Chapter - 4
WOMEN EDUCATION IN BRITISH INDIA

PAST REVISITED

“The real power of those who built colonial empires lay less in their guns than in the educational systems they introduced: ‘the gun coerces the body but the school bewitches the mind.’”

- Sheik Hamidou Kane

4.1 Impact of British Empire on Indian Education

English education in India has its foundation in the 18th century. The missionaries came to India with the East India Company and various measures were adopted to educate the local population. The missionary activities also included conversion to Christianity and as such the Indian population was weary of the education given by them. In 1773 Warren Hastings established the foundation of British Education. The controversy was generated because of the education being Western in its content and delivery. Thomas Babington Macaulay gave his famous Minutes in 1835. Another issue besides religion was the medium of instruction. Vernacular medium was the demand by Indian educationists whereas the British wanted it to be through the language of English. The problem encountered by the British in the field of female education was still more serious.

The ‘purdah’ system, the system of child marriage and the general indifference of parents to the education of their daughters acted as a check to the progress of female education. A girl child was believed to be much different, as far as her education was concerned, from a boy child. Girls were not required to be independent of their established customs and domestic duties. Her general appearance was the main criteria in being selected as a bride. The desire to get their boys educated was openly expressed but girls were good if they stayed at home. There was a rigid seclusion of women. These causes prevented even the elementary education from being given to girls.
Macaulay wrote that the Indians could not be taught by means of their mother-tongue. The Indians should be taught some foreign language. He believed that the Western education was the vehicle of ethical and political instruction. He thought that the education given by the British would be just and proper for human nature. It would provide information regarding every aspect of science which would lead to a healthy India and expand the intellect of Indians. He believed that the literature which existed in the English language was of greater value than all the literature of the world. He was sure that English tongue would make every native in India more closely connected with their empire.

Macaulay thought of India as an ignorant nation whose education could be through the civilized Western education. He also brought to light the fact that people were paid to learn Sanskrit and Arabic whereas the teachers were paid to teach Arithmetic. It is evident then that Sanskrit and Arabic were troublesome to acquire! He further said that he would not “leave the natives to the influence of their own hereditary prejudices”.

He also stated another fact that the natives themselves did not support the old system of education. He cited the example of Arabic and Sanskrit books printed with a lakh of rupees but no buyers. He further argued that the British government in India will not encourage the study of the Indian literature which was of small intrinsic value and inculcated errors in most subjects. He could not see the Indian course reconcilable with reason or with morality.

This policy was reaffirmed by Charles Wood’s Despatch of 1854, and with minor modifications continued throughout the British rule. The despatch of the Court of Directors of 1854 has been described as “The Magna Charta of English Education in India.” In his famous minute, Lord Dalhousie stated that the despatch contained “a scheme of education for all India, a very comprehensive scheme than the Local or the Supreme government could ever have ventured to suggest.” Immediately after this despatch, University Acts of 1857 were passed.

The Table - 1 below shows all the pupils in Public institutions and all the girls under instruction in both Public and Private Institutions, according to Provinces, for 1896-97, together with the totals for 1891-92. A study of the table indicates that the attendance of
the girls in schools has increased remarkably. The percentage of increase from 1891-92 is most noticeable in coeducational schools. Coorg and Burma take the lead in the percentage of girls going to Public Institutions for boys.

Table - 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>In Public Institutions for Girls</th>
<th>In Public Institutions for Boys</th>
<th>Total Girls in Public Institutions</th>
<th>Girls in Private Institutions</th>
<th>Total girls under Instruction</th>
<th>Percentage of School Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Pupils</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Total Pupils</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madras</td>
<td>53,982</td>
<td>2,525</td>
<td>51,457</td>
<td>56,008</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>107,465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bombay</td>
<td>46,526</td>
<td>1,524</td>
<td>45,002</td>
<td>26,051</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>71,053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bengal</td>
<td>69,884</td>
<td>2,909</td>
<td>66,975</td>
<td>38,944</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>105,919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.-W.P. and Oudh</td>
<td>12,301</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>11,847</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12,114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>13,506</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>13,399</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13,489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Provinces</td>
<td>7,627</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>7,471</td>
<td>3,326</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>10,797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burma</td>
<td>10,024</td>
<td>3,511</td>
<td>6,513</td>
<td>19,896</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>26,409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>4,424</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>4,102</td>
<td>4,174</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>8,276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coorg</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>673</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berar</td>
<td>2,021</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1,998</td>
<td>1,711</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3,709</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>220,410</td>
<td>11,544</td>
<td>208,866</td>
<td>151,140</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>360,006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total for 1891-92</td>
<td>192,650</td>
<td>9,046</td>
<td>183,604</td>
<td>123,796</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>307,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Increase</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Maharashtra State Archives, Education Department, Progress of Education in India, 1892-93 to 1896-97, Pg. 285

The popularity of “mixed education” can be seen from the above table. Next to Coorg and Burma comes Madras and then Assam. Bombay and Bengal have more than one third of its girls in boys’ schools. At the other end stands Punjab and North West where proportion of girls in boys’ schools is nearly 1 and 2 per cent. These extraordinary differences are no doubt due to the varying strength of traditional prejudice. The Education Commission condemned co-education at least for children above seven years
of age, and recommended that the attendance of girls in boys’ schools should not be encouraged, except in places where girls’ schools could not be maintained.

The following Table – 2 shows the distribution of girls in secondary and primary schools (excluding those for Europeans) according to stages of instruction, for the several Provinces in 1896-97, with the corresponding totals for 1891-92. The state of education of Indian girls can be clearly seen. Out of the 550 girls studying in high school 215 are from Bombay. The number of girls in the Middle stage is 3,998, of whom no less than 2,399 are in Madras. In the Upper Primary stage, the number is 19,699, chiefly in Bombay, Madras, and Burma. It is only when we come to Lower Primary (A) and lower Primary (B) that the number of girls becomes really large.

### Table - 2

**Girls in Secondary and Primary Schools for Indians according to Stages of Instruction, 1896-97**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>High.</th>
<th>Middle.</th>
<th>Upper Primary.</th>
<th>Lower Primary. (A.)</th>
<th>Lower Primary. (B.)</th>
<th>Total.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Madras</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>2,399</td>
<td>4,922</td>
<td>79,593</td>
<td>16,136</td>
<td>103,188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bombay</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>8,539</td>
<td>24,482</td>
<td>35,175</td>
<td>68,903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bengal</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>1,267</td>
<td>59,991</td>
<td>39,942</td>
<td>101,670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.-W.P. and Oudh</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>715</td>
<td>7,924</td>
<td>1,493</td>
<td>11,369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>1,081</td>
<td>10,426</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>11,945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Provinces</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>724</td>
<td>3,595</td>
<td>5,826</td>
<td>10,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burma</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>1,977</td>
<td>22,920</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>25,206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>6,714</td>
<td>1,451</td>
<td>8,248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coorg</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>533</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berar</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>2,915</td>
<td>3,669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>550</td>
<td>3,998</td>
<td>19,699</td>
<td>216,603</td>
<td>103,323</td>
<td>344,173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total for 1891-92</strong></td>
<td>415</td>
<td>3,452</td>
<td>16,345</td>
<td>175,016</td>
<td>99,090</td>
<td>294,318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percentage of Increase</strong></td>
<td>+ 32</td>
<td>+ 16</td>
<td>+ 21</td>
<td>+ 24</td>
<td>+ 4</td>
<td>+ 17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Table - 3 below shows the increase in number of the girls going to school. The increase is impressive especially in Eastern Bengal and Assam. Coorg, Central Provinces and Berar, and Bengal are closed behind. The general education of women received notice and social revolution should follow. It was expected that there would be a great upsurge in intelligence of the nation, a rise in integrity of character and all other aspects of personality.

Table - 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>1907</th>
<th>1912</th>
<th>Percentage of Increase in numbers at school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Madras</td>
<td>164,706</td>
<td>226,685</td>
<td>37.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bombay</td>
<td>108,716</td>
<td>153,090</td>
<td>40.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bengal</td>
<td>127,800</td>
<td>194,114</td>
<td>51.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Provinces</td>
<td>40,111</td>
<td>54,329</td>
<td>35.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>37,283</td>
<td>53,909</td>
<td>44.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burma</td>
<td>62,794</td>
<td>79,416</td>
<td>26.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Bengal and Assam</td>
<td>79,360</td>
<td>153,766</td>
<td>93.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Provinces and Berar</td>
<td>19,634</td>
<td>30,847</td>
<td>57.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coorg</td>
<td>1,118</td>
<td>1,935</td>
<td>73.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-West Frontier Province</td>
<td>3,506</td>
<td>4,820</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>645,028</td>
<td>952,911</td>
<td>47.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Maharashtra State Archives, Education Department, Progress of Education in India, Chapter XIII, Education of girls, Pg. 213.
The number of girls enrolled in various institutions kept on increasing continuously over the years - from 1,424,422 in 1922 to 4,297,785 in 1947 (see Table - 4). The trend about women education was encouraging and its clear that women’s education had grown remarkably during 1921 to 1947. Women had come to receive education in large numbers and were looking also towards taking up carriers. This development though was confined to the urban areas because most of women’s education was looked after by private organizations who were active in urban areas only. The government educational agencies even could not reach the rural areas. Gandhi and his views about women education brought a change and increase activities in this field to the rural areas.

Table - 4

Sex-wise distribution of Pupils in All Institutions (1922-47)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>6,962,928</td>
<td>1,424,422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>9,315,144</td>
<td>1,842,352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>10,273,888</td>
<td>2,492,649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>11,007,683</td>
<td>3,138,357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>12,266,311</td>
<td>3,726,876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>13,948,979</td>
<td>4,297,785</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: GOI, Progress of Education in India (PEI), relevant years.

While girls’ education registered a definite expansion, we cannot ascertain that the curriculum was satisfactory for the girls. The spread of English education by the British was not out of generosity. On the opposite there were different motives: “religious – proselytizing urge; moral – to inculcate new values in the spirit of Western liberal Christian concepts; administrative – to staff the vast and elaborate bureaucracy; economic – to familiarize the Indians with the modalities and values of the capitalist economic system, and also to develop in them a taste for British products; and not the least, political – to consolidate and maintain their dominance in the country”.

The British did not start a programme of mass education. They were only concern that a small class of English educated Indians should emerge out of the millions and should serve as interpreters. This small class would be “English in tastes, in opinions, in morals
and intellect”. Thus we know that the knowledge and the values which were taught by the British were Western in nature and were eventually used to stabilize the Raj. The British started a system of education in India on the basis of the system that existed in their Mother country. Most of the emphasis was on the language of English. The knowledge of English became very important for people who wanted to occupy official positions and leadership roles.

As said before, most of educational institutions were located in urban areas as they were within the reach of the British government. Rural areas were neglected and little attention was paid to curriculum. With the adoption of English as the medium of instruction the vast mass of people were progressively estranged from the administrative, judicial and commercial institutions established by the British. Since they were vitally affected by these emergent institutions and were not able to understand the modalities of their operation, they were forced to depend upon those who were English-educated. This coupled with the fact that English was the language of the ruling class bestowed unprecedented prestige on the English-educated Indians. These ‘brown sahibs,’ because of their link up with the economic and political interests dominated by the British, were alienated from the masses.

Though modelled after the University of London, the Indian universities were not same in terms of the quality given in London. Indian education was not meant to give technical and scientific education and laid more emphasis on languages and humanities. The excessive emphasis on the mastering of English as a language often eclipsed the purpose of education: it encouraged mechanical learning through memorizing and discouraged inquisitiveness and an experimental bent of mind (A. Basu 1978: 61). There was a simultaneous devaluation of the indigenous languages, and a sad neglect of their development.

The curriculum of English education was in tune with the colonial economic and employment policies. All higher appointments in almost all the services were in effect reserved for the British. Added to this was the lack of any concrete ideas for industrialization. This meant limited opportunities for qualified and trained Indians excepting perhaps in the lower echelons of the bureaucracy and in teaching. English education thus created a large number of ‘unemployables.’
Another point needs clarification here. There is a popular belief, held even by many educated Indians that the educational system in vogue before the colonial conquest was the unorganized Gurukul. The purpose of this, it is said, was to impart instruction in the Vedic lore to a privileged minority of the upper caste males. It is further believed that the British brought in the broad based educational system with universalistic criteria of enrolment. However, a close scrutiny of the archival evidence, especially the reports and minutes penned by the British themselves, explodes this myth.

At the time of the renewal of the East India Company’s Charter in 1813 the Court of Directors had instructed the Provincial Governors to institute inquiries into the indigenous education prevalent in their provinces. The Provincial Governors in turn instructed the Collectors under them to survey the state of education in their districts. Based on the reports of the various Collectors, the Governors concluded that not only were indigenous schools and colleges widespread in the 18th century, but also the sex and caste composition of the student body was highly egalitarian.

The denigration of the pre-British system of education in the country is widespread. While steering clear of this controversy suffice it to say that pre-British India was not ‘dark,’ but instead could boast of a system of education which was as widespread as it was broad based.

The establishment of the empire and the pursuit of the colonial economic and political policies in general and the educational policy in particular from somewhere around the first quarter of the 19th century dealt a death blow to the indigenous system of education. Henry Harding’s policy of giving preference to the English-educated among Indians in government appointments drove the last nail into the coffin of indigenous education.

It is true that the destruction of the indigenous system of education would not have been complete without the support, active or passive and direct or indirect, of the Indians themselves. Many of the early generation of English-educated Indians reposed faith in English education. Raja Ram Mohun Roy and Mahadev Govind Ranade thought that it heralded an ‘Indian Renaissance.’ The social reformers protested against the establishment of any oriented educational institutions and in fact demanded the expansion of the English system.
The filtration theory of Macaulay stated that education should permeate the masses from above. In education he assumed only those things which were Western in nature and did not anticipate the unexpected unwanted consequences that might emerge.

In England itself academic education had been elitist. The educational system introduced in India also carried with it its elite bias. Because of the initial advantage of their high status, the benefits of English education also accrued to the upper caste groups – the Bengali Kayasthas, the Tamil Brahmins and the Marathi Chitpavans – and the well-to-do, that too in the urban areas. Thus emerged the first generation of indigenous English-educated, political and intellectual elite in India.

The English-educated Indians, contrary to Macaulay’s expectations, showed the least enthusiasm for spreading education and Western ideology among the masses. On the contrary, they used their education for what the system wanted them to use it, namely, for obtaining employment and other material gains. This progressively widened the gap between the English-educated elite and the masses.

4.2 Continuing Past

The content of the curriculum has always been an important issue in women’s education and even today continues to be debated. Western style education was introduced by the British initially for boys but the girls began to study the same curriculum as boys. Some leaders did say at that time that there needs to be a different curriculum designed to meet the special needs of the girls but it went unheeded. The leaders argued that the boys were receiving an education to be trained for certain jobs; this was not the aim of the girls who went to schools. By 1882, people were convinced in favour of a differentiated curriculum, and the Education Commission of 1882 declared the same.

The schools that receive the government ground were required to follow the government-established curriculum. The private schools thus were not allowed innovation in the subject matter, though they could teach additional or new subjects which could offer special training to the girls. The government officials were partly convinced that a curriculum change was desirable suited to girls’ social roles. Certain subjects did emerge as ‘feminine’ for example, hygiene, domestic science, singing, needlework, home
science, etc. other subjects like physics, chemistry and mathematics emerged as ‘masculine’ subjects.

Educationists felt the futility of giving education which had no purpose behind it. Education according to the need should be the slogan of the day. As far as individual need differ, education must differ. There can be no branch of knowledge which can be considered as a special preserve of either sex. Whatever facilities given to a man for educating himself should also be given to a woman. Education for its own sake has few takers. There is always a purpose, a motive behind education.

Education in India started receiving a tension under the British rule with the Charter Act of 1813. Full recognition was given to importance of education in the Macaulay’s Minute of 1835. But unfortunately the British were not educating Indians they were making ‘babus’ out of the common men. They needed staff to run their administration in India systematically and this could be done only when the Indians learnt the language of English alone. So the learning of language and some basic education was included in the subject matter. A broad based education was never considered.

It is only with the “Wood’s Dispatch” of 1854 that education of women was seriously looked into. The government for the first time assumed direct responsibility for making women literate. From 1882 to 1947 the progress of girl’s education was very slow but it continued steadily. Only the elite classes who were in favour foreign rulers sent their girls to school. We should give credit to the British for initiating the process of women education formally in India. Before they started the girls unfortunately were restricted to home education where they were taught and trained to be a home maker only. Enrolment in women’s schools and colleges grew from 1.27 lakhs in 1882 to 3.93 lakhs in 1902 (Ministry of Education). It was also heart-warming to see two Indian women graduating in 1883. People began to recognize the importance of education of girls at least up to the primary level.

The Hunter Commission 1882 laid emphasis on the differentiation of curriculum in the field of education and award of scholarships. The Commission left the responsibility of framing the curriculum on the provincial governments and suggested that the curriculum should be organized according to the needs of the pupils. It suggested that the utility aspect of the subject is very important. It wanted agriculture, physical trigonometry,
geography, medicine and accountancy to be included in the curriculum as these subjects would help the pupils in their future.

The Hunter Commission recommended diversification of the curriculum into two parts, one to prepare the student for further studies and the other to give them education useful in their everyday life. The Commission also commented at length on the condition of women education of that time. It recommended immediate arrangement of Public Funds for more schools for girls, appointment of lady teachers and inspectresses, a separate curriculum for girls, special hostels for girls and arrangements for higher education.

The two decades from 1902 witnessed a still greater increase in the field of women’s education because to two reasons. One was the active role played by the Government in boosting the education of girls and the second was the positive impact of Freedom Movement on women education.

Lord Curzon supported the cause of Women’s education and this support was reaffirmed with the Government Resolution on Education Policy (1913). The resolution of 1913 recommended that the education of girls should be made practical with reference to the position they would fill in social life. The educationists felt the urgent need of the revision in the curriculum in girls’ schools.

There was a distinct feeling of dissatisfaction with the curricula of schools and colleges which were designed for boys and which did not pay any attention to the requirements of Indian girls. This drawback led Prof. D. K. Karve to establish the Indian Women’s University in Poona in 1916, with the special aims or providing an educational system suited to the special needs of Indian womanhood.

Shrimati Nathibai Damodar Thackersey Women’s University was established in 1916 in Bombay with the objective of higher education of women through local languages, to formulate courses of studies especially suited to the needs and requirements of women. In Madras, the Secondary School Leaving scheme provided a wide choice of subjects and reduced the strain of examinations to a minimum. Music, needlework, domestic economy and physiology were introduced among the optional subjects and were taken in a number of schools.

New school courses were framed in Bombay which included home-craft as a compulsory subject. But the cost and the lack of teachers qualified to instruct in these subjects formed
a stumbling block and the opening of a centre in which the subject could be taught was stopped by the outbreak of the War. In some of the elementary schools of Gujarat and Maharashtra, instruction was given in hygiene, first aid, cooking, household management, sewing, laundry and gardening. A satisfactory feature was that increased attention was paid to the physical training of girls. A course of physical training was organized for teachers of girls’ secondary schools near Bombay. The Young Women’s Christian Association lent the services of a certified athletic mistress.

In Bengal, an attempt was made to concentrate teaching for the matriculation in a few schools and to arrange a curriculum in accordance with the needs of girls. Hygiene, nursing, needlework, cookery and domestic work were included in the curriculum. But the attempts did not prove successful. The people of Bengal appreciated the matriculation certificate more than any useful practical course of studies and girls set their hearts on passing the matriculation examination. They did not realize the usefulness of the other subjects. They were dissatisfied with the new ideas and left the schools in which the new course was introduced. This shows that they did not approve of the idea of a separate curriculum for girls. Again, separation of subjects meant that girls were inferior to boys.

At the lower primary stage, there is no need of any change in the curriculum. But, at the upper primary stage there should be provision for girls to have sewing, music, needlework, handicraft, etc. It is a fact that physical or mental—particularly emotional or temperamental—differences exists between boys and girls in the 11-14 age group. At that time, they are in the middle stage. Hence, they must be trained for their future life and as such there must be difference in curriculum. At this stage, girls should be given pre-vocational training without putting any extra burden on her physical or mental capacities.

When we talk of special training, that is, special aptitudes, interests and needs of girls, it is usual to think of them only as ‘home makers, house wives or mothers’. It is a fact that these are the duties which practically every girl, when she is grown up, will have to perform. But, if we think in this way, it means that she has to confine herself between the four walls of the house. We forget her socio-economic freedom and her services in the society as well as her participation in the production of national wealth in industry and in fields. That is the reason why, while framing the curriculum for girls, we should
not forget her careers outside also. Many girls are likely to take to some vocation or the other in addition to home making, either because they will have to contribute to the family income or because they will want to make use of their education for some social work. A few who may not marry will need to take up a vocation as a means of livelihood. For these reasons, suitable courses in vocational education should be introduced in girls’ schools.

The discussion about the curricular change was linked to the level of education-primary, secondary and higher education. Advocates of women’s education agreed that there was no need to make a different curriculum at the primary level. Biologically, girls and boys enjoy the same kind of development at this age and hence no differentiation is required. At the secondary level the schooling was viewed more critically and was found that the girls needed to follow a different curriculum. At the college level, the curriculum should be differentiated but those girls who choose to take ‘masculine’ subjects should be allowed to do so.

During the British times, stress was laid on the role of socialization as the main function of education. Higher education was seen as training for jobs and philosophical upliftment of girls and boys. But the majority were of the opinion that a different curriculum should be followed for boys and girls because most of the girls cannot be assumed to take up jobs after completion of their education but will get married.

Education, in the school, should prepare and equip the girls to become better wives and mothers. The curriculum should include such subjects which will enable the girls to perform their roles more efficiently.

A very important point and an aspect of gender difference is that the women and men have a different moral, emotional and intellectual make up. It has to be admitted that women are psychologically and physically distinct from men. The likes and dislikes are also different. Given a particular situation, boys and girls would react differently. The girls are sometimes more mature than the boys.

By the first quarter of the 20th Century, the issue of education was influenced by Indian nationalism. Indianisation of education was being demanded by the nationalists. People did not want their daughters to be taught the topics that were taught in the West. Indian social reformers and political leaders demanded a new curriculum for the Indian girls as
the curriculum already in use for the Indian boys was found to be inadequate. The Indian educationists were of the opinion that the girls need to be trained not only to become efficient housewives but also should be acquainted with their culture. Western educationists agreed to this opinion.

Lord Curzon convened a meeting of the Directors of Public Instruction at Shimla in September 1901, to discuss issues related with Indian education. Many eminent people debated over issues related specifically to Indian education. Some were of the opinion that the current curriculum which was same for girls and boys would make tom boys out of girls.

It was argued that the curriculum also needed to be revised because the primary function of education should be to developed critical thinking and not merely preparation for role socialization. The aim of education should be far reaching and people in general wanted girls with a high intellect. Mathematics, physics and social sciences was argued to be necessarily taught whereas certain subjects for her role should be included. In such a case, it is understood that domestic science should be made compulsory for the girls but it was not done so.

The debates on curricular change continued but the challenge was never taken. The division of labour between the sexes was clearly seen but education was not reorganized. The Indian culture and appropriate curricular changes for girls were proposed within the school but were not executed in reality. This is the case even today.

As Dr. Radhakrishnan Commission has observed: “They are fitted to carry the same academic work as men with no less thoroughness and quality. The distribution of general ability among women is appropriately the same as among men”. One main thing is to be remembered that as marriage is the career for most girls in all countries, girls must know something more about home – it may be home science, child welfare, home decoration, or home economy. Home and Hearth should not be the only two places for our Indian women. Those who have a liking to take up careers as doctors, engineers, lawyers, etc. should be allowed to do so.

Our National Movement brought about great changes in the country and educational system also changed but the entire basis of education was not revolutionized. It was not a radical revolution premised upon mass involvement and directed towards changing the
fundamental institutions and cultural values of society. It was rather a movement led predominantly by the English-educated bourgeoisie, which took charge of the country’s destiny after Independence. Being heavily influenced by Western liberal ideology and its ethos, this bourgeoisie not only retained the institutions and values that had been introduced by the colonial masters but also imported other from Britain and elsewhere. Education was not tailor made for India but was fitted into the British system.

The social institutions, cultural values, and patterns of behaviour did not change and were implanted and nurtured with the help of economic sanctions and political force over a prolonged period of two centuries of colonial rule. It is hard to be radically transformed in the course of a few decades. The colonial bent of mind resulted in complacence. It has generated a feeling that the colonial institutions are superior cultural outposts for the so-called modern society, and there is no alternative. In fact the alternative was with us from the beginning and we just had to peep into our history, especially for women education.

Why are we still dependent upon the colonial education system?

In brief, the achievement of political independence by India has not resulted in the emancipation of its educational system from colonial bondage. On the contrary, the educational system along with its wider socio-economic framework has been transformed into a complex and wide-ranging phase of neo-colonial dependency with grave implications for the future development of the country.

In this context it has often been asserted, though implicitly, that an element of dependency of the ex-colonies on their former colonizers and other developed countries is an integral part of the modernization process in the post-colonial phase. This approach presumes development to be a one-dimensional process, whereby a developing or an underdeveloped society moves towards the ideal of developed society. The developed society is identified with the industrially advanced society of the West governed by the capitalist politico-economic and socio-cultural institutions and ideologies.
Percentage of girls going to schools in 1891-92
A Nature Lesson
Khasi Girls at School
A Geography Lesson
The Archives

“The very spring and root of honesty and virtue lie in good education”

- Plutarch

The proposal dated the 30th April 1912 from Mr. A. L. Covernton, Principal, Elphinstone College, Bombay to the Director of Public instruction has raised the question whether a separate college for women in India is required or co-education with men in arts colleges is better. On the one hand some Indian parents argue that if their daughters attend a men’s college they break more completely through the customs and prejudices that have hitherto hindered women’s education and fit themselves more easily and speedily to associate with men on equal terms of intellect after the fashion of western women. It is further to be remembered that the presence of women along with men in a college has a very beneficial effect on the manners of the latter, stimulating chivalry and a healthy rivalry in study. Moreover, it is undoubted that the teaching of men has in certain directions a more stimulating and widening effect on the feminine intellect than that of women. But on the other hand there are other parents and especially Hindus who are not prepared to break at once with the past or to leave their daughters to what must in present conditions be a very incompletely controlled association in study with men; who think that the end of woman’s education in India is not to give Indian women the social equality and unchartered independence of their western sisters or to train them for professional studies, but rather to render them more understanding in the performance of their functions as wives and mothers, daughters and sisters. This is a function of teaching which can only be performed adequately by women teachers.

He believed that the University should consider whether to provide or not to provide a special course or courses for women.

Government of Bombay, Educational Department, Resolution no. 1143, Bombay Castle, 30th April 1917, Letter from the Director of Public Instruction no. 7488, dated The 31st August 1914 States that the Committee is of opinion that in the lower primary standards girls should be taught how to read, write, arithmetic, along with some kind of needlework, religious principles and physical exercises. For the higher primary standards some knowledge of cookery also may be acquired at home and tested at school. Singing
was also preferable. This opinion was agreed to by Fazulbhoy Currimbhoy Ebrahim, Syed Shamsuddin Kadri, Rafiuddin Ahmad, W. H. Sharp, Fazulbhoy M. Chinoy and Syed Ali El Edroos.

In October 1919 a resolution from the Government of India educational department exhibited the Moral and Material Progress and Condition of India during the year 1919. It said that increasing attention is also being devoted to the improvement of the general position of Indian women; and various organizations then existed for enlarging the spheres of women’s usefulness. Among these were mentioned the Poona Seva Sadan which in the course of ten years of its existence had performed admirable work in training women and girls as nurses, midwives, wives, assistant surgeons, teachers, art and craft workers.

It was brought to notice that less than sixty per cent of the girls and women who were under instruction in India were attending institutions intended exclusively for females, and rather more than forty per cent were in attendance at institutions common to both sexes. In examining the progress of female education, therefore, it is necessary to take account of both these modes. Institutions for female students were classified in the same way as those for male students, but some of them are wanting. Thus there were Arts colleges for women, high schools and middle schools, both English and vernacular for girls, primary schools for girls, training colleges and schools for mistresses, and medical schools for female students.

There was however no instances of any of the following institution established exclusively for women: - oriental colleges, Law colleges, Medical colleges, Engineering colleges, Agricultural colleges or Schools of Art.

Thus, in one mode or another, female students were receiving instruction in the same branches of general and professional knowledge as men.

The small number of secondary schools for Indian girls was chiefly due to the lack of girl students. There was considerable advancement in the number of girls who were sent to school but only till the primary level. The secondary level still did not attract large number of girls.

The promotion of female education encountered peculiar difficulties. These difficulties arise chiefly from the customs of the people themselves. The material considerations,
which have formed a contributing factor in the spread of boys’ schools, are inoperative in the case of girls. The natural and laudable desire for education as an end in itself, which is evinced by the upper and middle classes as regards their sons, is no match for the conservative instincts of the Indians, the system of early marriage and the rigid seclusion of women. These causes prevented the most elementary education from being given to girls. The lack of trained female teachers and the alleged unsuitability of the curriculum, which is asserted to have been, framed more with a view to the requirements of boys than those of girls, form subsidiary reasons or excuses against more rapid progress.

It was understood widely in the society that education of women especially in the Indian context would bring about revolutionary changes in the society. The nation will see and increase not only in intelligence in character but also in all aspects of life. The Indian women who were fortunate enough to go to school were learning ideas of emancipation. The society was trying to keep in pace with the new conditions and should not be afraid of upheaval of customs at home.

Miss Ashworth, an inspectress in Bombay, writes:-

“At present, with one or two exceptions, the schools follow the same course as the boys’ schools and aim at preparing all girls for the examinations of the University. Such a course is harmful, and girls leave these schools with weakened physique and very little in the way of real culture to compensate for it. Under the stimulus of examinations both teachers and pupils work hard, and as all teaching in the higher forms is done through the medium of a foreign language, the mental strain is greater and the life altogether more strenuous than in European schools which prepare for the same examinations. There is a strong tendency to resort to mere cram, in fact since so many of the English text books studied are beyond the comprehension of the girls, cram is inevitable.”

All except about 35,000 of the girls under instruction in vernacular schools are in lower primary stages, i.e., they are in the infants’ class or in the two classes above that. In the lower primary stage of instruction, the only subjects which can be taught are reading, writing, arithmetic and needlework. They can be varied, enlivened and enforced by songs, games, Kindergarten occupations and object lessons. The only differentiation
between boys and girls in the lower primary stages is that the girls learn needlework and the boys do not. The drill of the boys differs from the physical exercises of the girls, and that the games in which the girls take part and the stories told to them are different, except in schools where girls and boys are taught together. Above the lower primary stage the curriculum for boys and for girls shows a little more difference, the boys’ curriculum being adapted for girls by the omission of manual training, agriculture, patwari papers and science, and the relaxation of standards in mathematics; instead of which the practice of needlework and drawing is continued. Some attempt is made to introduce subjects of domestic economy and hygiene.

There is only one province, viz., Bombay, in which the reading books used in primary schools by girls differ from those used by boys.

Here, as before, boys and girls used for the first three years of their school life the same reading books, but after that the girls were provided with a set of reading books for three years, which will be different from those used in boys’ schools. They are in four sections, historical, geographical, teaching of natural phenomena, and miscellaneous. The following account of them is taken from a report by MrCovernton:-

“Taken as a whole the girl readers are simpler in general treatment and narrower in the range of subjects than the boys’. The wider topics of history, literature and science are of little concern to vernacular girls, for whom (apart from the practical demands of domestic economy) biographies illustrating the good deeds of great and virtuous women, accounts of their native land and its most distinguished sons, ethical stories and lessons inculcating modesty and sobriety of conduct and demeanour, together with poems of a moral and natural religious tendency, are held by native public opinion to be more fitting pabulum. Such have been provided, but the committee has also introduced geographical lessons dealing with important natural phenomena, with the authorities of the presidency and India, and with the British Empire. Lessons, too, on the King-Emperor and his Consort and family, as well as Queen Victoria, have not been forgotten. In the historical sections sketches of such heroines as Sita, Savitri, Mirabai, Chandbibi, Nurjehan are given; and of such rulers as Asoka, Ahmedshah, Akbar and Shivaji; with some account of the rise of the British power and of the system of British Government in India. The lessons on domestic economy, common objects, etc., are intended to be read. The bulk of
them handle themes belonging to domestic economy. That is, they tried to handle food substance and their preparation, of cooking, of the cleanliness of the house and of clothes, of furniture, of household management, of dress, sewing and so forth. They also included lessons on elementary physiology and hygiene, as well as others on common articles and objects.”

The above report very clearly portrays the understanding of the need of a different curriculum for boys and girls.

Regarding the course of studies following has been said. The courses of studies in girls’ schools are modelled on those in schools for boys, with some variation in the middle school courses, and to a lesser extent in the matriculation course of the Universities. As regards the matriculation courses, there is no difference in the subjects for boys and girls at Calcutta, Madras and Bombay. In these Universities anybody could take up an Indian or European continental language in place of a classical language. At Allahabad and Lahore a classical language was compulsory for boys, but girls were given the option of a modern Indian or European language.

In Madras in the upper secondary course, girls were given the option of a variety of subjects in place of algebra and geometry, but hardly any girls followed this course. In Madras lower secondary (middle) course, the compulsory subjects for boys and girls were the same, but the optional subjects included needle-work and domestic economy for girls.

In Bombay in the middle stage, girls could substitute any portion of science for domestic economy.

In Bengal, in the regulations for vernacular schools, needle-work for girls took the place of agriculture or science and geometry for boys. Manual training could be substituted for needle-work in mixed schools which had no facilities for teaching needle-work. In the reading books for girls, lessons on domestic economy were substituted for the lessons on hygiene contained in the boys’ books.

In the United Provinces lower Middle English stage, girls could take up Indian history in place of drawing in Class V, and in place of drawing or other voluntary subject in Class VI.
A separate course was laid down for vernacular middle schools for girls in the Punjab. It was based on the course for boys but it contained less arithmetic, and subjects especially suitable for girls were added to it. The compulsory subjects were: reading, writing, grammar, arithmetic, geography, history, domestic economy, and needle-work. Any two of the following subjects were optional: a second vernacular language, Persian, Arabic, Geometry and algebra, and elementary science.

The Inspectress reports: “Needle-work is improving wherever there is European supervision. It remains poor in almost all isolated schools. The Christians everywhere show good work. Hindus care nothing for plain needle-work which is indeed of little use for their simple costume. Muslims excel in needle work and every kind of embroidery. As far as the teaching of household work was concerned she says: “It is impossible to teach Domestic Economy to any effect in a day school which has none of the appliances or conditions of a home. The best that can be done is to develop general intelligence, which may be employed later in the economy of the home, and to teach a few general principles and facts with the help of books. This was generally done, and she found a perfect homemaker “Sughar Bibi” a popular subject in the middle level. In Delhi, home economy was taught in the two Aided middle Schools for Christian girls at Delhi, where very good needle-work is also said to be done. Elsewhere needle-work is not satisfactory, and is not taught according to the prescribed scheme. In the Jullundur Circle Domestic Economy is taught only in the Kanya Mahavidyala at Jullundur City, where instruction is also imparted in clay modelling and household occupations, as well as in Elementary Drawing in so far as it is required in needle-work. Increased attention is paid to needle-work, and fairly satisfactory progress is reported to have been made almost everywhere in this branch of instruction. In the Lahore Circle Domestic Economy is taught as a book subject in all the Secondary Schools, but practical household occupations have not yet been given the place they deserve in a girl’s education. On this the Inspectress, while reporting on the Lahore District, says: “The only school in the Lahore District that gives this subject any attention is the Clarkabad Orphanage and Industrial School. There practical Domestic Economy is taught, and the girls do all the work of the institution. This is one of the best managed and most useful institutions to be found.” Needle-work of
different kinds has been receiving steady and full attention, with the result that it is now considered to have remarkable improved in quality.

The above report shows that needle work was given utmost importance and the girls were viewed as being different from boys.

In speaking of the curriculum for girls the Education commission said that: “It ought not to be taken for granted that the instruction which is suitable for a boy must necessarily be good for an Indian girl. In purely literary subjects, girls need not go so far as boys, and there are subjects of a practical kind to which girls might at least be introduced during their time at the studies.” The content was based on the syllabus that was followed in boys’ schools, but the literary portion was sometimes curtailed and special girls’ subjects were introduced.

In Madras the compulsory subjects for girls as well as for boys were the 3 R’s. The optional subjects include kindergarten occupations, drawing, needle-work, and singing.

In Bombay, separate standards were prescribed for girls in primary schools. There were six classes, comprising an infant class and five standards.

The sixth standard was divided into six heads: reading and language, writing and composition, arithmetic, history and geography, domestic economy, and needle-work.

The first head comprised of 200 pages of prose and 200 lines of poetry from the departmental reader, and simple grammar. The poetry was learnt by heart. The girls were also required to read ordinary manuscript with fluency. In the second head was included dictation and composition on a simple subject. The forms of private correspondence must be known. Arithmetic went up to decimals and discount and included household book-keeping. History included the elementary history of India (with special reference to the British period) and some information on the system of government. The geography included the general geography of the world, and in particular the geography of India. Needle-work was compulsory at the second standard, but managers had the option of beginning it earlier.

It is to be noticed that the primary schools of Bombay taught the full vernacular course, and the highest standard therefore carried the instruction somewhat beyond the level of other Provinces.
The schools for girls in Bengal taught the books and subjects of the boys’ schools. Girls could, however, take up needle-work instead of Euclid, mensuration, and science, and they were required to have knowledge of the geography of India and to read a little poetry at the lower primary examination instead of passing in native accounts. In Punjab the course in reading and writing was the same for boys and girls, but the course in geography and arithmetic was cut down. Needle-work was taught in all schools in which provision could be made for it. Object lessons were also given where the facilities existed; but it was found at that time there was no separate syllabus for girls. In Burma domestic economy and needle-work are optional subjects. In the Central Provinces where boys studied agriculture or history, girls took up history or needle-work. Thus it is seen that in British times the curricula for girls’ schools largely followed the curricula used in schools for boys, but modifications were made not only in different provinces but in different schools in the same provinces so at to make them more suitable for girls and to the local conditions and people.

Mention should be made about a noticeable work included in the syllabus. In a number of elementary schools provision had been made for vocational instruction which included classes for carpet and tape weaving, spinning, basket making, lace making and embroidery. At the Wesleyan mission Vocational School, village girls were trained in needle-work, house-work and crop cultivation.

The Percy Noble institute for women near Madura has some interesting things to be mentioned. The school had model cottages, a small nursing home with dispensary, a school post office, bank and shop. The work and instruction in the model cottage included house management, cooking, health and sanitation, household accounts and gardening. Many of the girls earned sufficient to provide for their education by working three hours daily at needle-work, lace making and weaving. This model of school would be very useful even in today’s villages.

In Bengal attempts were made to widen the curriculum for girls’ schools. Vocal and instrumental music was introduced into all the schools in West Bengal, while many schools taught embroidery work. A revised curriculum for primary schools was introduced in 1925. Hygiene was a compulsory subject and English and needle-work was
optional. It was reported that cooking was being taught in many schools and that progress was being made in drawing, painting and clay modelling.

In Burma hygiene, domestic economy and needle-work had been made compulsory in the middle section of English schools and drawing, singing and music were optional subjects. In Anglo-vernacular schools the optional subjects included hygiene, domestic economy, needle-work, dress-making, drawing, singing, music, cookery and weaving.

In Assam music, painting, sewing, nursing and cooking received special prominence in most girls’ school and the number of pupils who appeared for the needle-work diploma examination increased from 587 in 1921 to 919 in 1926.

4.4 Summary of opinions Received on the Subject of the Education of Girls and Women.

On the Subject of the Education of Girls and Women, opinions were called for by the Education department of the government in 1916. These opinions make very interesting reading and confirm to the view that special curriculum has to be framed for educating girls.

Miss A. L. Fanau, B.Sc. (London), Headmistress, Dastur Nosherwan Girls’ High School, Poona writes that mere knowledge of the three R’s is valueless in comparison with a knowledge of all that pertains to home-making, the care of herself and children, and the hygienic necessities of a good home.

The object of educating the girls should be as follows according to her:—

a) To give the girls a practical knowledge of how to deal with the problem likely to occur in their home lives;

b) To inculcate the highest ideals of womanhood and motherhood by stories or other means;

c) To foster in them all that is beautiful in Indian religion, conduct, and art;

d) To teach them some Indian craft or handwork; and

e) To teach them the three R’s only as an adjunct to the above.

Mrs. Indumatibai of Dharwar said that the courses and text-books for girls should be different from that of the boys. The hours should be from 12 to 5. Girls should, if
possible, be entirely separated from boys; or not more than 20 per cent of boys should be admitted to a girls’ school.

Mr. N. V. Gunaji, Chairman, Schools Committee, Belgaum said that a training in practical subjects of domestic utility will be universally appreciated; indoor gymnastics and suitable games are required for the physical welfare of the girls.

Rao Bahadur S. K. Rodda, Dharwar said that the whole curriculum should be re-caste after consulting the wishes of the enlightened public in each division. Separate text-books were required. The course should include sanitary and hygienic principles, religion, history and geography, systematic needle-work, household songs, etc. for the girls to help them in their future life.

Miss. M. E. Chubb, Lady Superintendent, Mahalaxmi Training College, Ahmedabad said that variations in the curriculum may be sanctioned by the local educational authority. She wanted the education of girls to be suitable to the local requirement. Education is objected to in the case of girls because it was thought to make them unfit for home duties; therefore home duties, including cooking, should be brought into the school.

Miss A. E. Brooke, Inspectress of Girls’ Schools in Sind said that in Sind a few girls were found in boys’ schools, and boys under 9 years of age may be admitted to girls’ schools. In the higher primary schools there was a growing demand for a more practical education, which can only be given by teachers specially trained in “home-craft.”

Mr. Rustam P. Mody, Honorary Secretary, Alexandra Girls’ English School, Bombay said that in the lowest portion of the school, the three R’s in English should be taught along with the vernacular spoken by the majority; add kindergarten, needlework, singing, physical drill, object lessons, moral tales, and recitation of English poetry. At the next stage the medium of instruction should be English. The subjects of British and Indian history, general history, physical and political geography, composition, letter writing, English poetry, moral instruction, English conversation, arithmetic, elementary science and physics, nursing, first aid, physiology, sanitation (but not cooking), music, drawing, needlework, and calisthenics should all be looked into and included in the syllabus.

Mrs. D. H. Vachha, Principal, Princess High School for Girls, Bombay said that Domestic science, music, or botany may be substituted for history, mathematics, or
natural science. The girls’ secondary course should include physiology, hygiene, cookery, nursing, botany, drawing and painting, music, and needlework. To make room for these-history, geography, mathematics, and nature study should be reduced. The course should be better graded than at present, in view of the physical strain upon girls in the first stage of adolescence.

Miss Aimee H. Patel, Principal, The Young Ladies’ High School, Bombay said that Matriculation course is unnecessarily hard and burdensome. Astronomy should be substituted for the science, and algebra, geometry, and second language should be replaced by enlightened mothering, cooking, washing and ironing, sewing, embroidery, singing and music.

4.5 An Indian Perspective on education of the children

In the above discussion we find emphasis given on academic as well as house work subjects by the heads of the schools. Let us see what our reformers felt about educating the future citizens of India.

4.5.1 Ram Mohan Roy (1774-1833)

Raja Ram Mohan Roy was not a king in the literal sense, the Mughal monarch of Delhi had bestowed the Raja title upon him but we know that he was bigger than a king as he was intelligent, fearless, socially responsible, politically clever and religiously liberated. He is known as father of modern India and father of journalism in India. His life is the torch that helped India to rid itself from darkness.

In 1815 he founded Atmiya Sabha with like-minded Indian liberals – like Prince Dwarkanath Tagor, Prasanna Kumar Tagore, Kali Nath and Baikuntha Nath Munshi, Raja Kali Shankar Ghoshal. In his book, ‘The Precepts of Jesus’ (1820), he looked at the holy trinity doctrine and understanding of the Gospels with the same arguments and disdains that the missionaries used to criticize Indian idolatrous practices as a load of rubbish.

He was the first feminist in India and his book, “Brief remarks regarding modern encroachments on the ancient rights of females” (1822), is a reasoned argument in favour of the quality of women. His educational reforms improved the learning system in the
country. He protested against the government’s policy to strengthen the Sanskrit colleges as they would do nothing and has no practical use. He requested Lord Amherst to promote the western education in India.

In the new system of education he introduced the subjects which could be used practically in life like Mathematics, Philosophy, Chemistry and Anatomy with other fields of sciences. The Hindu College was set up with the intention of imparting education in English. He also promoted the growth and prosperity of the women education. He firmly believed that till the women of India were elevated, the society cannot get rid of evils. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was the moving spirit behind empowering women and getting for them a respectable position in the society. Brahmso Samaj was founded in 1829 by him to increase the pace of the socio-religious reforms that he wanted in India.

In 1829, the efforts of Raja Ram Mohan Roy resulted in the abolition of the practice of ‘Sati’ under Governor-General William Bentinck. He believed that women work behind a successful and a progressive society and economy.

4.5.2 Dayanand Saraswati (1824-1883)

In the journey from childhood to adulthood, a child needs effective teaching and develops an ability to think critically, to solve his own problems, speaking skills and written skills. The most important thing that he develops is an ethical behaviour. We would like to develop an attitude of caring in the children alongside being intelligent and sensitive. These thoughts are expressed in the book ‘Light of Truth’ by Maharshi Dayanand, one of the greatest thinkers of the time. He gave a call “back to the Vedas” and formed the Arya Samaj which would lead to an awakening throughout the country.

After his death his dream was immortalized by his followers by founding of Dayanand Anglo Vedic College Trust and Management Society. Its first institution was established at Lahore in 1886 with Mahatma Hansraj as its founder principal. Today there are more than 700 D.A.V. schools across the country.

Maharishi Dayanand (1824-1883) has left behind an enlightened approach to education and has led to the educational renaissance in India. In his book he has outlined the role of the mother and father in educating the child at home. A mother should form the character
of her children and instil manners and good conduct in them. She should correct his pronunciation and speech. The child should know how to address his seniors and developed love of knowledge and control of the senses.

Maharishi has asked children to avoid useless playing, crying or laughing. The parents have the responsibility to develop truthfulness, patience and cheerfulness in the children. Virtues of truth and love of God will help the child and save him from becoming an unprincipled person.

Maharishi has warned that indulgent parents are, in fact, giving them poison and are thus the cause of their ruin. Children become well-behaved, refined and scholarly when their parents do not indulge them. Children should be reprimanded and on being reprimanded the child should feel pleased. Parents should be tender hearted and kind to the children but at the same time advise them to abstain from stealing, arrogance, untruthfulness, wickedness, jealousy and blind passion.

Maharishi has asked children to be taught about respect and trust. He says that a broken pledge injures a man’s character and no one will ever trust such a person. Hypocrisy and ingratitude are very painful and mislead the children. He has asked children to cultivate a speech that is pacific and sweet. He wants children to conduct themselves so as to gain in health and strength. They should eat a little less than their appetite and avoid eating non-vegetarian food and consumption of liquors. To give their children the highest education possible is the paramount duty of the parents so that in company he is not like a goose among swans.

4.5.3 Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (1817 – 1989)

Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru said that Sir Syed was and ardent reformer and he wanted to reconcile modern scientific thought with religion by rationalistic interpretations and not by attacking basic belief. He was anxious to push new education. Mr Inder Kumar Gujral said that men like Sir Syed and their vision could penetrate through the thick veil of darkness to visualize the nation’s destinies. Some of his sayings are as follows –

- “Acquisition of knowledge of science and technology is the only solution for the problems of Muslims”.
- “Get rid of old and useless rituals. These rituals hinder human progress”.

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“Superstition cannot be the part of Iman (faith)”. 
“Look forward, learn modern knowledge, and do not waste time in studies of old subjects of no value”. 
“Remember that the words Hindu and Muslim are only meant for religious distinction: otherwise all persons who reside in this country belong to one and the same nation”. 
“Ijtihad (Innovation, re-interpretation with the changing times) is the need of the hour. Give up taqlid (copying and following old values)”. 

The above thoughts of Sir Syed reflect his vision for the upliftment of education of Indian Muslims. He championed the cause of modern education at a time when Indian Muslims considered it a sin to get modern education and that too through English language. 
Sir Syed’s greatest achievement was his Aligarh Movement. He started this movement with an aim to elevate the position of Muslims in India. This educational venture was welcomed by one and all. In 1859, to educate the Muslims, he opened schools at Muradabad. In 1863 in Ghazipur he established schools. In 1864, he founded a scientific society to promote scientific temper and zeal among the Muslims. Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental School was started by him in 1867 when Sir Syed was posted at Aligarh. This happened at a time when a movement was started in Benares to replace Urdu with Hindi. Urdu was widely spoken by the Muslims. This made him think that he should do something about educating the Muslims in their own language. 
He got an opportunity to study and understand the British educational system while he was on his visit to England in 1869. He could appreciate the usefulness of education in one’s life. On his return from England, He prepared to set up a great Muslim educational institution – “a Muslim Cambridge”. He retired in 1876 and dedicated himself to the Aligarh Movement. 
The Aligarh College (Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College) became Aligarh Muslim University by an act of the government. Today all live and study in a cordial atmosphere and carry forward the cultural heritage as Sir Syed wanted.
Conclusion

The modern system of education has grown on the lines of the British education system. This system of education was nourished by the English-educated elite and has expanded phenomenally. While during the pre-Independence period the educational system was oriented to Britain, in the post-Independence era it is not oriented to India. The more the system expands the more its crisis deepens. The much talked about radical restructuring and reorientation of the educational system in the country is no doubt exigent. But the question is ‘which way?’ The answer to this profound question has to be based on an appreciation of the socio-historical bases of our educational crisis. It has also to recognize the fact that women play a special role in the society and there training has to be specialized.

The curriculum should be elastic enough to allow time to the girls to prepare for their future life and devote a good deal of time in learning things which would be essential in their day to day life. Sanitation, hygiene, domestic science and vocational education should receive a good deal more attention. Considerable attention should be given to music, games and physical culture.