CHAPTER II

INDIAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
No body denies that public schools in this country provide good education. Boys who come out of these schools have poise and self confidence, qualities which are greatly needed in our public life. Inspite of high fees charged by public schools, they maintain long waiting lists. These schools provide facilities for physical education and games, character building and intellectual development, which we would like to introduce in ordinary secondary schools also. In matters of educational standards too, these schools leave little to be desired and we would like all our schools to strive to attain the same standards.

Public schools are secondary schools and the secondary school system in India is extremely complex. Secondary schools fall into two broad categories. Government schools are those set up and managed by the state; private schools, on the other hand, are owned and run by non-governmental groups and organisations. Out of 27,600 secondary schools in the country, approximately 18,000 or 65 percent are under private management. Among the private school we may differentiate those, which are independent (i.e. they receive no government grants-in-aid) from those which receive a regular annual grant and are bound

by the rules and regulations of the grant-in-aid code.

Both independent and aided private schools may be secular or "denominational", that is, schools which are founded and administered under constitutional guarantees by various religious bodies. Most of the better known christian denominational schools are affiliated to the Inter-state board for Anglo-Indian Education. There are about 300 such schools educating over 2,00,000 students. Approximately 50 percent of these schools are independent, the rest receiving grants-in-aid from the government.

The Indian public schools are private, independent and secular institutions of secondary education. The Sainik and Military schools, which form part of the public school complex, have been established by the government and receive annual grants-in-aid. They are, however, considered to be "private" and "independent" because they are managed by autonomous boards of Governors and are not obliged to follow the regulations of the grants-in-aid code.²

The Indian public schools, as we have noted above, are independent and secular. Both are often confused in the public mind as denominational schools because they share certain common features: fees are high, the clientele is largely restricted to the upper income groups of society, the medium of instruction

is English, and they are believed to maintain high academic standards. This confusion of the public schools with other independent schools is further compounded by the practice of some schools appropriating the label "public" for the cachet which the name gives them. In Delhi, for example the three public schools are Air Force Central School, Modern School and Delhi Public Schools (which became an Associate Member of the Indian public schools conference in 1970). Salwan public school and Frank Anthorny Public School are, notwithstanding the name, not public schools in the technical sense of the term.

Briefly, a public school is one whose headmaster has been admitted to the Indian Public Schools Conference (IPSC) by Election. To qualify for membership of the Conference, a school has to comply with a set of technical criteria relating to the academic freedom of the headmaster, conditions of service of the staff, facilities of the headmaster, conditions of service of the staff, facilities for games and extra-curricular activities, the residential accommodation for a certain proportion of the student body.

The Indian public schools broadly conform to the following description. They are mainly residential schools with an independent Board of Governors. Each school is divided into several more or less autonomous units called "houses" in which 40 or more boys live under a housemaster. There is prefect system of authority which provided selected boys with
opportunities for training in responsibility, leadership and service. Extensive facilities are available for a wide range of extra curricular activities; games, athletics, physical education, crafts, art, music, dramatic and a variety of hobbies. The central emphasis in both academic and extra-curricular activities is on the "all round" development of personality by the cultivation of academic skills and the qualities of initiative and responsibility, self-disciplined, team spirit, sportsman, fairplay, a refined taste and the spirit of public services.

The public schools, because of their high fees, are exclusive institutions catering to the needs of the upper social classes and the rich. The style of life adopted in the public schools is cosmopolitan and tends to reflect the symbols, manners and patterns of social behaviour of high status groups in Western Society. Great stress is placed on fluency in spoken English and several cultural and recreational pursuits such as art, music, horse riding, mountaineering and shikar are associated with elite styles of life.³

Though the contemporary public schools fit this general pattern of formal organisation, educational and cultural emphasis, it would hardly be correct to assume that they are

alike in every respect. On the contrary, there are significant variations between the schools not only in traditions but also in the mode of organisation, the composition of the student population and the quality of the academic programme. Most of the schools are predominantly residential, but there are a few mainly day schools which have limited facilities for boarders.

Like their English prototypes, most of the Indian public schools are all male institutions. Only a few are co-educational. Such as Modern School, New Delhi, Air Force Central School, Sanawar, Lovedale and Hansraj Morarji. Of these only Sanawar and Lovedale have residential facilities for girl students. All the Sainik and Military schools are exclusively for boys. Most of these schools though not all have preparatory or Junior schools attached to them. The public schools are believed to recruit their students on all India basis, yet the catchment area of students and the staff tends to be regional rather than national. Modern schools for example, recruit, most of its students and staff from Uttar Pradesh and Punjab, Lovedale from Southern states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Mysore.

Apart from the Sainik and Military schools, which were founded by the government to prepare boys of ability for entry into the National Defence Academy and the Indian Military Academy, a few public schools such as Shri-Shivaji, Sanawar,
Lovedale and Punjab Public school have strong military traditions of which they are very proud. Though Sanawar and Lovedale are better known public schools. It seems true to say that the more pronounced the military orientation of a school, the less the esteem in which it is held among the public schools.⁴

Among British Public schools the most famous are known as the "Seven". These are charterhouse, Eton, Harrow, Rughly, Shrewsbury, Estminster and Winchester.⁵ The masters of the schools were asked to rank the seven Indian leading public schools.⁶ According to 84% the masters (excluding Military schools) the following are the Indian Equivalent of the British "Seven": Doon School, Mayo College, Modern School, Scindia, Lovedale Sanawar and Punjab Public School. It should be noted that these schools are not listed herein on evaluative rank order, except Doon School which is considered by an overwhelming majority of the masters to be the most outstanding public school in the country.

In recent times the public schools have become the Centre of bitter controversy because they are believed to offer the social and economic advantages of a good education to a socially

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⁴. SSPMS Samachar, 120 (July 31, 1965) p.2.
⁶. Alfred De Souza: Indian Public Schools - a Sociological Study R. p. 4.
exclusive clientele. At the core of this controversy is the hotly debated issue of the equalisation of educational opportunity in a democratic society. The arguments of the critics of the public schools is that they appear to function as exclusive pockets of entrenched privilege and are responsible for the creation and maintenance of a caste of modern mandarins.

In Britain especially after World War II, the public schools came in for severe criticism because they were held to be "citadels of privilege" catering primarily to the needs of the upper social classes and exercising a divisive influence in British Society. This opposition to the public schools was largely the outcome of a combination of educational, social and political factors, the most important being the considerable expansion and improvement of secondary schools in the state system, the rapid speed of a democratic ethos and the socialist ideology of the British Labour Party. The widespread criticism of the British Public Schools resulted in two government sponsored inquiries, the Fleming Committee (1942) and the recent public school Commission (1965). The main concern of both these commissions was to advise the government on the best way of integrating the public schools with the

state system of education”, and to suggest ways by which public school education should be made available to boys and girls capable of profiting thereby, irrespective of the income of their parents.9

In India the criticism directed at the public schools has also been motivated by educational, social and political concern. The critics of the Indian Public Schools generally concede that they offer a good education to those who can afford to pay for it. At the same time, it is asserted that this academic excellence functions as a mechanism for the perpetuation of privilege. (By providing a privileged education to the children of the upper social classes, the public schools are accused of promoting class distinctions in a socialistic pattern of society and also of encouraging a style of life and patterns of behaviour which are considered to be Western and not sufficiently in harmony with the ideals and values of Indian culture. In the Lok Sabha and elsewhere, politicians have repeatedly attacked the public schools as "undemocratic" and "foreign" because of their origins and general outlook, and have urged the government to abolish them. Dr. K.L. Shrimali, former Union Minister of Education (1958-63) for example, warned public school head-masters that the "social and economic changes that are taking place in our society will

not only remove difference in wealth but will also get rid of all those institutions which enable the wealthy classes to buy certain material advantages for their children.10

A HISTORICAL RETROSPECT

After 1857 when India was brought under the direct rule of the British Royalty and Parliament, some serious thought was given to providing higher and better education to a class of people whose sympathy it was necessary to win in the political interest. It was a period of consolidation of power and reassessment of politics. Except for a few rulers and upper class people not many could come forward for the European type of learning. The mass of people were busy earning a bare living for themselves. The Muslims suffered from a sense of political humiliation that the British had perpetrated on them and, therefore, as a group they were difficult to please. Except in the three Presidencies where some form of European education had already been started now here was the impact of the British arrival and their learning so apparent or widespread. The major limitations of the British rulers were lack of financial resources for education and their inability to bring as many of their race as they wanted during times of dire need. Therefore, they were forced to be selective in their provision of education as well as in making friends.

where else except among the indigenous ruler could they find the qualities which they sought for to qualify for their friendship. If this group of people was prepared to offer its hand friendship, the others who showed equal or perhaps greater interest was the "new" middle class who had their economic axes to grind. Education grew in numbers and quality as both ends i.e. at the top and down below. Former education was equivalent to good manners, broad mindedness, liberalism and the latter it signified an instrument of economic grains. The history of Indian education is the story of demand and supply of education for an everswelling number of middle and lower middle class people.

The first school of this type was founded in the year 1861 and named Raj Kumar College, Rajkot meant for the sons and relatives of princess Kathiawar\(^1\). The other college was named after Lord Mayo at Ajmer\(^2\) established in 1873. This college was also established only for princess. Some other colleges were also established but they had neither the curricula of the British School nor its strict regimen. This class of students had no definite goal in life except that these schools had English as a medium of instruction and prepared students for the Cambridge School Certificate examinations, they had nothing to qualify them to be called

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public schools.

The proper beginning of the Public Schools in India was made in 1928 when as eminent lawyer from Calcutta, Mr. S.R. Dass, started collecting funds for opening a chain of such schools. His sons had been taught at a public school in England and he had himself intimate knowledge of their work and worth. Indeed he became the Law Member of Lord Irwin's Executive Council in 1927 on the condition that he would be permitted to use his influence for collecting money for the propagation of the public school idea. He died without fulfilling his dream. He had, however, collected 20 lakhs in cash. His followers including Sir Joseph Bhore, Chairman of Indian Public Schools Society carried on work and succeeded in founding India's first Public School at Dehra Doon with 70 pupils. Mr. S.R. Dass had got a Society registered as the Indian Public School Society in 1928 which performed the job. Mr. Dass has included in the Article of the Association, the object of founding this school, which was to keep it free from distinction of caste, creed or social status.

After that many Public Schools had been established. They all were working to achieve the same goal they thought it necessary to combine into a single body. "The Indian Public School Conference" came into existence in October 1939, and the headmasters of the Public Schools were requested to be its members. The Indian Public School Conference had its origin
in a meeting of heads of schools in June 1939 immediately before the War. It was attended by seven heads and Mr. J.P. Sargent, Education Commission, Government of India. Numerous problems pertaining to education were considered. For instance, they discussed about the inadequate provision of examination in Indian languages, the formation of association etc. They wished to adopt and adapt a few characteristics of the English Public School in India. Mr. Sargent, later Sir John, was somehow favourably inclined towards them, although he stated frankly that in England he opposed and criticised the English Public Schools. But his enthusiasm for them was the result of his liking for certain good qualities these schools possessed. Be that as it may, the I.P.S.C. took birth with the efforts of the headmasters of nine schools which included Smith-Pearse, Foot Barry, Marchant etc. The I.P.S.C. in the beginning had agreed to work in consultation with the Board of Anglo-Indian and European Schools. One could easily understand the motives behind this agreement. Both had English headmasters and English as the medium of instruction as boys and girls of these schools were supposed to rule over India. With a common interest it is impossible not to be sympathetic with each other programme. But this is all incidental. The Principal reason was that the products of these schools were supposed to be the pillars of the British Empire in India. How could their managers think otherwise?
Despite of the fact that these schools had to face much public criticism, the I.P.S.C. stood by solidly like a rock and continued effecting improvements in their working and management. It should be obvious to the reader that simply by opening these schools to all did not affect their character. The only change came in the form of accepting pupils from rich families. Even as it is, it was definitely a step forward and the due credit must be given to them. The initial enthusiasm was more personal than public and broadmindedness of the originators of I.P.S.C. was not shared uniformly at the top.

The Public Schools numbered 14 in 1951. The tuition fees as reported in the above mentioned publication ranges from Rs.60 per annum to Rs.2,100 for ten months, in the latter case, however, inclusive of hostel fees. Not all were residential and except in one or two cases hostel accommodation fell short of the actual intake capacity. Indeed, not all had a large number of students because their number varied from 91 to 530. At least three were co-educational. It is interesting to note that except the Sardar School, Gwalior which had 10,291 books in library, none other had more than 8,900 volumes and in fact most had about 3,000 books only. The disparity in the starting salary of the teacher and the principal ranged from Rs.100 to Rs.1,000. Considering the affluence educational standards and the English models that they reportedly boasted of, the above facts are damning. These figures speak neither
of their popularity nor of particularly high standard of education. On the contrary, except that these institutions had succeeded in keeping themselves away from the public gaze and surrounded themselves in a shroud of mystery and therefore acquired a kind of halo, one wonders why did the government or the politicians not think of ignoring them as closed private shops.

According to a study conducted in 1965, the public schools numbered 26. In 1970 there are 44 public schools in India.

**LIST OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN INDIA**

1. Air Force School,  
   Behind Subroto Park,  
   DELHI CANTT. - 10

2. Birla Public School,  
   Pilani (RAJASTHAN)

3. Birla Vidya Mandir,  
   NAINITAL (U.P.)

4. Bishop Cotton School,  
   SIMLA.

5. Colvin Taluqdar's College,  
   LUCKNOW (U.P.)

6. Daly College,  
   INDORE

7. Doon School,  
   DEHRA DUN (U.P.)

8. Hansraj Morarji Public School,  
   Andheri, BOMBAY.

9. Hyderabad Public School,  
   Begumpet, HYDERABAD.
10. Lawrence School, LOVEDALE (NILGIRIS).
11. Lawrence School, SANAWAR (SIMLA HILLS).
15. Military School, BANGALORE.
16. Belgaum Military School, BELGAUM.
17. Chail Military School, CHAIL (SIMLA HILLS).
18. Dholpur Military School, DHOLPUR.
19. Modern School, Barakhamba Road, NEW DELHI.
20. Punjab Public School, NABHA.
21. Rajkumar College, RAIPUR (M.P.)
22. Rajkumar College, RAJKOT (GUJRAT).
23. Rishi Valley School, Rishi-Valley P.O. CHITOOR (A.P.)
24. Sadul Public School, BIKANER (RAJASTHAN).
SAINIK SCHOOLS

25. Sainik School,
AMRAVATHI NAGAR (MADRAS).

26. Sainik School,
BHUBNESHWAR (ORRISSA)

27. Sainik School,
BIJAPUR (MYSORE)

28. Sainik School,
CHITTORGARDH (RAJASTHAN).

29. Sainik School,
JAMNAGAR (GUJRAT).

30. Sainik School,
KAPURTHALA (PUNJAB).

31. Sainik School,
PÜRULIA (W.B.)

32. Sainik School,
MUJJPURA (KARNAL).

33. Sainik School,
REWÀ (M.P.).

34. Sainik School,
SATRA (MAHARASHTRA).

35. Sainik School,
P.O. Sárojningar,
LUCKNOW (U.P.)

36. Scindia School, Fort,
GWAJIOR.

37. Scindia Kanya Vidyalaya
GWAJIOR.

38. Shri Shivaji Preparatory
Military School,
POONA.

39. Vikas Vidyalaya,
RANCHI (BIHAR).
VALUES AND GOALS OF PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION

At the time that the Doon School was founded and Pearce and his colleagues were discussing the reorganisation of the chief's colleges, the focus of their concern was the instrument function of the internal structure of the public schools in achieving their specific educational goals: character formation and training for leadership. It must be remembered that Pearce, Smith Pearce, Marchant, Foot and the other headmasters were public school men who believed unquestioningly in the values and purposes of public school education. The pattern of education which the English headmasters of Chief's colleges esteemed and aimed at reproducing in Indian Public Schools appears to be none of other than a scheme of values and a set of moral norms which continue to define even today and essential elements of British Public School tradition and its code of conduct.
In seven essays later published in a book form as THE INDIAN PUBLIC SCHOOL (1942), Smith-Pearce, Pearce, Marchant and Foot set out what they believed should be the aims and ideals of the Indian Public Schools. In his conception of aims of public school education, Sargent, who wrote the preface, assumes that the ideals and values of British Public Schools have equal validity for Indian Public Schools. They are "varieties", he writes, which are, "Valid the world over and the schools my friends envisage are founded mainly on them. Like Sargent the headmasters of the Chief's Colleges and Foot of Doon School, who were the moving spirits behind the formation of I.P.S.C., were confident that British approach to elite education would be equally affective in training Indians for positions of responsibility. Yet Smith-Pearce as also Marchant and Foot, noted that the British Public Schools were institutions embedded in a culture that greatly valued tradition.

To compensate for the lack of tradition, on which British Public Schools depended for the transmission of the norms and values of elite behaviour, these headmasters substituted what Foot called, "Conscious planning" in the training of character of leadership. The essays which comprise "The Indian Public Schools" are perhaps, best interpreted as applications of this "conscious planning" to five major aspects of public school education, training of the mind, training in leadership,
training in physical fitness, training for leisure and religious education.

These essays have a special importance. Together with I.P.S.C. Memorandum of Association and Rules, they inaugurate a tradition which defines values and ideals of the Indian Public Schools and invest them with the qualities of permanence and continuity. The overall goal of public school education, as envisaged by these English headmasters, is the all round training of character, "intellectual and moral - for the production of men competent to take responsibility", or as they formulated it in the Memorandum of Association, the "Primary object" of Public School education was to "prepare boys of ability for positions of leadership and responsibility in all walks of life".

It was expected that the Public School boy would develop into what Marchant called a "Cultured gentleman" with a "considered opinion of his own" who had learned to "delight in living things of nature" cultivate an aesthetic appreciation of art and music and from a cultured taste. This notion of the "cultured gentlemen" involved a variety of social skills. Great value was attached to speaking English with fluency and a cultured accent, to social poise and to the social manners, characteristic of the style of life in elite circles.

The gentleman was expected to develop skill and interest in certain kinds of sporting activities and hobbies which
function as status symbols of leisure by which he was to be recognised. The boys were offered opportunities to participate in such sporting activities as shikar, mountaineering, fishing and tennis; hobbies such as painting, wood carving, clay modelling, bridge and chess, travel, music and the theatre were encouraged and boys were taught to love and look after animals, particularly dogs and horses. These, it was believed, would provide cultured gentleman with resources for the socially appropriate kinds of recreational pursuits.

The code of moral conduct set a high premium on truthfulness and fearlessness, and stressed the moral obligation of public service to justify privilege. To religious education was assigned a pedagogical role in strengthening commitment to this scheme of moral values and norms of behaviour. The headmasters were faced with difficult problem of providing religious education for boys belonging to different religious faiths. In British public schools the chapel was a central importance in the task of imparting a moral education with the emphasis on character training for leadership. In India it was Foot's solution to the problem of religious pluralism that set the pattern for the other public schools; he replaced the chapel with the daily school Assembly, and religious doctrine with non-sectarian prayer and "practical religion".

Like the chapel, the Assembly symbolised the unit of the school community; and the message of the assembly, like that of
the chapel, was aimed at motivating adherence to the norms and religious value embodied in the approval code of public school conduct. What was termed, "practical religion" was understood as the sustained effort on the part of the school community to express the ideals of cooperation, self discipline, tolerance, personal and social responsibility, in some form of social service.

In the task of moral education of the boy, religion was supported by games and sport. The cult of bodily fitness and manliness was combined with an intense moral purpose in the public school obsession with organised games and sports. Organised games were highly valued because they were thought to develop in the boys toughness endurance, resourcefulness, cooperation and unselfishness, fair play, loyalty, obedience self-control and leadership.

The value and standards of behaviour of the contemporary public school are intimately related to the overall objectives of all round training of character for responsibility, leadership in public service and the professions. In the training of character the qualities selected for special emphasis are honesty, self-confidence, loyalty, courage, manliness, cooperation, self-restraint, team spirit, initiative, responsibility and the spirit of service. This Arnodian conception of character is most clearly discerned in statements about the aims and objectives of public school education. "Every effort is made
states a headmaster, to infuse our boys with the spirit of loyalty devotion and patriotic service, and to inculcate qualities of leadership, personality, discipline and team spirit among them."

The notion that a privileged form of education carries with it the obligation of public service is constantly and insistently promoted in public schools. Public service is conceived in terms of the "house" and the school community, and is extended to the wider society that forms the external social and cultural environment of the school. In the development of this spirit of service a crucial pedagogical role is played by the "house" arrangement of community living, the prefect system and programmes of social service. If the house system teaches the boy to subordinate his private interests to those of the group, the prefect system, apart from the training boys in the handling of authority, aims at the concrete demonstration of the belief that power and privilege are only justified when used for the greater service of the community. The considerable powers given to prefects are expected to be exercised for the good of the school community.

The spirit of public service is commonly accepted as a valid criterion for the evaluation of the school's effectiveness in the training of character. "It would be of little avail" observes a headmaster, "claiming that the sense of service
stressed here since the earliest days fitted our boys to utilise their talents in modest cooperation with others to the benefit of the country if our old boys in their careers did not substantiate this claim. The careers which are highly esteemed are those which are most clearly associated with public service: the Administrative service, the Defence forces and politics.

It is frequently said by headmasters that not enough public school boys enter careers associated with public service. As they perceive it, few boys are entering the Indian Administrative Service (I.A.S.) or the Indian Foreign Service (I.F.S.) and that there has been a falling off in the number joining the Defence services. In terms of absolute number it could be said that few public school boys have entered the I.A.S. or I.F.S. as compared with those who join business or the professions. In some schools there appears to have been a discernible trend, as a former headmaster of Doon had often pointed out, towards careers in business firms rather than in the army or the various government services. But this does not seem to be typical of the public schools as a group. With respect to the I.A.S., what seems to be a smaller number of public school boys constitutes in fact a substantial proportion of the recruits. Morris - Jones (1964) found nearly 100 out of 350 I.A.S. Officers had received a public school education. This shows that public boys are over represented in the I.A.S. though their number does not come up to the expectations of the headmasters.