that was guided by religious practice. The first two denominational universities played a role in building research capabilities in the regions of Oudh and Agra – they were surely pioneering institutions in those regions. But as denominational universities they left little impact on the universities that appeared subsequently, which were inspired by other models. BHU's students did play a role in the national struggle and subsequently in building scientific and technological capabilities in the country. The BHU alumni could boast of leading scientists, builders/engineers, industrialists, doctors, and entrepreneurs, but never as many as did the universities of Calcutta, Bombay, Chennai and Punjab (Lahore). The books and courses introduced for religious education at the Hindu University propagated the idea that imagined Hinduism was a broad-based religion that could assimilate all other religions.

The founders wished to produce a generation that would help build the new India. The university was successful in achieving its objective of creating a class of technically competent professionals. However, it failed in its religious agenda, and in promoting Hindi as the language of the Hindus. On the other hand, from within its core, and possibly because of its flawed origins, it provided a breeding ground for a militant Hindu nationalism. These developments would have saddened somebody like Malaviya as well as his co-religionists with whom he worked towards the foundation of BHU.
The idea of founding BHU and AMU was born at a luminal moment in the history of colonialism when the social fabric was strained. The idea of the denominational university was as much a product of the divisiveness of colonial rule as it was a response to the processes of modernization and cultural imperialism initiated by colonial rule. The flawed moment of the birth of the idea towards the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries was itself a bearer of the achievements and tragedies that were to follow.